



PRESS RELEASE

Commercial TV responds to the Commission's consultation on Audiovisual Convergence

Brussels, 1 October 2013 – European commercial broadcasters call on the European Commission to focus on a long-term vision to sustain excellence and innovation in the audiovisual sector.

In the ACT's response to the European Commission Green Paper on Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World, commercial broadcasters emphasise that while media convergence is a reality now, its long-term implications are as yet unclear. Commercially, ACT member companies are enthusiastically embracing the opportunities created by convergence, and the off and online offers of audiovisual services are booming: with 3.000 on-demand services and 10.000 TV channels in Europe, and average viewing at an all-time high of 235 minutes per day.

Speaking about the ACT position, **Ross Biggam, Director-General of the Association of Commercial Television**, commented that:

“We are calling on the Commission to work on long-term scenario planning for the future of the European audiovisual sector. The strength of commercial broadcasters lays in the high-quality programming that the audiences love to watch. And ACT members invest heavily into content, 40% of their revenues, to deliver great choice of content on our consumers' screens. Therefore, the sustainability of the current financing models for content production must be at the heart of the Commission's debate, not regulation per se.

Looking to the future, an in-depth analysis of possible future framework of content regulation at EU level is essential and the ACT suggests a rigorous and detailed exercise of scenario planning. We call on the Commission to undertake in-depth research and modelling to ensure that EU regulation can adapt, quickly if necessary, to a range of possible future scenarios. European media markets differ widely, so member states will experience convergence in diverse ways.”

The ACT emphasises that any rethink of EU-level content regulation should be based on principles rather than on micro-management and should examine how to best deliver the policy goals, including via self-regulation. These key principles will include: contractual freedom, country of origin, signal integrity (necessary for sustaining editorial responsibility), commercial overlays and other novel techniques should be possible only with the prior consent of the broadcaster, high level protection of minors, the principle of editorial responsibility and ethical rules on commercial communication. Any future content regulation must preserve the core elements of the current AVMS – notably on jurisdiction and platform neutrality - that underpin Europe's thriving audiovisual market.

Press contact:

Ross Biggam, Director General
Phone: +32-2-738 76 13 | GSM: +32-477-407 733 | E-mail: rb@acte.be



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 37 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. See www.acte.be.