

BBC World News broadcast apology

10 February 2012

In November 2011 the Editorial Standards Committee of the BBC Trust upheld various breaches of the Editorial Guidelines on conflicts of interest and/or the Sponsorship Guidelines with respect to several programmes broadcast on BBC World News which were acquired for low or nominal costs.

The original finding can be found at:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/appeals/esc_bulletins/2011/world_news.pdf

In January 2012 the Committee considered whether it wished to ask the Executive to take any further remedial action following the Committee's finding. The Committee welcomed the appropriateness and the effectiveness of the Executive's actions in response to the breaches identified in the Committee's finding. It agreed that given the serious nature of the breaches an on-air apology to the audience was appropriate.

The apology will be broadcast at on Saturday 11 February 2012 on BBC World News at: 0356 GMT; 1156 GMT; 1856 GMT; and 2356 GMT.

It reads as follows:

"A small number of programmes broadcast on BBC World News between February 2009 and July 2011 broke BBC rules aimed at protecting our editorial integrity. These rules ensure that programmes are free, and are seen to be free, from commercial or other outside pressures. Three current affairs programmes were sponsored, which is not allowed. Three other programmes were partly sponsored by external organisations with a direct interest in the subject matter and this too broke our rules. In one other programme, the financial relationship between the sponsor and the production company was acceptable but was not made clear enough to viewers.

In the case of eight other programmes, all of which featured Malaysia, we found that the production company which made the programmes appeared to have a financial relationship with the Malaysian Government. This meant there was a potential conflict of interest, though the BBC was not aware of it when the programmes were broadcast.

None of the programmes breached the BBC guidelines on impartiality and none of the BBC's news bulletins was affected.

Editorial integrity is the highest priority for BBC World News, which is why we apologise for these breaches of our normal standards.

For the Trust's full finding and information on action taken by the BBC please go to the BBC Trust's website at www.bbc.co.uk/trust.