[FR] CNews fined EUR 50 000 for breaching obligation to exercise honesty and rigour in the presentation and processing of information

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In a decision of 17 January 2024, the *Autorité de régulation de la communication audiovisuelle et numérique* (the French audiovisual regulator – ARCOM) fined the CNews television channel EUR 50 000 for breaching its obligations to exercise honesty and rigour in the presentation and processing of information and to ensure that different viewpoints are expressed on controversial issues. During the programme *Face à l'info* broadcast on 26 September 2022, reference was made to an international ranking of the world's safest cities published by the website Numbeo, which collects data from its users. The programme presenter introduced the subject by saying: "All this is happening in the context of a decline in security in France. France is ranked bottom of all European countries … France is descending into a state of insecurity: reactions?" All the pundits in the studio then expressed similar views, while a banner appeared on the screen with the words "*Insécurité en France: le grand déclassement*" [Insecurity in France: the big decline].

Since the rankings that were described had no scientific basis whatsoever and were not based on official data, the broadcaster should have exercised caution rather than presenting them as established facts. Neither the detailed methodology behind the rankings nor its shortcomings were mentioned on air. The information was therefore presented in a manner that led viewers to believe that the rankings were based on established figures, which was not the case.

Furthermore, the people present in the studio all bemoaned France's place in the rankings and agreed that France, and Paris in particular, were more dangerous than other cities and countries in the world. As a result, there was a clear imbalance in the discussion of the subject, especially as it was based solely on a questionable list of rankings that had been presented as a proven fact. Insecurity is a highly sensitive topic of general public interest. It raises controversial questions and therefore requires broadcasters to ensure that different viewpoints are expressed. ARCOM therefore concluded that the broadcaster had infringed Article 2-3-7 of its licence agreement and Article 1 of the audiovisual regulator's decision of 18 April 2018, which required broadcasters to ensure that different

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viewpoints were expressed on controversial issues.

Décision n° 2024-43 du 17 janvier 2024 portant sanction pécuniaire à l'encontre de la Société d'exploitation d'un service d'information (SESI)

https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/download/pdf?id=teMfyg7X5c4QpZf9347_Q-PkObGgr_40PWvP0zRxzaw=

Decision No. 2024-43 of 17 January 2024 fining the Société d'exploitation d'un service d'information (SESI)

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