[FR] CSA issues stern warning to LCI following debate on vaccine trials in Africa

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Amélie Blocman
Légipresse

In a press release issued on 14 April, the French national audiovisual regulatory authority (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel – CSA) wrote: "During this severe health crisis, a time when questions, the need for information and issues surrounding social cohesion are more important than ever, the media carry enormous responsibility. This requires them to be vigilant at all times in view of the serious risk of misinformation and to be particularly rigorous in the presentation and processing of information, including in visual illustrations." This stern warning was issued after the audiovisual regulator was contacted by a large number of TV viewers following the broadcast of a debate during the programme 'LCI info' on 1 April 2020. During the debate, a researcher from the French medical research institute (Inserm) and a head of department from a Paris hospital had discussed the advisability of conducting clinical trials in Africa to assess the use of the BCG vaccination to prevent COVID-19 infections. This had provoked numerous reactions and strong emotions at both national and international levels.

After analysing all of the footage, the CSA noted that the programme's presenter had failed to react to or ask for an explanation of the abrupt, questionable comments made by one of the speakers. This demonstrated a lack of control by the broadcaster, as defined in its licence. In view of the nature and characteristics of the topic discussed, the CSA also thought that the subject matter had not been dealt with sufficiently carefully. It therefore warned LCI not to repeat the offence.

Nevertheless, the CSA welcomed "the very strong commitment shown by all audiovisual media, whether public or private, national or local, and editorial staff in their efforts to fulfil their remit to disseminate information despite the huge difficulties they are currently facing."

Communiqué du CSA, 14 avril 2020

https://www.csa.fr/Informer/Espace-presse/Communiques-de-presse/Communique-de-presse

CSA press release, 14 April 2020

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