[FR] Canal+ follows Orange in battle between TF1 and its distributors

IRIS 2018-4:1/22

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Following in Orange's footsteps (see IRIS 2018-3/15), Canal+ has entered the battle between TF1 and its distributors. Angered by TF1's demands for payment for carrying its channels, the Canal+ group decided on 1 March 2018 to cease broadcasting them (TF1, TMC, TFX, TF1 Séries Films and LCI) until an agreement was reached between the parties.

Orange, for its part, had, a month earlier, "only" blocked access to MyTF1 (without touching the live channels), and cancelled its advertising campaigns with TF1. A week after Canal+ pulled the plug, Culture Minister Françoise Nyssen responded by pointing out that all French viewers, thanks to DTT, were entitled to receive 27 free national channels. Despite a high coverage rate of around 95% of the French mainland population, DTT was not available in some rural and mountainous areas. In order to guarantee equality between all French citizens, the law stated that everyone should be able to receive these 27 channels free of charge via satellite. Free DTT channels were therefore obliged to make their signal available to a satellite distributor free of charge. The minister said that Canal+'s decision to suspend the signal of the TF1 Group's channels for people who only had its TNT Sat (satellite DTT) service - thus depriving them of all access to the group's five free channels - therefore violated the principle of universal coverage. The national audiovisual regulatory authority (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel - CSA) and the national telecommunications regulator (Autorité de régulation des communications électroniques et des postes - ARCEP) also urged the Canal+ Group to restore access to these channels via its TNT Sat service. As a result, Canal+ agreed to switch the TF1 satellite signal back on, but left its other subscribers without the TF1 group channels.

At the same time, Orange and TF1 announced the signing of a "new global distribution agreement" for the group's channels - TF1, TMC, TFX (ex NT1), TF1 Séries Films (ex HD1) and LCI - for Orange subscribers, "as well as the non-linear services associated with these channels", which had been suspended since 1 February this year. TF1 is thought to have agreed to lower its demands, with Orange now paying between EUR 10 million and EUR 15 million per year.

Meanwhile, in a press release published on 10 March, Canal+ confirmed that all free channels of the TF1 group were available on all networks to all its subscribers (ADSL, fibre and Internet): "Since it has been confirmed in the last few days that

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the broadcast of free channels would remain free, and that only complementary services (replay, start over, etc.) could be chargeable, the Canal+ group has decided to gradually reintroduce the free channels of the TF1 group. Canal+ subscribers should not have to pay for free-to-air channels, which have obtained free frequencies for this purpose from the state." The group also said it was ready to negotiate "reasonable" remuneration for the distribution of value-added services associated with these channels.

Communiqué de presse du groupe Canal +, 1er mars 2018

http://www.canalplusgroupe.com/uploads/pressRelease/press_release_4537.pdf

Canal+ group press release, 1 March 2018

Communiqué de presse du ministère de la Culture, 7 mars 2018

http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Presse/Communiques-de-presse/Coupure-de-l-acces-a-TF1-sur-l-offre-TNT-Sat

Ministry of Culture press release, 7 March 2018

Communiqué de presse du groupe Canal +, 10 mars 2018,

http://www.canalplusgroupe.com/uploads/pressRelease/press_release_4561.pdf

Canal+ group press release, 10 March 2018

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