[FR] CSA rules on presidential election come into force

IRIS 2017-3:1/13

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The official presidential campaign began in the media on 1 February 2017, in accordance with the CSA's recommendation of 7 September 2016, which was adopted under the Act of 24 April 2016.

The campaign is divided into three stages.

(i) From 1 February to 20 March candidates and their supporters will enjoy equal speaking time and airtime. This will be calculated for each declared or presumed candidate – not for each political grouping. The principle of equity means that television channels and radio stations must allocate speaking time and airtime to the candidates and their supporters according to their degree of authority within the respective grouping and their actual involvement in the campaign.

(ii) From 20 March until 9 April (inclusive), equal speaking time and airtime are to apply under comparable programming conditions (according to four time slots set by the CSA).

(iii) From 10 April until 9 May, the principle of equal speaking time and airtime must apply, subject to the same programming conditions.

In a communication on 8 February 2016, the CSA presented its report on speaking time allocated over the previous six months of the pre-electoral period, as defined in its meeting of 29 June 2016. The CSA had pointed out repeatedly during this period, both by means of issuing general statements and directly to the editors concerned, that it was necessary to ensure a balanced representation of all the political groupings. It appears that, following these interventions, particular care has been taken to redress the serious imbalances that had been observed at one point on the TF1 and M6 television channels (specifically, the overexposure of the Parliamentary opposition – see IRIS 2017-2/17). On this occasion, the CSA emphasised more particularly the involvement of the public service channels in the provision of programmes devoted to political news; it noted that the issues of both the number of hours of airtime and balance had been respected.

At the same time, the CSA rejected an application from the Front National party, which felt it had been at a disadvantage in terms of speaking time during the pre-electoral period and wanted to have the benefit of a "carry-over" to the new period beginning on 1 February. "The rules applicable to the calculation of speaking time do not permit any carry-over from one period to the next",

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according to the written reply from the CSA's President. It should be recalled that editors had notified the CSA of "difficulties" encountered in the replies they had received from the Front National party to their proposed allocations of speaking time.

Temps de parole (1er août 2016 - 31 janvier 2017) : un bilan équilibré, communiqué du CSA du 8 février 2017

http://www.csa.fr/Espace-Presse/Communiques-de-presse/Temps-de-parole-1er-aout-2016-31-janvier-2017-un-bilan-equilibre

Speaking time (1 August 2016- 31 January 2017): a balanced result; notice from the CSA of 8 February 2017

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