

06

Dec 2018

▲ Lvl. 2

Resolved

France

Alert created on: 12 Nov 2015

Programme Cancellation and Dismissal Threats Within the French Channel Canal+

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY  ▶ Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, Index

On 23 September 2015, the collective "Informing is not a crime," Civil Society of Multimedia Authors (SCAM), Association of Albert Londres Prize, "editorial watchdogs" from 13 media companies, the National Union of Journalists (SNJ) and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published an open letter for the Superior Council of the French Audiovisual (CSA) on the eve of the hearing of Vincent Bolloré, Chairman of the Vivendi Supervisory Board. Vincent Bolloré is a majority shareholder of the Vivendi Group and owner of the Canal+ television group. The signatories of the open letter believe that the "principle of the media editorial independence was trampled on many occasions by the main shareholder of Canal+ Group, Vincent Bolloré." Two documentaries of Canal+, one devoted to Crédit Mutuel and the other to Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande, have been cancelled for no apparent reason. A report on the Olympic of Marseille for the show "Enquêtes de foot" has been removed from the website. A documentary on BNP Paribas, validated by the Investigative Committee of Canal+, seems to be currently frozen. After expressing concerns about the editorial independence of the channel, two members of the Editorial Board (Deputy Editor of the magazine "Special Investigations", Jean-Baptiste Rivoire, and Director of "Zapping", Patrick Menais) were called to "a preliminary interview of a possible dismissal". This procedure was suspended at the last moment.

RESOLVED

06 Dec 2018: In May 2017, the dismissal of Patrick Menais, former director of "Zapping" on Canal +, was nullified by the Minister of Labour. In April 2018, Vincent Bolloré left his position as chairman of the supervisory board of Canal Plus. On 6 December 2018, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

UPDATES

10 May 2017: On 10 May 2017, the 2016 dismissal for "gross misconduct" of Patrick Menais, former director of "Zapping" on Canal +, was nullified by the Minister of Labour.

- ➔ Article published by Le Monde: " Licencierement du créateur du « Zapping » : El Khomri donne tort à Canal+"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ➔ Canal+ channel's agreement with the High Audiovisual Council
- ➔ Law n° 2016-1524 on the strengthening of media freedom, independence and pluralism, 14 November 2016
- ➔ Statement by Reporters Without Borders: "Bolloré devant le CSA: Les questions qui dérangent"
- ➔ Statement by Index: "France: Vincent Bolloré's takeover of Canal Plus sparks concern for press freedom"
- ➔ Article by Nouvel Observateur: "Zapping, Guignols... : Bolloré et les limites de la logique de "reencryptage" de Canal Plus"
- ➔ Article by Figaro: "Vincent Bolloré «piétine l'indépendance» de Canal+, les journalistes interpellent le CSA"
- ➔ Article by Libération: "En tuant l'esprit Canal, Bolloré met la chaîne en danger"
- ➔ Article by Point: "Canal+ : encore un coup de balai de Vincent Bolloré?"
- ➔ Article by Monde: "Vincent Bolloré, un magnat des médias qui assume avoir « le final cut »"

STATE REPLIES

 **09 Feb 2018** | Reply of the French authorities

- ➔ Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe (in French only)

RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS

28 Jun 2018 | Factsheet on Freedom of Expression and the Broadcasting Media

➔ **Overview of the ECHR case law and other relevant Council of Europe resources related to Freedom of Expression and the Broadcasting Media**

DISCLAIMER This section presents a non-exhaustive selection of CoE instruments and ECHR case-law. This information is not a legal assessment of the alert and should not be treated or used as such.