



PRESS RELEASE

01.09.2018

AFP COMMITS TO BETTER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN ITS PRODUCTION

NEW GUIDELINES ON COVERAGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND INCREASED USE OF WOMEN EXPERT SOURCES ARE AMONG THE TOPICS INCLUDED IN A SET OF INITIATIVES LAUNCHED BY AFP'S GLOBAL NEWS DIRECTOR MICHÈLE LÉRIDON, AIMED AT IMPROVING THE WAY WOMEN ARE REPRESENTED IN THE AGENCY'S CONTENT.

Last May, AFP's Global News Director assigned journalists Aurélia End and Pauline Talagrand to write a report on the way women are represented in the text, photo, video and infographics content produced by the Agency every day.

In their report, the two authors emphasised that while AFP had no reason to be ashamed of its production, there was nevertheless room for improvement.

Based on a number of recommendations contained in the report, the global news director has issued rules and guidelines to editorial staff.

A specific item reminding editorial staff to ensure that AFP content reflects social diversity is to be added to the Agency's ethics charter, the document that outlines AFP's fundamental principles and ethical standards. Another new item will concern the coverage of violence against women in various parts of the world, with special emphasis on ensuring that coverage respects the victims of such violence.

The new stylebook, which is being finalised, will contain several sections relating to this topic. Clear rules will be established regarding the use of gender or gender-neutral forms in titles and occupations depending on the language, the coverage of domestic violence, the use of a broader range of sources – with a greater emphasis on women experts and analysts – and the need to exercise increased vigilance on social networks. The stylebook will also stipulate that descriptions of people's physical appearance and clothing, as well as references to their marital status, should not be applied only to women.

To facilitate the implementation of these measures, a training session on coverage of crimes will be organised, with a section dealing specifically with violence against women. A half-day awareness session on how women are represented in the media and a round table discussion at AFP with prominent women (experts in various fields, elected officials, etc.) are also planned.

"These measures should increase women's visibility, both quantitatively and qualitatively," said Global News Director Michèle Léridon. "They are also aimed at improving the quality of our content: diversifying our sources and providing more context about a story can only enrich our production."

These improvements "also respond to the expectations of our clients, specifically radio and television stations who are under an obligation to diversify their sources and strive for a better balance in terms of their guests," she said.

About AFP:

AFP is a global news agency delivering fast, accurate, in-depth coverage of the events shaping our world from conflicts to politics, economics, sports, entertainment and the latest breakthroughs in health, science and technology. With 2,300 staff spread across almost every country, AFP covers the world 24 hours a day in six languages. AFP delivers the news in video, text, photos, multimedia and graphics to a wide range of customers including newspapers and magazines, radio and TV channels, web sites and portals, mobile operators, corporate clients as well as public institutions.

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