[BE] New Order on Identification System

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On 8 November 2004, the Moniteur belge (Belgian official gazette) published the new order of the Government of the French-speaking Community of 1 July 2004 on protecting minors from television programmes likely to be damaging to their physical, mental or moral development. From 1 January 2005, this order will replace the previous order of 12 October 2000, which defines the identification markings currently used for television programmes (see IRIS 2001-2: 5). A new system of markings will therefore be used by television broadcasters in the French-speaking Community. As it had done through previous orders on this subject, Belgium's French-speaking Community is aligning its system with that used in France. Exceptionally for a piece of Belgian legislation, the order refers in its preamble to the consent given by the French Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (audiovisual regulatory body) on 30 March 2004, authorising Belgian TV channels to use the same pictograms and warnings as those used in France. It was necessary to standardise the markings because several French channels have many viewers in French-speaking Belgium (TF 1, France 2, France 3, France 5 and Arte), and it was important to avoid confusing Belgian TV viewers who would otherwise have been faced with two different identification systems. From 1 January, programmes likely to be damaging to the physical, mental or moral development of minors will be classified into four categories: programmes unsuitable for children under 10, programmes unsuitable for children under 12, programmes unsuitable for children under 16 and programmes unsuitable for minors. The respective pictograms (-10, -12, -16 and -18) will have to appear throughout the broadcast, including the credits. A corresponding warning will also need to be shown, either in white at the bottom of the screen for at least one minute at the start of the programme or covering the whole screen for at least ten seconds before the programme starts. The identification system does not apply to TV news bulletins, but newsreaders should give a verbal warning before any scenes likely to be damaging to the physical, mental or moral development of minors. The system also does not apply to advertisements. It does, however, apply to film trailers.

Arrêté du Gouvernement de la Communauté française de Belgique du 1 juillet 2004 relatif à la protection des mineurs contre les programmes de télévision susceptibles de nuire à leur épanouissement physique, mental ou moral, Moniteur belge du 8 novembre 2004

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Order of the Government of the French-speaking Community of Belgium of 1 July 2004 on protecting minors from television broadcasts likely to be damaging to their physical, mental or moral development, published in the Moniteur belge (official gazette) of 8 November 2004

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