



## 1. TELECOMS & MEDIA

# Sipromad vs Euronews (Africanews) first hearing scheduled for 14 September in Paris

Last October, the Malagasy group owned by Ylias Akbaraly filed a lawsuit against Naguib Sawris' television company at the Paris Commercial Court concerning its aborted takeover of Euronews' African subsidiary.

09/09/2020 at 15h21, by Gaëlle Arenson

At this first hearing, Sipromad, which is being defended by **Renaud Semerdjan** and **Christophe Ayela** from **STAS et Associés**, will present its case. The group, which was looking to enter the media industry following its takeover of French broadcasting company Thomson Broadcast (now renamed **Phenixya**) a few years ago, believes it was "deceived" by **Euronews** representatives. The Madagascar group is seeking damages in court, claiming that "serious cover-ups on their part" constituted fraud, and caused the takeover project to fail.

At the heart of Sipromad's argument is a letter dated 2 October 2019, sent to the group by the Congolese Minister of Communication and Media and government spokesman **Thierry Mougalla**. In this correspondence, Mougalla was surprised not to have been informed of the proposed sale and explained that "with regard to the agreements that bind us [editor's note: The Republic of Congo] and the company Euronews, the latter does not have the right to transfer the company Africanews without our prior consent, in the absence of which any transfer may be cancelled."

However, our sources tell us that the defence, represented by **Dominique Bordes** and **Caroline Wassermann**, will argue that the same minister then declared on at least two occasions on July 11 that the Congo "does not have, and still does not have, the means to prevent a possible sale. Congo cannot be blamed for the failure of this sale."

On 12 May, he told *Jeune Afrique Business+*: "given the operator Africanews' difficulties, Congo has never opposed any sale whatsoever and remains available to study all potential options that might arise."