[FR] France Télévisions Adopts a “Channels Charter”

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The public-service television company France Télévisions has just adopted a “Channels Charter”. Its Chairman and Managing Director, Rémy Pflimlin, claims it is the first to be drawn up by an audiovisual group in France. Public-sector television has a particular role to play in the country’s democratic life as well as in its social and cultural life - on the basis of this idea, the France Télévisions group wanted to define the fundamental principles that ought to determine the course of its action and that of its employees. The text recalls the “ethical rules” and the “public-service missions” required of the holding company’s channels, including “honesty of information”, “transparency”, the “independence and pluralism of information”, and the “representation of the diversity of the population of France”. Faced with the multiplication of sources of information, particularly the Internet and the use of browsers, the charter recalls that journalists are required to check “every item of information” before presenting it on the air and to check all images that are to be broadcast: “journalists shall ensure that images broadcast correspond to the subjects they are supposed to illustrate”. In order to preserve the independence of professionals working for France Télévisions, the charter provides that they must avoid “any situation that might cast doubts on the company’s impartiality and its independence in relation to pressure groups of an ideological, political, economic, social or cultural nature”. Employees must “take care to avoid any surreptitious advertising” and refuse “money, gifts, gratifications, travel, holidays or other favours or advantages of any kind whatsoever that might prejudice their independence and their credibility”. They must also exercise caution when using blogs and social networks, ensuring “respect for professional and ethical rules”, and refrain from compromising their credibility or that of the company. In this respect, the charter has been supplemented by an “employees’ guide to good practices on social networks” since “all France Télévisions’ employees may talk about their employer some day”. The document covers a dozen points, recalling the ban both on comments that are slanderous, defamatory or racist, and the divulgence of in-house, confidential and/or financial information specific to the company. Employees are also to be held personally responsible for the content they publish in a blog or on a site, media or social network. It is also recommended that journalists should not tweet about what they did not say on screen, and that they should always indicate the source of content and always check on an item of news before communicating it. Extracts from the “Channels Charter” are expected to be incorporated in the collective agreement that is currently under negotiation.

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Charte des antennes de France Télévisions

http://www.francetelevisions.fr/downloads/charte_des_antennes_web.pdf

Charter of the channels of France Télévisions

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