

Catalan Audiovisual Council Criteria with Regard to Religion as Shown on Television Entertainment Programmes¹

Barcelone, May 15th, 2002

1. Respect and promote religious freedom as a basic right arising from other fundamental rights.
2. Respect and promote religious freedom in its collective dimension as a positive social asset, which includes respect for all religious confessions and organisations, a matter also considered and recognised in the legal system.
3. Respect individual and collective feelings in such a way that symbols that are representative for people who profess a particular religious confession are not improperly used, even in a humorous tone.
4. Respect religious pluralism, in the framework of universal values, fundamental rights and coexistence in a democracy and different public attitudes in relation to atheism and agnosticism.
5. Act with particular responsibility and rigour in the event of expressions that could lead to discrimination based on religious reasons.
6. Apply the principle of equal treatment to all confessions, independently of their sociological incidence.

7. Accept that in exercising freedom of speech -understood as the broadcasting of personal and subjective judgments, opinions, beliefs or thought- public personalities or well-known people should accept that activities in exercising positions and functions are subject to the scrutiny of public opinion and that value judgements are thus made in relation to these actions.
8. Accept that legitimate criticism in affairs of public interest includes matters that may disturb, worry or be unpleasant to a particular set of people.
9. Do not allow formally injurious expressions or names unconnected with legitimate criticism or unnecessary to the message to be spread, by reason of freedom of speech, if they may result in unjustified damage to the renown of religious institutions or the dignity of the people who represent them.
10. Given that our society is increasingly plural, heterogeneous, multicultural and secular, operators should be aware of the establishment of ethical codes, of the attitude to adopt with regard to the treatment of beliefs or religious symbols in entertainment programmes and the repercussion and scope this attitude might have on the public.

Note

1. On March 5th and 6th, 2009, the CAC and the Autonomous University of Barcelona's Department of Public Law and Historical-Legal Sciences organised a seminar entitled, "Media and Religious Pluralism.". The aim of the latter was to analyse the regulatory challenges and the legal debates surrounding religious freedom in the public audiovisual sphere, specifically taking into account various positive initiatives in this area such as these *Criteria*, amongst others. The Catalan Audiovisual Council published the papers delivered at the seminar in Catalan (*Mitjans de comunicació i pluralisme religiós*) and in Spanish (*Medios de comunicación y pluralismo religioso*) (Barcelona, 2010).