

G-Regs™

Belgium – JEP: Depiction of People

**A: Representation / Depiction of Persons (JEP – 1976 – 2002)**

In a document prepared in 1976 under the title: “Advertising and the Human Being”, the Jury of Advertising Ethics (JEP: Jury d’Ethique Publicitaire/ De Jury voor Ethische Praktijken inzake Reclame) had made various recommendations on the representation (depiction / image) of man, woman or child.

After careful thought and with the approval of the Advertising Council, the Jury (JEP) adapted and supplemented these recommendations in 2002 to take account of social evolution.

Respect for the human person / being is a fundamental ethical principle.

The Jury of Advertising Ethics therefore urges advertisers, advertising agencies and media which carry advertising to ensure compliance with the following recommendations, based primarily on the ICC International Code of Advertising Practice¹ and accompanied by explanatory comments.

They concern men, women and children.

1. Every advertisement should be prepared with a due sense of social responsibility and cannot be such as to impair public confidence in advertising (Art. 1 ICC Code)
2. Advertisements should not contain statements or visual presentations which offend prevailing standards of decency (Art. 2 ICC Code)
 - *Depending on the feeling / sensitivity of society at a given time, the public audience exposed to the advertising, the social or cultural contexts, and its evolution as well as the validity (currency / relevance), it is desirable that the advertising does not devalue or abuse the human being which, by spreading an image infringing their dignity and decency, is likely to shock or even offend the public. In this regard, it is appropriate to pay attention to the tone of the messages and their visual presentation.*
 - *The representation of the human body in whole or part, cannot be of an indecent or obscene nature. Special care must be taken when the representation (depiction) of the human body is unrelated to the product and its objective and subjective characteristics. When advertising uses nudity, particular efforts shall be made to ensure that its representation cannot be regarded as demeaning and alienating.*
3. Advertisements should not condone any form of discrimination, including that based upon race, national origin, religion, sex or age, nor should they in any way undermine human dignity (Art. 4.1 ICC Code)
 - Thus, the following should be avoided:
 - *Generating contempt, disrepute or ridicule regardless of the ethnic, social, professional, economic or demographic group to which a person belongs*
 - *Exploiting, promoting or developing pejorative (disparaging / derogatory) comparisons based on the sex, age, race, nationality, social or professional status of individuals. Advertising cannot ignore the skills, aspirations and roles of various human and social categories.*

¹ Most recent version is the ICC Consolidated Code of Advertising and Marketing Practice 2011 <http://www.iccwbo.org/Data/Policies/2011/ICC-Consolidated-Code-of-Advertising-and-Marketing-2011-English/>
URL of source:

French version: http://www.jep.be/media/pdf/regles_recommandations/voorstelling_persoon_fr.pdf

Dutch version: http://www.jep.be/media/a.voorstelling_van_de_persoon_jep_1976_2002.pdf

- *Likewise, endorsing the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of a person because of their affiliation to a social group, or even promoting, directly or indirectly, feelings or behaviours of exclusion, intolerance or racism, should be avoided*
4. Advertisers must be aware at all times to changing moral values and avoid contributing to the perpetuation (protraction/ continuance) of social prejudices or stereotypical images that run contrary to changing conditions in society (societal development) or ideas accepted by large segments of the population.
- *This is why using stereotypes, referring to characters intended to be representative of a social, ethnic group etc. must make particular efforts to comply with the principles developed in these Guidelines.*
 - *It is necessary to avoid inducing a sense of submission or dependence devaluing the individual / human being or presenting in a complacent manner a situation of domination or exploitation of a person by another.*
5. Advertisements should not appear to condone or incite violence, nor to encourage unlawful or reprehensible behaviour (Art. 4.3 ICC Code)
- *Gratuitous use of violence, direct or implied and any incitement to violence whether physical or psychological should be avoided. The concept of violence covers at least all illegal, unlawful and reprehensible activities provided for in current legislation. Direct violence translates into (results in) the representation of the act of violence itself; implied violence means an atmosphere, indeed a context resulting in an act of violence; psychological violence includes, in particular, dominating behaviour patterns and harassment (psychological or sexual)*
 - *Advertising shall not under any circumstances trivialise violence through statements or presentations.*

URL of source:

French version: http://www.jep.be/media/pdf/regles_recommandations/voorstelling_persoon_fr.pdf

Dutch version: http://www.jep.be/media/a.voorstelling_van_de_persoon_jep_1976_2002.pdf