



Brussels, 3 December 2020

Press Release

Media regulators adopt new framework for cooperation to strengthen cross-border law enforcement

At its December plenary meeting, ERGA took stock of its work in 2020 and laid the groundwork for its activities in 2021.

National regulatory authorities have agreed on common principles and rules on how to ensure the cross-border enforcement of media rules on audiovisual media services and video-sharing platforms. A result of the work in 2020, the new ERGA Memorandum of Understanding was adopted by ERGA members (and by the national authorities of the European Economic Area, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein) today. The adoption marked a highlight of the 14th plenary of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) which took place as a digital conference on 3 December 2020.

The ERGA Memorandum of Understanding is a testimony of audiovisual regulators' convergent will to take joint action and work towards a democratic climate and a level playing field in the media sector. It will provide ERGA members with a new instrument to overcome the challenges of an increasingly convergent and borderless media environment.

"If we in Europe do not confidently defend our constitutional freedom through the rule of law, then no one does", said Dr Tobias Schmid, Chair of ERGA, at the beginning of the meeting. "In 2020, we have been focussed on building up the structural foundation that lets us do our best job in protecting the freedom of speech of people in Europe. In 2021, we will have to make use of our new and powerful procedures."

Members of ERGA also took the plenary as an opportunity, to look back on their numerous contributions to the debate on how to tackle disinformation. Generally, ERGA argues for more transparency and suggests moving from self-regulation to co-regulation of online platforms. In this regard, ERGA welcomes the European Commission's European Democracy Action Plan and Media Action Plan just released today. While the European Democracy Action Plan guarantees the difficult balance between protecting freedom of expression and defending democratic values, the Media Action Plan recognises the added value of the Memorandum of Understanding and the importance of a strengthened cooperation of media regulators within ERGA.

ERGA's efforts are also supported by the Council of the European Union. In the recently adopted Council Conclusions on safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system, Member States unanimously support the Memorandum of Understanding and call for an enhanced role of national regulators and ERGA.

Within its [work programme for 2021](#), ERGA will take up the topics set out in the Commission's action plans and will continue to accompany the EU-level discussions on the future framework for digital services and measures against disinformation. In this context, the European regulatory authorities are primarily concerned with protecting a democratic media environment. At the same time, ERGA will intensify its work on the implementation of the AVMS Directive, providing guidance on some of its regulatory novelties.

During the plenary, Tobias Schmid was re-elected for a second term as ERGA Chair in 2021. Karim Ibourki, President of the Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel (Belgium), was confirmed as Vice-Chair of ERGA. In addition, ERGA members voted Alejandra de Iturriaga Gandini (CNMC, Spain), Charlotte Ingvar-Nilsson (MPRT, Sweden) and Celene Craig (BAI, Ireland) to be part of ERGA's Board in the coming year.

About ERGA:

The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) consists of the national regulatory authorities in the field of audiovisual media services. ERGA advises the European Commission and facilitates cooperation between the regulatory bodies in the EU. Dr Tobias Schmid, Director of the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia, is the current Chairperson of ERGA.