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PRESS RELEASE ERGA 12th PLENARY MEETING

The 12th Plenary meeting of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services took place in Brussels on 10th December 2019. Members elected new leadership, set priorities for 2020 and adopted deliverables produced throughout the year.

New ERGA leadership

A new board of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) has been elected taking office on 1 January 2020. Tobias Schmid, Commissioner for European Affairs of the German State Media Authorities and Director of the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia, will be the new ERGA Chair. Tobias Schmid: "Europe stands for freedom. The Internet also promises this liberty, but being free cannot entail being defenceless. Instead, rules must be put in place to safeguard this freedom. To enforce these rules it takes a close, solution-oriented, and courageous collaboration among European media regulators within the framework of ERGA. I am looking forward to our cooperation in the year to come and appreciate the trust my European colleagues have placed in me."

Ľuboš Kukliš, the current ERGA chair, whose term ends this year: "I would like to congratulate Tobias Schmid in his new position as ERGA chair, that has found with him and the rest of the elected ERGA representatives the strong leadership needed for the challenges ahead in 2020. The last year was a crucial one for ERGA standing on the crossroads of the ongoing AVMSD transposition which large potential needs to be fully realised with the many issues in the current media environment. ERGA with its strengthened position in the AVMSD tried in its many tasks to be a strong partner not only for the Commission but also for other stakeholders in the ongoing policy debates. I would like to thank all of the ERGA members for their dedication and support to ERGA during this last year of my chairmanship."

Karim Ibourki, Chairman of the French-speaking Belgian regulator CSA, was re-elected as Vice-Chair.

The other elected members of the board are Alejandra de Iturriaga y Gandini (Director of Telecommunications and Audiovisual Sector at the Spanish regulator CNMC), Charlotte Ingvar-Nilsson (Director General of the Swedish Press and Broadcasting Authority MPRT) and Ľuboš Kukliš (Chief Executive of the Slovak regulator RVR).

Priorities for 2020

ERGA decided on its priorities for 2020, addressing some of the most challenging issues in the audiovisual policy area. Firstly, the group will focus on strengthening the Digital Single Market by enforcing audiovisual rules and upholding European values through cooperation between regulators in cross-border cases, particularly in the online environment. Secondly, to tackle the issue of disinformation and other media plurality issues, ERGA will continue and diversify its

activities in this field by building on the results already achieved in 2019. Thirdly, it will address issues around media diversity and findability, focusing on both the transparency of access and ease of retrieval of media content on platforms.

An outlook with Director-General Roberto Viola

The Director-General of DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Roberto Viola, recalled that the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) has enhanced the legal status of national regulatory authorities.

He highlighted the central role that independent regulatory authorities are playing – individually and collectively – within ERGA in ensuring the correct and timely transposition and implementation of the revised AVMSD. Mr Viola emphasised that the AVMSD holds the key for solutions to many issues in the online and offline environment, which stem from the evolving media realities. National media regulatory authorities are in a unique position to offer their expertise in content moderation, which is of great value in ensuring the achievement of the aims of the AVMSD.

Mr Viola also expressed his gratitude for ERGAs work in its assessment of implementation of the Code of Practice on Disinformation.

Results of work in 2019

In 2019, ERGA covered a multitude of topics through several workstreams, workshops and ERGA Academy events. The implementation of the revised AVMS Directive was the focus of a major report adopted at the meeting dealing with the revised material rules for audiovisual media services, revised material scope (i.e. the inclusion of video-sharing platforms) and analysis of concrete mechanisms of regulation. Members also adopted a report on industry-led good practices related to gender diversity in the European audiovisual sector.

As tasked by the 2018 Action Plan against Disinformation¹, ERGA helped the Commission to monitor the implementation of the commitments by the signatories of the Code of Practice on Disinformation² (the Code). Having adopted an Interim Assessment and Statement in June 2019, at this Plenary meeting ERGA members were updated on the monitoring carried out by regulators across numerous EU countries. The final monitoring report will be adopted at the start of 2020 and will focus on the effectiveness of the measures taken by the platforms in all of the pillars of the Code. Based on the report, ERGA will also present possible policy options for the European Commission.

Reform of ERGA

ERGA worked intensively over 2019 to prepare a reform of its functions and working methods in order to be able to effectively carry out the new tasks stemming from the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive³ (AVMSD). The overall aim is to make ERGA more effective, transparent, relevant and inclusive. Changes to that effect were introduced into the revised Rules of Procedure of ERGA, which were adopted by the Plenary meeting.

Notes for Editors

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.

Lubos Kuklis, Chief Executive of the Slovak Regulatory Authority, is the Chairperson of ERGA in 2019. For questions, please refer to the ERGA Secretariat CNECT-ERGA-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu.

¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/54866/action-plan-against-disinformation_en

² <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/code-practice-disinformation>

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/revision-audiovisual-media-services-directive-avmsd>