

28
Mar 2017

▲ Lvl. 2

Resolved

Belgium

n° 53/2015

Alert created on: 22 Jun 2015

Chief Editor Anne Brumagne Dismissed for Criticizing a Restructuring Plan that Puts Business above Journalism

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ

In Belgium, the regional Flemish government partly finances some independent news outlets focusing on local issues (including the free weekly “Brussels deze Week”) through the non-profit organisation Vlaams-Brusselse Media (VBM). The new CEO of VBM, Michel Tubbax, launched a restructuring plan that focused on business, marketing and advertising to the detriment of journalism. Anne Brumagne, chief editor of the free weekly “Brussel deze Week”, was dismissed in June 2015, after having criticised the lack of involvement of journalists in the internal decision process. The decision was taken in the absence of any editorial charter regulating journalists’ ethics and protecting the independence of the newsroom. Anne Brumagne had insisted on the necessity of such a charter. In the meantime, the restructuring plan has been partly postponed, and the CEO has been dismissed. But Anne Brumagne has not been reinstated in her job.

RESOLVED

28 Mar 2017: Given that an agreement settling the dispute was reached between Anne Brumagne and VBM, on 28 March 2017, the partner organisations of the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Article on the VVJ \(Flemish journalists’ association\) website \(in Flemish\)](#)
-  [Article in “Flanders Today” : ‘VBM staff “relieved and proud” as CEO is asked to step down’](#)

STATE REPLIES



11 May 2016 | Response from the Flemish Community

 **Letter from the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the Council of Europe**



29 Apr 2016 | Reply from the Government of Belgium

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