[BE] Television Spot to Promote Youth Radio Programme not Discriminatory against Physically Disabled Persons

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On 21 September 2010, the Belgian Jury voor Ethische Praktijken inzake Reclame (Jury for Ethical Practices Concerning Advertising) issued a decision on a complaint, lodged by a member of the public, against the Flemish public broadcasting corporation VRT. The Jury is the self-regulatory authority of the advertising and marketing sector in Belgium (for more information, see IRIS 2010-1: 1/9). The VRT had produced and broadcast a television spot promoting the radio programme “All Areas”, which reports live from various music festivals for the public broadcaster’s youth station “Studio Brussel”. The spot displayed two friends attending a music festival, one of them sitting in a wheelchair and the other one doing his utmost to look after his disabled friend and providing him with drinks. At a certain moment, the disabled person stood up from his wheelchair and confessed to his friend that he had been tricking him for five years. According to the complaint, there is nothing humorous about the spot, as it does not show respect for real wheelchair users. The Jury in a very short decision judged that the spot depicted an unrealistic situation (five years of deceit, during which the friend failed to notice anything) and contained no disdainful elements regarding wheelchair users. On the contrary, the wheelchair user was shown as attending music festivals, was very well cared for and treated with respect. Because of the spot’s humorous nature and the fact that the advertisement was intended to promote the youth station “Studio Brussel” (which is known for its funny campaigns), it could not be found to be shocking or pejorative. As the Jury could find no violation of legal or self-regulatory norms, it decided not to formulate any remarks. The decision has not been appealed, hence the case is now closed.

Jury voor Ethische Praktijken inzake Reclam, Adverteerder: VRT, Product/dienst: Studio Brussel, 21.09.2010

http://www.jep.be/nl/beslissingen-van-de-jep/?decision=2950

Jury for Ethical Practices Concerning Advertising, complaint against VRT, 21 September 2010

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