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## ETHICS CHARTER FOR JOURNALISTS OF FRANCE MEDIAS MONDE

Having regard to the terms of reference of France Médias Monde, the previous Charters of RFI and France 24, national and international texts such as the Charter of Professional Ethics for French Journalists initially drafted in July 1918, revised in January 1938 and March 2011, the National Collective Labour Agreement for Journalists, extended to all media companies by decree of 2 February 1988, and the Declaration of Duties and Rights of Journalists (Munich Ethics Charter, 24 November 1971), the Law of 29 July 1881 on freedom of the press, the Law of 30 September 1986 on freedom of communication and the Law of 14 November 2016 on reinforcing the freedom, independence and pluralism of the media, this Charter was drafted jointly by the management bodies of France Médias Monde and the representative bodies of journalists (representative unions and journalists' societies).

The Committee on Honesty, Independence and Pluralism of Information and Programmes, defined below, was consulted for the drafting of this Charter.

The purpose of this Charter is to recall the essential principles relating to the ethics of journalists, such as the principles of independence, freedom, transparency, pluralism, honesty of information, pluralist expression of streams of thought and opinion, representation of the diversity of populations and the representation of women within programmes of services published by France Médias Monde. It aims to bring together in a single document these principles and values which guide employees of France Médias Monde.

France Médias Monde is a national public service broadcaster that respects the principle of editorial independence which guarantees freedom of information, a freedom that is necessary and essential to the foundation and functioning of any democracy.

France Médias Monde broadcasts its programmes in many languages. Its audience is located in France and the rest of the world. This specific aspect requires, on the one hand, that particular attention be paid to wordings and terms used on all broadcasting media (it is indeed necessary to prevent and avoid any potential misinterpretation or misunderstanding in the public mind, whatever the language of expression) and on the other hand to be vigilant with regard to the possible consequences of broadcasting its content in certain geographical areas of the world, including risks relating to the safety of individuals. The journalists and managers of France Médias Monde agree to comply with the principles set out in this Charter. Thus, in accordance with article 2 bis of the Law of 29 July 1881 on freedom of the press, an employment contract entered into between a professional journalist and France Médias Monde implies acceptance of this Charter. A copy will be provided to any journalist when they are recruited and to any journalist already employed by France Médias Monde, within three months of this Charter being adopted. Its aim is not to define a new disciplinary framework and it does not constitute an appendix to an employment contract.

The France Médias Monde Works Council is informed each year of the company's compliance with Article 2 bis of the aforementioned Law of 29 July 1881 on freedom of the press, the purpose of which is to protect journalists against any pressure that may be brought to bear on them when carrying out their professional duties.

The Committee on Honesty, Independence and Pluralism of Information and Programmes, composed of independent persons, is responsible for contributing to compliance with the principles of honesty, independence and pluralism of information and programmes recalled in this Charter. The terms and conditions of its operation will be determined by the terms of reference of France Médias Monde.

The members of this committee are appointed by the France Médias Monde Board of Directors, which works to ensure equal representation of men and women. This appointment is notified to the CSA [French Media Regulatory Authority].

It may intervene or be requested to intervene at any time by any person.

This Committee informs the CSA [French Media Regulatory Authority] and the governing bodies of France Médias Monde of any fact that may contravene these principles. It publishes its annual report.

## PROFESSIONAL TREATMENT OF INFORMATION

**The professional treatment of information requires compliance with the principles of integrity, impartiality and protection of journalists' sources.**

The professional treatment of information therefore requires:

- Promoting free access to all sources of information concerning public life and the right to freely investigate all facts that affect it;
- Proscribing all unfair and corrupt means of obtaining information. Should their safety, the security of their sources or the seriousness of the facts require them to withhold their status as a journalist, they will inform their hierarchy and explain this to the public at the earliest opportunity;
- Communicating the facts honestly, refraining from any fabrication, approximation, prejudice or manipulation; the journalist upholds critical thinking, truthfulness, accuracy, integrity, fairness and impartiality to be the cornerstones of journalism;
- Avoiding any risk of confusion in the public mind. Accuracy must always prevail and the content of any information (photos, images, etc.) must not be distorted;
- Carrying out all necessary checks to ensure the dissemination of accurate information to the public, whatever the demands for timeliness;
- If the accuracy of an item of information is not certain and editorial offices consider that its transmission to the public is nevertheless necessary, the information may be disseminated, where appropriate, with an indication of its source, and / or its conditional nature;
- Specifying clearly the origin of the elements used (images, visual or sound document, archives) when it is of an informative nature;
- Editing with discernment and honesty. Words, sounds, images, their meaning and scope must not be distorted or altered;
- Distinguishing between reported facts and interpretations or comments;
- Prioritising information and giving it its rightful place without exaggerating or minimising its significance and taking into account its usefulness and interest so that audiences understand events and their impact;
- Rejecting any incitement to crime, violence, hatred, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination, intolerance and stigmatisation. The possible dissemination of such statements will be assessed with a view to the need to communicate the information to the public. It will clearly mention the name of the author of the statements and the circumstances in which they were made;
- Respecting pluralism and balance between points of view. The treatment of information must be fair, honest and show the same level of standard and attention between various opinions and



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points of view that may be expressed on the same information in the context of respect for public order, human rights and human dignity;

- Ensuring the accurate presentation of guests on set (title, status, present and/or past appointment, etc.) in order to avoid any confusion.

## RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR DIGNITY

**France Médias Monde ensures that individuals and their dignity are respected. Through the manner in which it handles information and programmes broadcast on its channels, France Médias Monde is committed to combatting all forms of discrimination.**

Respecting individuals and their dignity entails in particular:

- Rejecting any insult, slander, defamation, or unfounded accusation.

It is appropriate to correct any published errors and respect the right of reply of those wishing to exercise it. If justified, the right of reply may be exercised, i.e. a journalist should accompany the reply or correction with new comments which may themselves give rise to a further right of reply;

- Respect for privacy.

Everyone has the right to privacy.

However, certain aspects of privacy may be disclosed without the consent of the person concerned, if the elements disclosed are related to current events and if such disclosure is necessary in the context of a subject of general interest;

- Respect for the presumption of innocence.

The presumption of innocence must be respected until a final decision is given; following a sentence, it is essential to mention either that an appeal has been lodged (appeal, appeal to the Supreme Court, appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, etc.) or that it is still open, where the limitation period has not expired.

As long as a sentence has not been handed down, the law prohibits the dissemination of images of handcuffed persons, even if they are handcuffed in blurred form, insofar as they are identified or identifiable. It is necessary to shrink the frame so that they are not visible;

- Respect for human pain, suffering and distress by avoiding any voyeurism or indiscretion in the presentation of victims of acts of war, violence or accidents of any kind (death of relatives, missing persons, families of hostages, etc.).

Particular attention must be paid to the announcement of events involving deaths. In particular, it is necessary to check beforehand that deaths have been confirmed by the family, a person in charge directly informed of the situation or by an authorised and reliable person (agent, official spokesperson, etc.). It is necessary to verify the source of the information to ensure that it is not simply a case of rumours circulating on other media or on social networks;

- Alerting the public when the need for information requires the dissemination of images or sounds that may offend their sensibilities;
- Ensuring the protection of minors and compliance with any specific legislation applicable to them.
- In the event of uncertainty concerning the application of these rules, journalists will refer the matter to their hierarchy.



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## **COVERAGE OF ACTS OF WAR, ATTACKS, ARMED VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS**

**France Médias Monde strives to reconcile the essential imperative of free information with other imperatives of general interest in the treatment of these acts:**

**- A specific internal process of control and validation of information before dissemination is established within each editorial office of France Médias Monde.**

**- During this type of event:**

- No image or sound that could undermine the safety, integrity or dignity of individuals must be broadcast.
- Journalists will refrain from having any contact with terrorists, hostage-takers or hostages, in order to avoid any risk of manipulation and in order not to compromise the safety of individuals and the progress of any investigation.

Any contact made with victims, witnesses or their relatives must be subject to particular vigilance so as not to compromise the safety of individuals.

- Any disclosure of information on air must be subject to particular vigilance, including any information relating to the identification of terrorists, hostage-takers or their modus operandi. The same precautions are required for the identification of victims.
- Particular care must be taken in broadcasting accounts gathered so as not to amplify facts or pass on any rumours and take into consideration the psychological state individuals.
- The broadcasting of images or sounds from amateur recordings must be accompanied by special precautions (systematic prior verification, contextualisation of the recording and broadcast).

**- Journalists will exercise increased vigilance when presenting terrorists on air:**

- Broadcasting conditions (especially multicasting) must be taken into account, in order to avoid any phenomenon that showcases and glorifies terrorist acts and their perpetrators.
- Journalists will avoid broadcasting any aspects of propaganda (images, sounds, vocabulary, etc.). In the event of any exception to this rule, it is necessary to contextualise them and specify their origin.



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## INDEPENDENCE AND RESPECT

France Médias Monde provides its journalists with the means to carry out their work independently and in accordance with the rules of the profession.

