[FR] New Principle of Pluralism for Speaking Time for Politicians on Radio and Television

IRIS 2009-8:1/19

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Taking note of the decision made by the Conseil d'État on 8 April 2009 (see IRIS 2009-5: 14), the national audiovisual regulatory authority (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel - CSA) adopted on 21 July 2009 a new "principle of pluralism" that will govern the balance in regard to the proportion of speaking time for politicians on radio and television. Starting on 1 September, this principle will replace the so-called "three thirds" rule (government, majority, and opposition), in force since 1969, which excluded the Head of State for the purpose of the calculation. As a result, the total speaking time for the parliamentary opposition now may no longer be less than half the total speaking time of the Head of State and the presidential majority. Speeches by the President and members of his staff will therefore be added automatically to that total. With this recalculation of the total speaking time for the presidential majority (members of the Government, the parliamentary majority and the Head of State's staff), the CSA is emphasising a simplification of the rules for calculation. Furthermore, only those speeches by the President that, because of their content or context, fall within "the national political debate" within the meaning of the Conseil d'État's decision, will be taken into account. This means that speeches falling within the scope of the Head of State's "sovereignty functions" (fonctions régaliennes) within the meaning of Article 5 of the Constitution (functions involving compliance with the Constitution, the proper functioning of the public authorities, the continuity of the State, national independence and the integrity of the territory, and observance of treaties).

For those political formations that do not belong to either the majority or the opposition, and for those not represented in Parliament, the channels will continue to ensure fair speaking time based on various features of the representation. Each channel shall send the times to the CSA, which will then inform the leaders of the parliamentary chambers and the political parties present in the Parliament each month. The results may also be consulted on the CSA's Internet site.

Le CSA adopte un nouveau principe de pluralisme pour les temps de parole des personnalités politiques, communiqué de presse du CSA, 21 juillet 2009

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http://www.csa.fr/actualite/communiques/communiques_detail.php?id=128930

CSA adopts a new principle of pluralism for speaking time for politicians; CSA press release, 21 July 2009

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