



COMMISSION ADOPTS DIGITAL AGENDA – ACT POSITIVE ABOUT ACTION FOR A COMPETITIVE EUROPE & A THRIVING DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

Brussels, 19 May 2010 – The Association of Commercial Television in Europe (www.acte.be) has responded to today’s adoption of the Digital Agenda. The EU 2020 Strategy rightly recognised the Digital Agenda as one of seven flagship initiatives needed to stimulate growth. The creative industries, including commercial television, play a crucial role in that initiative, contributing to the European economy and employing millions of workers, but also by promoting democracy, original creative content, linguistic diversity and media pluralism. As indicated in the Digital Agenda attractive content plays an important role in stimulating investment in faster networks.

Philippe Delusinne, ACT President & CEO RTL Belgium, commented: “I congratulate Commissioner Kroes and her colleagues for the presentation of the Digital Agenda, an ambitious roadmap for action in the mid- and long-term. Europe’s broadcasters are already embracing the challenges of innovation and investment in legal offers, with no fewer than 720 on-demand services now offering audiovisual content in Europe alongside a total of 7,200 European television channels at the end of 2009. In other words, we are responding to the fast pace of technological change and a challenging economic environment. Above all, we need to be clear that this debate is not about the pipes, it is rather about the content which flows down the pipes – it is great content, not great software engineering, which makes the Digital Agenda attractive to European consumers”.

In this context commercial broadcasters welcome the following points in the Digital Agenda:

- The Commission recognition of the need to **distinguish between different forms of online content**; i.e., between sectors such as music and audiovisual facing specific challenges and requirements.
- It is crucial for future investment in creative content and services that **contractual freedom of rightsholders will be preserved**.
- Commercial broadcasters welcome the Commission’s idea to initiate a **broad stakeholder dialogue** about online content services to listen to the different views of stakeholders. The Commission’s intention to take action to improve the **governance and transparency of collective rights management** may also assist some of the industry’s long-standing concerns.
- Finally, the ACT supports the Commission’s plans **to take action on piracy**, an important initiative to ensure the creation of and investment in creative content in the future. Despite the great availability of legal online offers today, piracy still poses one of the crucial challenges for our industry as a whole.

When evaluating the Digital Agenda Ross Biggam, Director General ACT, said: “There are very important policy initiatives laid down in the document, on which we are very much looking forward to working with the EU institutions. In particular, we look forward to the opportunity of explaining to the Commission, in the context of the new Green Paper on Audiovisual Content how copyright is evolving – as indeed it has done for the past 300 years – to meet the new technological challenges. We are more cautious about suggestions made to harmonise spectrum policy. Here, the fact that media markets are so diverse due to their structural and economic conditions and history that the introduction of a European approach would simply ignore national circumstances. The respect for national markets and the application of the subsidiarity principle should be the guiding principle when considering any action on these dossiers”.

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 thirty 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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