[FR] CSA Announcement on Listing and Numbering of Cable and Satellite Channels

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Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

The *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel* (French audiovisual regulatory authority - CSA) has delivered its first decisions in the procedure for settling differences between editors and distributors of services as organised by the Decree of 29 August 2006, in application of Article 17-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986 on the freedom of communication. The CSA had received fourteen applications from editors of channels broadcast on terrestrially broadcast digital television concerning their numbering on the cable and satellite distribution networks. The channels at issue (including NRJ12, BFM TV, LCP-AN) wanted to be listed for cable and satellite under the same numbers as those used for terrestrially broadcast digital television. NRJ12, for example, was on channel 12 for digital television, 112 on CanalSat, and 217 on the cable operator Noos. The CSA turned down these requests, however, on the grounds that the digital television channels were intended to fit into themes corresponding to their programming. The CSA held that the principle of organising services schedules by theme was in the viewer's interest. Viewers chose the programme they wanted to watch mainly because of the type of content (news, sport or cinema, for example). Thus, a theme included channels that were competing for the same audience, enabling the editors presenting similar content to compete on a fair basis.

The CSA did, however, realise that there were serious difficulties in connection with numbering in the relationship between distributors and editors, which could have unfavourable consequences for the financial balance of editors. From the viewer's perspective, it was important to be able to access the desired channels easily. For editors, numbering should enable them to reach the widest possible audience and present a degree of stability. For distributors, numbering should contribute to their commercial strategy by enabling them to adapt their offers to the expectations of subscribers and maximise the exposure of their affiliated channels. With this in mind, the CSA has decided to adopt a global approach making it possible to define the rules for numbering. It has therefore submitted, for public consultation, a draft deliberation based on Article 3-1 of the Act of 30 September 1986, according to which the CSA is to ensure the "equitable, transparent, homogeneous and non-discriminatory nature of the numbering of television services in the programmes offered by the services distributors". Apart from the pertinence of organising services schedules by theme, the draft seeks responses concerning the definition of themes and their organisation, the criteria by which a channel is categorised under a theme, and the order of the channels

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within a given theme. The replies to the CSA's consultation are to be received by 12 July 2007.

CSA, Communiqué de presse n° 637 du 6 juin 2007, Règlement de différends sur la numérotation des chaînes sur le câble et le satellite

http://www.csa.fr/actualite/communiques/communiques_detail.php?id=123361

CSA, Press release no. 637 of 6 June 2007, Settlement of differences concerning the numbering of channels on cable and satellite

Projet de délibération relative à la numérotation des services de télévision dans les offres de programmes des distributeurs de services sur des réseaux de communications électroniques n'utilisant pas des fréquences assignées par le CSA

http://www.csa.fr/upload/decision/projet_delib_numerotation.pdf

Draft deliberation concerning the numbering of television services in the programmes offered by distributors of services on electronic communications networks not using frequencies allocated by the CSA

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