



## CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF COMMERCIAL TV AND EVER GREATER CHOICE FOR VIEWERS

**Brussels, 4 November 2009** – On the occasion of the “2nd Annual ACT Conference 2009”, commercial broadcasters from all over Europe met in Brussels and celebrated 20 years of commercial TV in Europe, delivering creative, informative and entertaining content.

When taking a look back to 1989, commercial broadcasters can be very positive about what has been achieved. From a landscape with 47 national TV channels, the broadcasting industry has developed into a pluralistic and diverse media landscape with more than 3,300 channels available in Europe. And people are spending more time watching television than ever. Average European viewing time is 3 hours and 47 minutes per day in 2008, three minutes more than in 2007<sup>1</sup>. Today, however, established models of content financing are challenged by the economic downturn, with a double digit decline in advertising in almost all European countries – a point made both by broadcasters but also by the European Commission.

**Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Society & Media, said:** “The biggest challenge for the next European Commission will be to work effectively to accelerate the recovery from the world economic downturn. Information and communication technologies, including media, will play a crucial role in this process as a source of productivity, innovation and growth.”

Broadcasters present at the ACT Conference confirmed that commercial broadcasters are constantly adapting their business models, diversifying revenues via multimedia activities and launches of new channels and services such as Catch-up TV, mobile TV, IPTV, HDTV and 3D-TV.

**Philippe Delusinne, ACT President & CEO RTL Belgium commented:** “It is the attractiveness of TV and enduring interest of people in it, which ensure that TV – sometimes combined with other platforms – will also in future remain the key medium to reach out to mass audiences. Television will not only survive, it will thrive. But our ability to do so remains linked to European regulation. For commercial television to flourish in the future, a regulatory rethink is needed, which allows to move away from prescriptive micro-management and instead provides outcomes, which work with the flow of technological change.”

**Ross Biggam, ACT Director General, concluded:** “As we move from the world of ‘broadcasting’ to one of ‘multiplatform distribution of audiovisual content’, two things will remain certain. That the viewer’s control over what to watch, when and where to watch it will only continue to increase. And for that, the decisive factor in our business is what it always has been: the programmes.”

The ACT has also published its first Annual Report<sup>2</sup> to explain in a more in-depth way what television is about, what business models underpin the sector, and the key economic and strategic drivers.

<sup>1</sup> Source : “Television 2009 - International Key Facts” study, IP Network

<sup>2</sup> If you wish to receive a copy, please send an email to Joanna Chansel at [jc@acte.be](mailto:jc@acte.be)

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**About the ACT:**

The Association of Commercial Television in Europe (ACT) represents the interests of the commercial broadcasting sector in Europe. Formed in 1989, the ACT has twenty seven member companies active in 34 European countries. Our members operate several hundred free-to-air and pay-tv channels and distribute many more channels and new services. The ACT members encompass several business models: free-to-air broadcasters and pay-TV players, digital platform operators and multimedia groups.

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