

BROADCASTERS CALL FOR MEDIA/DEMOCRACY ACTION PLANS TO ENSURE INVESTMENT IN CONTENT, MEDIA PLURALISM & TRUSTWORTHY NEWS

BRUSSELS, 3 DECEMBER 2020. Commercial Broadcasters welcome the opportunity to engage with the Commission’s European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP) and Europe’s Media in the Digital Decade Action Plan (EMDDAP). Both proposals have at their heart the desire to sustain and grow Europe’s media ecosystem, an objective shared by broadcasters and the European creative economy as a whole. Legal certainty on the business drivers and a commitment to a level playing field should be the priority for any recovery strategy.

As commercial broadcasters, our core business is to serve customers across Europe and the world. Our members have actively developed in the past decades hundreds of linear, non-linear, OTT, VOD and catch up services in and across Europe. We are proud to be one of the key sectors to drive investments in digital transformation; financing this drive on our own revenues while facing severe and unprecedented anti-competitive conducts in the online environment. As fully regulated businesses, we have made significant contributions to enriching media pluralism and diversity, developing trusted news and respecting the drivers of investment in European content. To do this requires an ecosystem of services. This is not fragmentation but a value chain that produces and distributes work to cater for cultural diversity. This complex balance is vital to the success of the Creative and Cultural Industries, a priority industrial ecosystem. The expectations is therefore for a coherent set of policies across the various forthcoming proposals. The objective remains to deliver the industrial strategy the Commission has called for and the ACT has supported. A Robust, Reliable and Responsible framework¹.

Both proposals set out numerous actions to be developed with special attention to the needs of funding and cooperation between actors of the chain. Commercial broadcasters looks forward to engaging with the Commission in all dialogues to ensure that these plans will support investment in content, media pluralism and trustworthy news.

ACT will specifically want to highlight the ongoing importance of territoriality – which is key to refinancing audiovisual content - as part of upcoming discussions on the EMDDAP. To this effect we welcome the results of the Review of the unjustified geo-blocking Regulation that has concluded that legitimate geo-blocking of AV content should remain out of the scope of services covered. This is a very positive development supported by ACT and 50 leading associations from the AV sector². The ecosystem calls for solutions that support territoriality and deliver circulation of works with market led solutions such as co-productions to share costs and risks, secure exclusive rights, reduce consumer costs and increase consumer interest. The principles of territoriality and exclusivity continue to be the central to investment. We are grateful that the Council, in its [latest conclusions on Safeguarding media pluralism](#), is rightly directing the Commission to uphold these principles³.

Regarding the EDAP, we commend the Commission’s intention to place the onus on the heart of the news, namely the safety of journalists. We also support the Commission’s drive to upgrade the Code of Practice on Online disinformation and tackle political advertising to ensure it delivers on transparency, oversight and incentives. We welcome the introduction of “coregulatory backstop” in the DSA and the setup of a multi-stakeholder and structured dialogue to drive better results in the fight against online disinformation.

Crucially, issues of disinformation cannot be addressed while digital platforms avoid responsibility for content they surface, promote and profit from on their platforms. We therefore, look forward to seeing the Commission’s DSA and DMA proposals and to better understand how these will complement the EDAP and EMDDAP to further the Commission’s overall ambition to address disinformation and harmful content online.

¹ [ACT Blueprint for EU Media Policy 2019 - 2020](#)

² [Joint Statement co-signed by 50 AV organisations](#), 30 November 2020. *Film/Audiovisual sector welcomes EC review of unjustified geoblocking in line with latest studies supporting territoriality. Calls for an AV Action Plan that boosts European cooperation on financing and distribution, including through co-productions, to increase circulation of content.*

³ [See ACT Press Release on Council conclusions on Safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system](#) approved by written procedure on 27 November 2020.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCIAL TELEVISION IN EUROPE (ACT)

ACT member companies finance, produce, promote and distribute content and services benefiting millions of Europeans across all platforms. At ACT we believe that the healthy and sustainable commercial broadcasting sector has an important role to play in Europe’s economy, society and cultures. For further enquiries: Greg Polad | Director General | gp@acte.be

