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Press release

## **ERGA presents its priorities to the Culture and Education Committee in the European Parliament**

On Thursday 13 January 2022, the newly elected Chairperson of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA), Mr Karim Ibourki, was invited for the first time by the CULT Committee of the European Parliament to present ERGA's priorities for 2022. In his intervention, the ERGA Chair underlined that the protection of fundamental rights, including human dignity and privacy, as well as the safeguarding of the freedom of expression, will represent the cornerstone of ERGA's activities during his presidency. Mr Ibourki, took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of key legislative files aiming to regulate online platforms and political advertising in order to affirm Europe digital sovereignty and safeguard European democracy.

In this regard, this year will be crucial for the update of the EU media framework. As the European Commission has announced, it will put forward a European Media Freedom Act to safeguard media freedom and pluralism in the EU media market.

In addition, two major regulations, namely the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, are currently under discussion. The DSA is a horizontal instrument trying to address the main issues posed by online platforms, while the initiative on political advertising addresses the specific issues concerning political advertising on all media, including potentially negative effects on democracy.

*« As the whistleblower and former Facebook employee, Ms Frances Haugen, pointed out nowadays, the most dangerous threat for our democracy comes from private companies putting their profit before the public good, rather than democratic governments. When business activities conflict with the interests of the whole society, democracies must react and adopt new laws »,* recalled Mr Ibourki.

In light of this, the ERGA Chair also insisted on the need to increase the responsibilities and the accountability of online platforms and to ensure the introduction of an efficient and effective enforcement mechanism of the new rules.

*« For the first time, the DSA introduces an ambitious set of obligations for online platforms that will help counterbalance their enormous power. The cooperation of National Regulatory Authorities within ERGA*

*is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of the DSA. We cannot miss this chance to deliver a better online environment and without effective implementation of the new rules, this will not be achieved »*, concluded the Chair of ERGA.

**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. Mr Karim Ibourki, President of the Belgian CSA (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel) is the current Chairperson of ERGA.*