



40th EPRA Meeting  
Tbilisi: 8-10 October 2014

Working group 1:

**Empowering Users: Focus on Protection Tools**

**Summary of the debate**

**By WG Rapporteur Maria Donde, Ofcom (UK)**

The second session of this annual Working Group, which in its first session focused on [media literacy initiatives across Europe](#), was devoted to practical consequences of implementing protection tools. The group heard from three EPRA members – the Dutch CvdM in the Netherlands, the AGCOM in Italy and the RTÜK in Turkey – about the different classification models and protection tools applied in those countries; in particular the relationships that regulators had with co-regulatory bodies, and how existing tools and models were being adapted to address the challenges of content delivered over the internet, including content outside of the scope of the AVMS Directive.

Discussion was particularly lively on the topic of the [NICAM](#) body in the Netherlands. NICAM develops and oversees the use of the [Kijkwijzer](#) classification system, and most recently has joined with The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) to create a “[YouRateIt](#)” self-rating tool for producers and users of online UGC content. There was also interest in AGCOM’s new powers to define the concept of “*seriously impair*” (as set out in Article 12 of the AVMS Directive) and its technical table of protection mechanisms; while Turkey has developed several unique ideas, including a “viewer representative” appointed by broadcasters to handle viewers’ concerns.

These presentations built on the comprehensive background paper that gathered together the experiences of 22 EPRA members of overseeing or simply observing the types of tools used in their countries to protect audiences from potentially inappropriate content.

Each country offered a slightly different perspective, but all provoked interest and debate. Several themes emerged:

1. The importance of familiar and understood classification systems, particularly in attracting voluntary take-up by big media players falling outside of the scope of regulation.
2. The prevalence and success of co-regulatory and self-regulatory models: in several instances, it emerged that several approaches to protection had begun life as self-regulatory initiatives that were later enshrined in or supported by legislation.
3. The development of new protection methods to react to the increasing provision of content over the internet and outside of the scope of existing regulation (including the UK’s voluntary network level Internet filters initiative).
4. Overall, a clearer picture of the variety of tools used by European audiences – adults and children alike – to feel confident about controlling access to potentially inappropriate content. These tools support existing legislation and regulation, but can also help to fill any gaps that might emerge with the development of new content providers.

Finally, the [European Audiovisual Observatory](#) mentioned its intention to build on the work conducted by EPRA on the topic of “Empowering Users” during this year, and to potentially feed into the work of ERGA in this field.