

STATEMENT BY THE ACT, CRTV, COBA, EGTA, AND VPRT ON THE REVIEW OF THE AVMS DIRECTIVE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRUSSELS, 27 February 2017. Europe’s commercial broadcasters warn that proposed changes to the AVMS Directive are a step backwards that risks damaging growth, audience choice and investment in European content, instead of delivering the Commission’s stated aim of fostering Europe’s digital economy.

When the European Commission embarked on the current review, vice president Andrus Ansip pledged to enable audiovisual companies “to be the powerhouses in the digital economy, not weigh them down with unnecessary rules.”¹ But instead of deregulation, current proposals will increase restrictions - jeopardising investment in European content, increasing unfair competition with online players, and undermining the freedom to broadcast.

European broadcasters are already responsible for the majority of commercial investment in European content, pay significant taxes and provide highly regulated services that are subject to robust audience protections, particularly for minors. The review of the AVMS Directive is a once-in-a-decade opportunity to promote media plurality and diversity in the broadcasting sector; to help European broadcasters compete with less regulated global online players and to innovate in response to changing audience demands; and to maximise their investment in European content and the creation of European jobs. However, it is instead set to represent a step backwards.

Specifically, proposed amendments would:

- Limit broadcasters’ freedom to provide channels to EU audiences by undermining common rules that apply irrespective of where a channel is based and creating unnecessary uncertainty in establishment criteria. This risks damaging choice and plurality especially in smaller markets and all but destroying the Country of Origin principle on a practical level (Articles 2, 3, 4, 9).
- Restrict the main revenue source for broadcasting companies by introducing new advertising constraints while maintaining outdated legacy provisions. This will limit broadcasters’ ability to react to consumer demand for high-quality content and effectively compete with less regulated global online players (Articles 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 23).
- Introduce strict financial requirements such as levies on broadcasters’ linear and non-linear services. This will apply to broadcasters who are already among the biggest investors in European content, and prevent channels from taking an innovative approach to funding content in response to changing audience demand (Article 13).

Europe’s broadcasting sector has been a success story over the ten-year lifetime of the current AVMS Directive, steadily increasing investment in European content, jobs and the number of channels that EU citizens can choose from. As European broadcasting associations with members across the EU, we urge politicians and policy makers to ensure our sector’s competitive strength in the long term by delivering on the original stated aim of this review “to create a fairer environment for all players.”²

ENDS

¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1873_en.htm

² http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1873_en.htm

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SIGNATORIES

About the Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT)

The Association of Commercial Television in Europe represents the interests of leading commercial broadcasters in 37 European countries. The ACT member companies finance, produce, promote and distribute content and services benefiting millions of Europeans across all platforms. A healthy and sustainable commercial broadcasting sector that plays an important role in Europe's economy, society and culture. For more information please consult www.acte.be

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About the Commercial Broadcasters Association (COBA)

The Commercial Broadcasters Association (COBA) is the industry body for UK multichannel broadcasters in the digital, cable and satellite television sector, and their on-demand services. COBA members operate a wide variety of channels, including news, factual, children's, music, arts, entertainment, sports and comedy. Their content is available on free-to-air and pay-TV platforms, as well as on-demand. www.coba.org.uk

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About Confindustria Radio Televisioni (CRTV)

Confindustria Radio Televisioni (CRTV) is the association of the Italian radio and television broadcasters. Established in 2013 CRTV includes Italy's major national broadcasters among its members: Discovery Italy, Elemedia (Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso), Giglio Group, HSE24, La7, Mediaset, Persidera, Prima TV, Qvc Italy, Radio Italia, RAI, Rete Blu, RTL 102.5 Hit Radio, Tivù, Viacom International Media Networks Italy. Major local TV and radio broadcasters are also members of CRTV through the Association of Local Televisions and the Association of Local Radios FRT. All the major categories of Italy's broadcasting industry are represented in CRTV: public and private broadcasters, national and local, platforms and network operators.

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About the European association of Television and Radio Sales houses (egta)

egta is the media trade body for television and radio advertising, representing 137 companies in Europe and beyond. egta members come from both public and private sectors and cover respectively 75% and 50% of the total TV and radio ad spend in Europe, thus playing a fundamental role in the sustainable funding of the European audiovisual and radio industries.

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About VPRT

VPRT represents commercial broadcasting and audiovisual companies in Germany. With their TV, radio, online and mobile offerings, its approximately 150 members enhance Germany's media landscape in terms of diversity, creativity and innovation. To ensure a vibrant audiovisual media landscape in the digital world, VPRT helps shaping favourable regulatory, technological and economic parameters. As a trade association, we support our companies in their dialogue with politicians and market partners in order to achieve this goal – at both a national and EU level.

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