

COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS SUPPORT EU COMMISSION IN PROMOTING MEDIA FREEDOM IN EUROPE

Brussels, 12 October 2011 – In the light of today’s publication of the European Commission’s Annual Enlargement Package; the Association of Commercial Television in Europe (www.acte.be) expresses its full support to the Commission’s enhanced efforts to ensure media freedom in Europe and with accession and candidate countries.

Ross Biggam, ACT Director General, said: “The Commission rightly recognises freedom of expression as a fundamental right safeguarded by international law and forming an important part of a pluralistic democracy. Unfortunately, the Report confirms that this principle is threatened in a variety of European countries. In our view, in particular political interference and the lack of independence of market regulators pose serious concerns for journalists and media companies alike”.

In its Enlargement Strategy 2011-2012, the Commission lists the following challenges to freedom of expression and the media:

- Disproportionate fines against media outlets and journalists
- Political interference, including the use of fiscal measures
- Economic pressure
- Using crime and corruption to influence the media
- Insufficient protection of journalists against harassment
- Insufficient implementation of media legislation in a series of countries
- Threats in several countries, in particular Turkey, to the freedom of expression

Ross Biggam concludes: “The Commission has also correctly identified a range of threats to media freedom. In the ongoing accession and enlargement negotiations it will be important to continue this route and point out when Governments are taking unjustified action”.

To see the full Enlargement Package, please see:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1182&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

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-two member companies licensed in 34 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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