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*Press release*

## **17<sup>th</sup> ERGA Plenary: European media regulators gather and discuss how to provide input for key European legislative proposals**

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022, the 17<sup>th</sup> ERGA plenary meeting took place in Brussels as the first in person meeting of the group in two years. Members gathered to take stock of ERGA's work, in a crucial year for the legislative framework regarding the media sector. They exchanged views with the European Commission on current policy initiatives, for instance the upcoming European Media Freedom Act and the recently published strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation.

The 2022 strengthened Code of Practice is aimed at further limiting the spread of online disinformation by providing more transparency about the activities of signatories, reducing monetization of disinformation, and by empowering users with better tools to be informed, recognize and flag online disinformation. ERGA acknowledges that the majority of the recommendations made in its report has been taken into account in the Code's final version. ERGA welcomed that the Code offers a set of clear commitments in the key areas, such as scrutiny of ad placement, political advertising, integrity of services, empowering users, researchers and the fact-checking community. New commitments accompanied by a set of measurable key performance indicators and the commitment to provide country-level data represent an improvement from the 2018 Code.

ERGA particularly welcomes the establishment of the permanent Task-force whose aim will be to adapt the Code further. ERGA as a future member of the Task-force will play an important role to provide its members' expertise to the European Commission and the signatories in order to further enhance the Code.

Members also discussed the future implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA) and its interplay with the Code of Practice on Disinformation as well as other relevant legislations such as the AVMS Directive, the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and the future Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising. Indeed, as ERGA pointed out previously, an independent supervision, an active role of media regulators and an enhanced cooperation between them within ERGA, as well as with the European Commission regarding very large online platforms, are key to ensure an effective implementation of the DSA as well as the achievement of its goals.

Special attention was also given to the work on disinformation and in particular to disinformation narratives related to the war in Ukraine. Furthermore, members were presented with a detailed update concerning

the position paper that the group is preparing on the proposal for Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising.

The upcoming European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) was another focus of the debate. The Commission presented its intentions for the EMFA to strengthen media freedom, independence, and pluralism, as well as to safeguard on media independence. In addition, it outlined the expected next steps on the proposal. ERGA members also discussed possible regulatory solutions concerning media under influence/control of third countries and the future role and structure of ERGA to adequately deal with all possible new tasks and responsibilities under the DSA and the EMFA. ERGA members highlighted their support for a sufficient reinforcement of ERGA and paving the way to a more effective cross-border enforcement.

In addressing the plenary, Věra Jourová, European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency emphasised the role of ERGA for the monitoring of the 2022 strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation within the permanent taskforce. She also underlined the importance of ERGA in the framework of the EMFA. *“ERGA needs a strong role in this important project”*, said the Vice-President.

Finally, ERGA members highlighted that the future EU regulatory framework is ambitious and unique in the world, but that on the other hand its effective implementation will require additional resources for ERGA and its members. Only some ERGA members indicated that they had received additional funds to implement the revised AVMS Directive in their countries, while new EU policy initiatives as the DSA, EMFA and a reinforced Code of Practice on Disinformation will create more responsibilities and pose new challenges.

*“There is an urgent and crucial need to reinforce ERGA’s independence and provide proper resources as well as to increase human and financial resources of its members at national level”*, highlighted Karim Ibourki, the ERGA Chair.

### **More about the Code of Practices on Disinformation:**

[2022 Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation](#)

### **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. Mr Karim Ibourki, President of the Belgian CSA (Conseil supérieur de l’audiovisuel) is the current Chairperson of ERGA.*