

ACT' STATEMENT BEFORE THE SENATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND ON A DRAFT LAW TARGETING MEDIA FREEDOM

BRUSSELS, 10 AUGUST. The Association of Commercial Television in Europe is observing the Polish government's recent actions – targeted at shutting down the country's main TV news channel, TVN24, and muscling its owner, TVN Discovery Group, out of the market – with grave concern.

Ever since its transformation, stepping out from under the boot of oppressive communist rule, Poland has shined as an example of a nation that holds the values of a democratic civil society and the rule of law in the highest regard. The country became a paragon for nations in the region which were quick to follow in its path, leading to a peaceful transformation and democracy's triumph across Eastern Europe. Poland also became a source of inspiration for Western nations to pursue broader economic, social and political integration with their Eastern partners, eventually leading a new family of European countries to ascend into the European Union.

A recent bill proposed by members of the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland targets one particular TV broadcaster, TVN Discovery Group. Such action demonstrates the Polish government's willingness to go against the rule of law and to move away from the country's democratic foundations. Freedom of speech, media independence, citizens' rights to information, and the freedom to make one's own choices are prevailing EU values that all European citizens have at heart. Without them, Europe's future is divided. Free media are the essence of any democracy. Without media freedom, there is no freedom at all.

It is unacceptable that any media outlet, or in this case one particular broadcaster, should become persecuted by a country's authorities. Limiting media freedom must not take place in any European country, and an outright attack on civil rights cannot be used as a means to strengthen a government's influence.

In light of recent events, the Association of Commercial Television in Europe would like to urgently appeal to Polish authorities – the country's government, parliament and President – to immediately block the legislative process that aims to limit the freedom of TVN Discovery Group, as well as to renew TV channel TVN24's broadcasting license.

--- END ---

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCIAL TELEVISION IN EUROPE (ACT)



The ACT represents the interests of leading commercial broadcasters in Europe. The ACT member companies finance, produce, promote and distribute content and services benefiting millions of Europeans across all platforms. At ACT we believe that the healthy and sustainable commercial broadcasting sector has an important role to play in Europe's economy, society and cultures. **For further enquiries please consult our website www.acte.be and/or contact Greg Polad, Director General, ACT – gp@acte.be**