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Press Release

ERGA adopts its contribution to the public consultation on the European Democracy Action Plan

Stabilising democracy online is one of the most important tasks currently occupying media regulators and politics. With its European Democracy Action Plan, the European Commission wants to ensure that citizens are able to participate in the democratic system through informed decision-making free from unlawful interference and manipulation. Basing itself on the unique expertise and experience of media regulators in content regulation, the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) has taken the opportunity to contribute to the Commission's public consultation on the action plan.

In its contribution, ERGA stresses the importance of uniform definitions of disinformation and the need for measures against technical online manipulation. ERGA also calls for the reinforced cooperation of media regulators at EU level to ensure seamless regulation across borders.

Drawing from the work of ERGA members in the area of disinformation, the group advocates for transparency of microtargeting criteria, especially in the context of elections. For media regulators transparency is the cornerstone to approach new rules for online political advertising and to tackle online disinformation in general. Moreover, members of ERGA call for meaningful transparency for algorithmic content recommendation systems.

In addition, ERGA highlights the need for privacy-compliant access to platform data for researchers. There is an urgent need to better understand the manipulative potential of the online advertisement ecosystem in order to guarantee the integrity of democratic processes online.

Last but not least, ERGA advocates for a reinforced role and strengthened cooperation of European media regulators in overseeing the rules on online media content – especially when dealing with cross-border issues. Moreover, ERGA underlines the continued relevance of the country of origin principle as the basis of EU online content regulation.

“With initiatives such as the European Democracy Action Plan and the Digital Services Act, we have the unique chance to give the Internet a European character – based on democracy and the rule of law. What we need are the means to prevent – instead of only reacting to – problems such as hate speech and disinformation while protecting the freedom of speech”, says **Tobias Schmid**, Chair of ERGA and European Commissioner of the Directors' Conference of the German Media Authorities.

“The rise of digital platforms to prominence has brought many new challenges but the mission remains the same. The means to ensure that fundamental values such as media freedom and pluralism are protected under the new conditions. This is what our contribution to the European Democracy Action Plan reflects”, comments **Luboš Kukliš**, Member of the ERGA Board leading the work of the group on disinformation and Chief Executive of the Slovak Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission.

Besides ERGA's contribution towards the European Democracy Action Plan, the European media regulators have also adopted [a position on the Digital Services Act](#). All ERGA press releases and reports can be found on <https://erga-online.eu/>.

About ERGA:

The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services brings together heads or high-level representatives of national independent regulatory bodies in the field of audiovisual services. Thereby, ERGA advises and assists the European Commission in its work, to ensure a consistent implementation of the AVMSD as well as in any other matters related to audiovisual media services within the Commission's competence. In addition, ERGA aims to facilitate cooperation between the regulatory bodies in the EU by fostering the exchange of information, experience and good practices.

Dr Tobias Schmid, Commissioner for European Affairs of the German Media Authorities, is the Chairman of ERGA in 2020.