



**42nd EPRA Meeting
Nuremberg: 28-30 October 2015**

**Plenary Session 2:
The regulators toolkit to encourage diversity of sources and output
Introductory Document**

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Introduction & Objectives

EPRA's [Work Programme for 2015](#) focuses on how to ensure a sustainable ecosystem for the supply and distribution of media content that is financially viable but also offers a plurality and diversity of content. The present plenary session will particularly scrutinize the legal and regulatory toolkit at the disposal of regulators to stimulate diversity of sources, output and exposure. A range of possible topics were suggested in the work programme including media ownership, concentration, must carry rules, licensing policy, content obligations and transparency provisions.

The material covered at the plenary session on this topic in Berne in May 2015 has provided a useful building block for the autumn meeting. The session had examined recent and current initiatives aiming to monitor the level of plurality in the media and focused more particularly on processes, mechanisms and methodologies. On that occasion, participants exchanged views on the difficult issue of measurement and the right criteria and metrics to choose in a changing media environment. The discussion also revolved around the follow-up action of monitoring projects such as the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM).

The main conclusion from the spring plenary was that whatever approach is adopted to monitoring, it needs to be realistic and proportionate. It was also clear that the appropriate approach needs to recognise evolving best practice and operational realities in the relevant jurisdiction. There is no one size fits all.

Cost is also an important consideration for regulatory authorities with limited resources and competing priorities. These considerations are also relevant when it comes to considering the legal and regulatory toolkit required to ensure diversity and this reality has shaped the panel structure for the Nuremberg meeting.

A recurring theme at EPRA meetings is the challenge of accessing current relevant information especially for smaller regulators. This was raised particularly in the context of plurality monitoring at the Berne meeting. Reliable recent data is an essential part of any regulatory toolkit and practical options in this area are a key focus for the plenary session in Nuremberg. This is being examined from both the consumption and supply side with an emphasis on transnational information.

Structure of the session

- Firstly in relation to consumption, **Dr David Levy**, Executive Director of the [Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism](#), will outline their work since 2012 measuring changing patterns of news consumption across a growing number of countries across the globe. This research focuses on traditional and new media and has offered valuable insights into how audiences are accessing news in the digital age. In 2015 the study covered 12 countries¹ but this is being expanded with funding from Google to cover 20 European countries in 2016 and moving to 30 European countries in 2017/2018.² As such, it is the largest international study of news consumption habits. While this is valuable information as such, Reuters is also open to providing regulators with access to the raw data for use in further research. This could be a valuable resource. In 2015, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland in partnership with Dublin City University used the data to produce an Irish specific report³.
- The [MAVISE Database](#) on TV and on-demand audiovisual media services and companies in Europe was launched in March 2008 by the [European Audiovisual Observatory](#); the project and database development was funded by the European Commission, DG Communication. In 2013, it was extended to cover on-demand audiovisual media services. The main aims of MAVISE are to provide better knowledge of the audiovisual market and more transparency. Since it was established, it has also been a valuable resource for tracking the ownership of TV and on-demand services. **Gilles Fontaine**, Head of Department for Information on Markets and Financing of the EAO will detail plans and opportunities for the further development and enhancement of this tool as a resource for regulators. Gilles will also explore what the data current available indicates about how services covered by the database circulate in Europe.
- The regulatory toolkit also needs to be fit for purpose in the context of the challenges presented by the jurisdiction in which it is operating. Different operational realities require different responses. In this context, the panel includes a presentation from **Ivane Makharadze** from the [Georgian National Communications Commission](#) on their approach to implementing strict rules introduced by amendments to the Law on Broadcasting in 2011 on the ban of “offshore” ownership of Georgian media outlets and the full disclosure of ownership structures, including all owners and financial sources. This is a useful example of the challenges presented by very specific legislation rules in relation to the transparency of media ownership⁴.

¹ US, UK, Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Finland, Brazil, Japan and Australia
The annual report can be accessed on <http://www.digitalnewsreport.org>.

² The new countries to be included in the main report from 2016 are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. These will be added to the 12 countries already covered in the main 2015 report; UK, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Spain, together with Australia, Brazil, Japan and the US. - See more at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/news/google-and-reuters-institute-agree-grant-major-expansion-digital-news-report%E2%80%99s-coverage-europe>

³ See more at http://www.epra.org/news_items/changing-patterns-in-the-consumption-of-news-in-ireland.

⁴ See more at: <http://www.access-info.org/tmo/13237>

Suggested questions for consideration in the discussion after the presentations are as follows:

- To what extent does research currently being undertaken by the Reuters Institute and the European Audiovisual Observatory provide useful information for assessing and ensuring pluralism? Are there areas where this could be developed further?
- Are there other examples of consumption or supply side research that regulators could easily access?
- What strategies are being used to respond to the challenges presented by the increased consumption of transnational services, particularly on-demand services?

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