



Naples, 29.06.2023

Press release

19th ERGA Plenary: European media regulators gather and discuss their role in a changing audiovisual environment

On 29th June 2023, the 19th ERGA plenary meeting took place in Naples. Members gathered to take stock of ERGA's work, in a crucial year for the European legislative framework regarding the media sector. They exchanged with the European Commission on current policy initiatives and adopted statements on the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and on the Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, highlighting their crucial importance for ERGA and media regulators.

In its [statement on EMFA](#), ERGA reiterated its full support to the fundamental objectives pursued by the proposal for a European Media Freedom Act, and welcomed the significant progress made by the European co-legislators, namely the recent agreement on a negotiation mandate in the Council of the European Union, and the steady pace at which the work is progressing which should allow to adopt this key piece of legislation on time before the end of the current European legislative mandate. In this context, ERGA reaffirmed its priorities and proposals for further improvements¹ concerning the provisions on media services originating from outside of the EU, treatment of media content in the online environment and the need to create a real level playing field for audience measurement. Finally, ERGA welcomed the co-legislators' initiatives to strengthen the independence of the future European Board for Media Services and insisted on the need to ensure the effective independence of the Board's Secretariat.

In his speech, Roberto Viola, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, stressed the important role of independent and authoritative media and therefore independent media regulators for European democracies. "*Media are the lifeblood of our democracy*", he said. He recalled the need to pursue the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and a need of a close cooperation with media regulators, within ERGA as well as with individual media regulators, on fact finding that could inform Commission's work while enforcing the Digital Services Act. The European Media Freedom Act once adopted will be an important part of the overall EU legislative framework. He also referred to the crucial role of ERGA with regard to the Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation.

¹ ERGA [proposals for EMFA amendments for articles 7–16](#) (February 2023), [articles 17-18](#) (April 2023) and [article 23](#) (May 2023).

The new role that ERGA and its regulators will have under the EMFA in the changing audiovisual sector does not mean that the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive becomes less important. On the contrary, to highlight the centrale role of the AVMS Directive, the Plenary was preceded by the ERGA Academy; a workshop on effective regulation of vloggers and on age verification which took place on the 28th of June.

During the ERGA Academy relevant provisions and themes following from the practical experience of regulators before and after the implementation of the revised AVMS Directive in Member States were discussed, also building on the two previous reports on the regulation of vloggers (“Analysis and recommendations on the regulation of vloggers”, 2021; “How to identify and localize vloggers and regulate their commercial communication”, 2022). The Regulators discussed together with industry representatives and academics two main themes: 1) regulation and enforcement of rules on influencers and vloggers and 2) the age verification tool to effectively protect minors under the Directive.

“The transformation of the audiovisual sector creates new opportunities for the economy but also potential risks for consumers and challenges for regulators”, said Giacomo Lasorella, the ERGA Chair. “The provisions of the AVMS Directive need to be effectively applied to market players who are active on a global scale and disseminate content on social media, thus directly reaching the viewers, and the regulators, together with the European Commission, must find the most appropriate measures to tackle these challenges and protect the citizen in an effective manner. Besides, new legislation will soon be adopted by the European co-legislators, adding more tasks and powers to the audiovisual NRAs. Some Member States have already started moving in this direction. It is high time, therefore, that we address these issues and agree on the new role that media regulators will have in the future.”

Finally, in its [statement on the regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising](#), ERGA reiterated its full support to the fundamental objectives pursued by this legislation and in particular the provisions regarding the labelling and the creation of repositories of political advertising. ERGA proposed to pursue common standards on three technical aspects of such repositories: data structure, application programming interface (API) and Authentication.

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 Giacomo Lasorella, President of the Italian AGCOM (Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni) is the current Chairperson of ERGA.