

The image of women and men in Advertising in Belgium

The study analyses the contents of Advertising and how they are received by consumers as well as the literature on the negative effects of some advertising images. It also presents channels by which consumers can complain about the image of women and men conveyed through advertising. Moreover, it explains how the Jury on Ethical Advertising treats complaints. Finally, it suggests a number of ways to take further the debate and the existing legislative and policy framework.

Key information on EU or National policies/legislation on women's' representation in advertisement:

The fourth chapter of this study is the results of an opinion survey that was carried out at the end of 2008 among representatives of the sector of communication and marketing and of that of equal opportunities. Respondents to this survey were also asked to discuss possible solutions for the problem of women's and men's representation in Advertising. It offers a discussion of alternatives such as legislation and/or autodiscipline, or other policy initiatives such as the award of an official prize to an advertisement conveying a positive gender image and message or the training of consumers as to how women and men are represented through advertising language and techniques. The fifth chapter concentrates on how the Jury on Ethical Advertising (Jury d'Ethique Publicitaire - JEP) treats complaints. The sixth chapter analyses the deontological code and the autodiscipline code that the JEP applies whenever it needs to take a decision with respect to complaints about the representation of women, men, girls and boys in advertising. The final chapter of the study can also be situated at the level of policy-making as it suggests a number of ways to take further the debate and the existing legislative and policy framework.

Key information on trends and challenges on women and the media:

In the first chapter of this study a documentary analysis is done of the contents of Advertising and how they are received and evaluated by consumers. The second chapter analyses the (mainly Anglo-Saxon) literature on the negative effects that some advertising images may have on women and men. The third chapter presents the channels by which consumers can complain about the image of women and men conveyed through advertising. It also analyses the nature and importance of their dissatisfaction. The fourth chapter is devoted to the results of an opinion survey that was carried out at the end of 2008 among representatives of the sector of communication and marketing and of that of equal opportunities.

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