[FR] Use of the French Language in the Audiovisual Media

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Faced with the multiplication of English terms on radio and television, the CSA (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel - audiovisual regulatory body) adopted on 18 January a recommendation recalling the legal and contractual provisions to which service editors are subject in this respect. Introduced by Article 12 of the Act of 4 August 1994 on use of the French language, Article 20-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986 lays down the principle according to which the use of French is compulsory for all broadcasts and advertising by radio or television bodies and services. This obligation is also taken up in the agreements and contract conditions of both private- and public-sector channels. A number of exceptions are nevertheless allowed; these cover cinematographic and audiovisual works broadcast in their original language version, musical works, including those used in advertising spots, where all or part of the text is in another language, programmes for learning a foreign language, broadcasts of cultural ceremonies, and programmes, parts of programmes or advertising spots included in these designed to be broadcast totally in a language other than French. Although the use of French is compulsory in programmes and advertising spots, another language may still be used, as long as its translation into French is equally legible, audible or intelligible as the presentation in the other language (Article 20-1, para. 4 of the Act of 1986). The recommendation also broaches the specific case of brand names and titles of broadcasts. Under Article 2 of the Act of 4 August 1994, although brand names, trade names or service names within the meaning of Articles L. 711-1 et seq. of the CPI (Code de la propriété intellectuelle - French intellectual property code) are not subject to the provisions of the Act on the use of the French language, accompanying mentions and messages are. Thus the CSA recalls that brand names themselves may be registered, recorded or used in France without translation. However, public-sector radio and television companies may not give their broadcasts titles made up of terms in another language. Three waivers are nevertheless provided for in the Act - the titles of broadcasts for which the companies have acquired broadcasting rights but have no control over their conception (Friends, for example), titles made up of a term in another language for which there is no equivalent in French, and titles that were registered as brand names before 7 August 1994.The CSA is asking the editors of private-sector radio and television services to make every effort to use French in the titles of their broadcasts. Should they choose to use a title in another language, the CSA recommends a verbal or visual translation of the title, thereby

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making it readily comprehensible to the public. The recommendations are scarcely coercive and are having little effect on the proliferation on private-sector television programme titles such as Star Academy, Loft Story, Fear Factor, Morning Live, etc.

Recommandation du CSA relative à l'emploi de la langue française par voie audiovisuelle, 18 janvier 2005

http://www.csa.fr/infos/textes/textes_detail.php?id=21397

Recommendation by the CSA on use of the French language in the audiovisual media, 18 January 2005

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