



EU DECISION ON STATE AID A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO MODERNISE IRISH TELEVISION

Brussels, 29 February 2008 – The Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT) welcomed the decision by the European Commission to close the case brought by the commercial Irish broadcaster TV3 about state financing of the public broadcasters RTÉ and TG4. TV3 has been a member of the ACT since 1999.

TV3 argued that the public service remit of the Irish public broadcaster was not sufficiently precise and that they were not properly entrusted with public service obligations. In addition, TV3 claimed that the level of funding was not proportionate and that public funds were used for commercial activities. Following commitments from the Irish government to bring the financing and regulation of RTÉ into line with European law by the end of 2008, the Commission now decided to close the investigation.

Speaking in Brussels, Ross Biggam, Director-General of the ACT, said:

“Ireland now has a great opportunity to create a television marketplace which is fit for the digital age. All over Europe – in France, Germany, Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic – governments are recognising that the regulation of public television needs to leave the monopoly era behind. The ACT and our member companies look forward to assisting TV3 on this in the months ahead.”

But not all broadcasting markets are identical. Ross Biggam pointed out one peculiarity of the Irish landscape:

“We are unaware of any other country in Europe where the state broadcaster spends as much on sports rights as RTÉ does. Nowhere else in Europe is the commercial sector excluded from Champions League, the World Cup, Premier League and the Six Nations. So we are pleased to hear that the European Commission has expressly kept open the aspects of TV3’s case relating to sports rights.”

About the ACT:

The Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT) is a trade association representing the interests of the commercial broadcasting sector in Europe. The ACT has twenty seven member companies active in 34 European countries operating over 380 free-to-air and pay-tv channels and distributing 540 channels and 170 new services.

For further information, please see: www.acte.be

Press contact:

Ross Biggam

Director General

Phone: +32-2-738 76 13

GSM: +32-477-407 733

E-mail: rb@acte.be.

Utta Tuttlies

Head of Communications

Phone: +32-2-738 76 18

GSM: +32-495 – 24 64 67

E-mail: ut@acte.be

XXX