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Press Release

## European media regulators met for their semi-annual plenary

### ***ERGA members discussed European legislative initiatives for media and online regulation***

European media regulation must function across borders and respect national needs at the same time. This common objective was strongly echoed at the summer plenary of the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA). On 1 June 2021, ERGA members met for a virtual meeting to present the state of play regarding their different working groups and discuss about future areas of work. The current legislative and political initiatives at European level – such as the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the European Democracy Action Plan – were at the centre of the discussions.

Giuseppe Abbamonte, Director for Media Policy of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, opened the meeting. He provided first insights on the potential plans for a **European Media Freedom Act** which would aim at introducing new rules to strengthen media freedom and media independence in the EU. As the independent national media regulators, the experience of ERGA and its members could be of particular importance for this legislative initiative. Also, he outlined the new "Guidance on Strengthening the Code of Practice on Disinformation" just published by the European Commission. Only a few days ago, ERGA had itself adopted a common [position paper](#) on the upcoming revision of the Code.

Members of ERGA also discussed a further common position paper on the Digital Services Act package. The paper will build on an initial positioning that ERGA already adopted in March for a public consultation of the Commission and has been developed within the working group on the completion of the EU regulatory framework relevant for media. While stressing the agreement of ERGA with the overall objectives of the DSA, the new position paper will detail ERGA's **request to clarify how the DSA proposal would relate to existing national media law provisions** and, in particular, to provisions on video-sharing platforms stemming from the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). In addition, ERGA members debated the supervisory structure proposed in the DSA. **The governance structure must ensure that the supervisory structures of the Member States are appropriately taken into account. Moreover, sector-specific networks of national regulators should be strengthened.** Based on the discussions at the plenary, ERGA expects to adopt the final position paper within the next weeks.

*"ERGA is characterized by cooperation based on trust. And this can serve as a blueprint for effective cross-sectoral European cooperation in media regulation in the future. We hope that we will get the chance to contribute in this way in the further course of the different important legislative initiatives, and thus contribute to successful structures for digital media supervision",* says Dr Tobias Schmid, Chairperson of ERGA, about the work of the past months.

Besides the position paper on the DSA, the subgroup working on the topic of disinformation presented a report on improving the relationships between Code of Practice signatories and researchers, which was adopted by the members of ERGA and will soon be publically available on the ERGA website. The document focusses on the **perspective of researchers who work on the issue of disinformation on Social Media**. Based on the concern of researchers **that there is a significant lack of access to data for research purposes**, ERGA recommends among others to set up a systematic cooperation between relevant stakeholders and online platforms to elaborate on this topic.

In addition, a first discussion of the Work Programme of ERGA in 2022 was on the agenda. Three main fields of work

were discussed, with the final programme to be adopted in the coming months. Next year subgroups are expected to continue the work of ERGA on the **consistent implementation and enforcement of the AVMSD framework**, the **completion of the EU regulatory framework for media** as well as ways to **address disinformation and strengthen democracy** in a digital environment.

**About ERGA:**

*The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) consists of the national regulatory authorities in the field of audiovisual media services. ERGA advises the European Commission and facilitates cooperation between the regulatory bodies in the EU. Dr Tobias Schmid, Director of the Media Authority of North Rhine-Westphalia, is the current Chairperson of ERGA.*