These include:

- Complying with:
  - The editorial line of the media they work for;
  - The opinion of their colleagues;
  - The choices of their hierarchy.
- Asserting the right to object accorded to journalists by Article 2 bis of the Law of 29 July 1881 on freedom of the press:
  - Claiming the right not to disclose the source of any information provided confidentially, free of charge and voluntarily, subject only to legal requirements;
  - Rejecting all external pressure or instructions and accepting editorial instructions only from editors;
  - Refusing to endorse any article or programme that has been modified against their will; withdrawing their endorsement if any modification has been made without their knowledge;
  - Refusing to carry out an act which is contrary to their professional convictions and not in compliance with this Charter;
- Rejecting any plagiarism;
- Working in coordination with those on the ground, correspondents or special correspondents, who sometimes operate in difficult conditions, particularly in conflict zones, and respecting their work constraints;
- Avoiding any situations that could compromise journalistic integrity under the influence of any political, economic, ideological, religious, social or cultural pressure groups;
- Refusing any payment, gift or benefit of any kind that may cast doubt as to the impartiality of the information;
- Refusing any work which amounts, even indirectly, to advertising and propaganda.

France Médias Monde journalists must be aware that they may be perceived as representatives of the company, including when they are interviewed or invited to take part in a debate. It is imperative in these situations that they ensure that they comply with professional and ethical rules and do not compromise their credibility and violate their company's values in relation to ethics, independence and impartiality.



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## PRECAUTIONS IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

France Médias Monde journalists may likewise be perceived as the company's representatives when they publish on blogs, forums, social networks and any space dedicated to the public exchange of information. Indeed, the presence of journalists on these networks engages the company's image and its responsibility. It is therefore imperative that journalists ensure, also within this context, that they comply with professional and ethical rules, and that they do not compromise their credibility and do not violate their company's values in relation to ethics, independence and impartiality in these environments. Some recommendations are provided to this end:

### **Under what identity?**

- If journalists wish to be active on a social network, in a professional capacity and / or using an account attached to the company, they will inform their hierarchy;  
Journalists on social networks in a professional capacity must clearly identify themselves and indicate the position they hold within France Médias Monde. In any event, they remain responsible for anything they publish using this account;
- If journalists wish to express themselves in a private capacity on a social network, they must create a personal account which is explicitly separate from their professional account. However, journalists should remember that their person and their position are often inseparable: special care should therefore be taken. To avoid any confusion, it is strongly recommended to add the statement "*Any statements published do not reflect the position of France 24, RFI, MCD*" or similar wording.

### **Recommended conduct:**

- Journalists will refrain from any comments that could harm the image of their media.
- Journalists will remain loyal to their media. They may not disseminate any information that could harm the company or its employees. They will alert their hierarchy if they become aware that their media or any colleagues working for it are attacked or accused on social networks.
- Journalists must be careful not to spread or endorse any rumours or unconfirmed information, for example by republishing them or creating any link to information. Particular vigilance is required before posting, reposting or sharing any status or comment or any still or moving image on any type of social network.
- Journalists must reserve any exclusive information gathered in the course of their work for their media and therefore publish it first on their media's official accounts. However, they are free to publish on their personal accounts any personal notes, specific information on their field of specialisation or regarding current events in general.



## ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

France Médias Monde has an Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman ensures compliance with professional ethics. They are the intermediary between the public and the editorial staff of France Médias Monde.

The Ombudsman's main task is to deal with correspondence from the public. They thus contribute to the establishment of good relations between the public and France Médias Monde.

The Ombudsman gathers any comments, complaints, criticisms or claims concerning the content broadcast by France Médias Monde and is responsible for responding to them along with the managing editors and journalists concerned.

The Ombudsman may freely decide to follow up on requests submitted to them and, with the agreement of the parties, make their opinion public.

The Ombudsman is independent:

- Their opinion is advisory;
- They are neither a representative of the management nor a spokesperson for the company.

The Ombudsman may, if they see fit, refer a specific case or a question of general interest to the Committee relating to the Honesty, Independence and Pluralism of Information and Programmes.

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Signed in Issy les Moulineaux on **12 JULY 2017**

In two original copies,

Between:

**The Company FRANCE MEDIAS MONDE**, represented by:

Its Chief Executive Officer: Marie-Christine Saragosse

The Director of RFI: Cécile Mégie

The Director of MCD: Souad El Tayeb

The Director of France 24: Marc Saikali

The Ombudsman of France Médias Monde: Jean-Pierre Constantin

**The representative trade union organisations in the company**, listed below:

On behalf of the CFDT: Ludovic Dunod

On behalf of the CFTC: Rabya Oussibrahim

On behalf of the CGT: Sabine Mellet – SNJ-CGT

On behalf of FO: Maria Afonso

On behalf of the SNJ: Nina Desesquelle

**The Journalists' societies**, listed below:

On behalf of the SDJ of France 24: Alexandra Renard

On behalf of the SDJ of RFI: Anne Cantener