



COMMERCIAL BROADCASTERS SET OUT VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIA

Brussels, 4 June 2010 – On the occasion of the EU Presidency Conference organised by the Spanish Government in Madrid today on “*European Media Meeting: The new Challenges*”, the Association of Commercial Television in Europe (www.acte.be) expresses its view about the state of the media sector and calls for targeted and limited action by regulators at European and national level.

Speaking on behalf of the commercial broadcasting industry at the Conference, **Ross Biggam, ACT Director General, stressed:** “Our sector is in reasonable shape and our main plea to regulators is not for public money, but rather for regulatory forbearance and assistance in targeted areas like protection of content and fair competition against state-aided operators. If we have those elements in place, then our understanding of what viewers want to watch will deliver a vibrant, diverse European media landscape much more efficiently than any regulatory diktat”.

In this context commercial broadcasters call for action in the following fields:

- Member States need to set **clear limits with regard to the expansion of publicly-funded broadcasters into the new media environment.** In particular in the field of sports rights and digital media, there is danger of a distortion of competition. A proper implementation of the Broadcasting Communication currently going on in the Member States, is of ever greater relevance for commercial broadcasters today, who have been affected strongly with regard to their advertising revenues in basically all European Member States over the last year.
- Good quality content like 24-hours news or European programming costs money and cannot be available for free. **Protection of content and strong anti-piracy measures** are therefore crucial for future investment in content. In this respect commercial broadcasters highlight the importance of the recently-adopted report by **MEP Marielle Gallo** on enhancing the enforcement of IPR in the Internal Market, which is a positive and balanced outcome recognising the negative impact of online copyright infringements on all creative sectors and on the European economy as a whole. Respect of IPR is a necessary precondition for the success of innovative new online business models. If this is not ensured, investment in content is endangered as such.
- Innovation is crucial to the success of our industry and the wide range of new programmes and services demonstrates the efforts made by commercial broadcasters to offer the widest choice of creative content to viewers today. In order for our sector to be able to innovate in the future, regulators need to think flexibly and address the issue of **overregulation of television.**

- **Digital media is a reality and there is no problem of access of content.** Today we have 7200 television channels and 720 on-demand services available in Europe. Where there is consumer demand and an economic justification for it, commercial broadcasters offer their programmes and services outside of their home markets. The latest publication of the **KEA-study on “Multi-territory licensing for audiovisual works in the online environment”** is therefore of direct relevance for the current debate. In order to maintain a fair return on investment and ensure future production of and investment in creative content, it will be essential to maintain the current provisions on contractual freedom for licensing and exclusivity of content.

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.
www.acte.be

Press Contact

Ross Biggam

Director General

Phone: +32 2 738 76 13

GSM: +32 477 407 733

E-mail: rb@acte.be

Utta Tuttlies

Head of Communications

Phone : +32 2 738 76 18

GSM : +32 495 246 467

E-mail : ut@atcte.be