



COMMERCIAL TELEVISION DRIVES GROWTH & COMPETITIVENESS IN EUROPE

Brussels, 9 November 2011 – CEOs from leading European media companies gathered today in Brussels at their annual College of Members to discuss the future of the audiovisual sector. Following their meeting, the association held its 4th Annual ACT Conference which attracted hundreds of key EU decision-makers and stakeholders.

The meeting unanimously re-elected Philippe Delusinne as President of the ACT for a further two years.

Commenting on the discussion Philippe Delusinne, ACT President & CEO RTL Belgium, said: “Following the exchange with my colleagues from all over Europe, I am in a position to say that the commercial television sector is in good shape. People like to watch our content and reward us with very successful ratings in all territories for the excellent professional content we produce. Today TV is an important contributor to growth and competitiveness in Europe and while we successfully produce local programmes for our audiences in the different European countries, we are increasingly becoming important players on the global level due to our success in the international sale of European formats”.

Today the EU has a positive trade balance with the US in television formats, a sector worth €9.3 billion annually. The UK and the Netherlands each export more global formats than the US.

In a continuously changing media environment with online and new media seeing great success – people continue to watch television. For the tenth consecutive year, average daily TV viewing increased in 2010 to 228 minutes per day. Almost 50% of households have a high-definition set. In terms of genres, live TV and sport continue to dominate the most viewed programmes. Viewers’ choice has increased over the years and by the end of 2010, more than 9800 channels had been established in Europe. The internet and TV complement each other and commercial broadcasters are enthusiastically developing online offers and services all over Europe and interact with their viewers via social platforms. Catch-up TV is increasingly popular and 55% of internet users watch TV on catch-up services, with 81% of catch-up users stating that they are watching as much linear TV as previously.

In 2010, the TV market was worth € 91.7 billion and up to 50% of commercial broadcasters’ revenues are reinvested in content:

- In Italy, the TV industry is worth around €12 billion and an investment of €800 million is drawn to the production of TV drama and other audiovisual works, with an additional €1.5 billion earmarked for in-house productions.

- In the UK investment in content production amounts to £4 billion a year.
- In France, Canal+ and CANALSAT invest more than €2 billion in content, which represents 50% of their pay-TV turnover.

In an increasingly competitive and changing media environment, commercial broadcasters face the ever greater challenge of monetising their content. In order to ensure the same level of creation, production and distribution of professional audiovisual content in the future, commercial broadcasters need a robust copyright framework, respect for exclusive rights and contractual freedom to ensure a fair return upon investments. The fight against piracy is crucial for the future of the sector.

Concluding with a call for action to European policy-makers, Ross Biggam, ACT Director General, said: “Stakeholders and regulators need to develop an understanding that any future discussion about the regulation of our sector is not about this or that directive or whether a particular article needs to be retained – it is about a regulators’ wider vision of the future and the creation of a fair level playing-field with all players in the media market”.

The ACT will increase its membership base and has accepted Top Channel from Albania as its 33rd member company.

With regard to the increase of the ACT membership, Ross Biggam said: “We are very pleased to welcome Top Channel to the Association. As of today, the ACT represents 33 member companies, the highest number in our history. We are delighted that more European broadcasters are convinced of the need to engage with the institutions and communicate the challenges of our sector to European regulators”.

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 33 member companies licensed in 36 different European countries and distributed across 45 European markets and beyond. 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. www.acte.be

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