

# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

## COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (84) 3

### OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON PRINCIPLES ON TELEVISION ADVERTISING

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 23 February 1984  
at the 367th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the ideals and principles which are their common heritage ;

Bearing in mind the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ;

Recalling its commitment to the freedom of expression and the free flow of information and ideas as embodied, *inter alia*, in its Declaration of 29 April 1982 ;

Conscious that the electronic media enable a contribution of growing importance to be made towards communication and better understanding between individuals and peoples ;

Aware that the development of new technologies, particularly involving the use of satellites, has made it more urgent to arrive at common European principles in the field of advertising on television ;

Noting that member states adopt different attitudes towards advertising on television ;

Conscious of the importance which advertising may have for the financing of the media ;

Aware of the impact of television advertising on the attitudes and behaviour of the public ;

Considering the importance of the portrayal of women and men by the media, particularly in television advertisements ;

Mindful of the importance of securing the interests of the public in relation to advertising ;

Welcoming the fact that codes of ethics and good advertising practice have been adopted on a voluntary basis by advertising organisations and professionals both on a national and an international basis ;

Taking into account the independence of broadcasting organisations in matters of programming,

Recommends that the governments of member states :

*a.* satisfy themselves that the principles set out below concerning advertising on television are respected, and

*b.* to that end give these principles the widest possible circulation both to the competent bodies and to members of the public.

## *Principles*

The following principles apply to television advertising, especially when transmitted by satellite :

### *I. General principle*

1. Advertisements should be prepared with a sense of responsibility towards society, and give particular attention to the moral values which form the basis of every democratic society and are common to all member states, such as individual liberty, tolerance and respect for the dignity and equality of all human beings.

### *II. Content*

2. All advertisements should be fair, honest, truthful and decent.

3. Advertisers should comply with the law applicable in the country of transmission and, depending on the proportion of the audience which is in another country, should take due account of the law of that country.

4. Utmost attention should be given to the possible harmful consequences that might result from advertisements concerning tobacco, alcohol, pharmaceutical products and medical treatments and to the possibility of limiting or even prohibiting advertisements in these fields.

5. Advertisements addressed to or using children should avoid anything likely to harm their interests and should respect their physical, mental and moral personality.

### *III. Form and presentation*

6. Advertisements, whatever their form, should always be clearly identifiable as such.

7. Advertising should be clearly separated from programmes ; neither advertisements nor the interests of advertisers should influence programme content in any way.

8. Advertisements should preferably be grouped and scheduled in such a way as to avoid prejudice to the integrity and value of programmes or their natural continuity.

9. The amount of time allowed for advertising should neither be excessive nor detract from the function of television as a medium of information, education, social and cultural development and entertainment.

10. No subliminal advertisements should be permitted.