



EPRA Chairperson's Report 2015

1 OVERVIEW OF 2015

Last year, 2015, was a most significant one for EPRA as it marked the 20th anniversary of the establishment of our network. The anniversary was celebrated at our meeting in Berne, Switzerland, on 13th-15th May, when a number of nostalgic and fun activities took place to mark the occasion. We had the pleasure of being joined by nearly all past chairpersons of EPRA including *Greger Lindberg*, *Joan Botella*, *Jean-François Furnémont*, *Jürgen Brautmeier* and *Michael O'Keeffe*. [Video](#) and [other contributions from past members](#), setting out their special memories as participants, were also presented to those attending the meeting.

2014 was noted as a year of change in the make-up of the Executive but 2015 also saw some further changes. In May 2015, the EPRA Chairperson, *Helena Mandić*, indicated her willingness to stay on the board, but to do so in a capacity as Vice-chair. This was facilitated by the members, with *Celene Craig*, (previously Vice-chair) taking over [as the new EPRA Chairperson](#). The departure of *Juraj Polák* from EPRA left a vacancy to be filled on the Executive Board and I am pleased to say that we were joined by Ms. *Johanna Fell* of the BLM, Germany, a long-standing participant in EPRA.

It was an exceptionally busy year, with a programme of activities that aimed at building on work to date. These are set out in the report which follows.

We also acknowledge that it was an exceptionally busy year for most of our members, who, in addition to all their usual regulatory duties, had added work arising from the activities of the European Commission and ERGA in respect of the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

2 EPRA MEETINGS

An extensive range of activities in 2015 comprised both regular and some new activities, as follows:

- Two plenary meetings were held in [Berne](#) (13th-15th May) and [Nuremberg](#) (28th-30th October). It had been intended that Bucharest would be the venue for our autumn meeting. However, for reasons outside of the control of our hosts, a venue change was required for the autumn meeting. While the decision came at quite a late point in time (end of July 2015), we nonetheless had a very successful outcome. Thanks to the great efforts of our German colleagues in the BLM, the LfM and the DLM, we had a very successful meeting in Nuremberg.

Overall, there was a very high level of participation by both the membership and the permanent observers at both meetings and it was of note that at Nuremberg, we had all 52 members participating for the first time in EPRA history. Both the range of contributions and the quality of content was exceptionally high and feedback from our members was very positive.

- **Activity of Executive Board:** the Executive Board met on five occasions in the course of the year – in Sarajevo on 30th January, in Berne on 13th May, in Brussels on 2nd July and again on 26th November and in Nuremberg on 28th October. A considerable element of the time spent at the Executive Board meetings involves planning for and reviewing the EPRA work programme, in particular the content of the two plenary meetings, in addition to the practical arrangements for hosting of the meetings. A new feature of the meetings in 2015 was discussions on the potential for the **development of an EPRA strategy**. Members can expect to hear more about this in the course of 2016.

3 CO-OPERATION

An important part of the work of EPRA to date has been its close co-operation with a number of other European bodies active in the audiovisual field. Indeed, this co-operation has been central to EPRA's success, as it facilitates the sharing of information, experience and expertise in a collegiate and timely manner. The following reflects some of the active co-operation which EPRA enjoyed in the course of 2015:

- **ERGA:** With the establishment of ERGA, EPRA was invited, in an Observer status, to attend both plenary and sub-group meetings of ERGA and participated in the Plenary Meeting, which took place in Paris, on 14th April. There was informal consultation on ERGA's part with EPRA late in 2015, on aspects of the 2016 ERGA work programme. EPRA looks forward to identifying further ways of engaging and co-operating with ERGA in the future.
- **Council of Europe:** on 18th September, the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Media and the Information Society (CDMSI) commented positively on the work of EPRA in the field of media pluralism and transparency of media ownership and suggested further co-operation between the two organisations. EPRA welcomes the invitation for future co-operation which we are very pleased to continue.
- **European Audiovisual Observatory:** a Workshop entitled [The Grey Areas between Audiovisual Regulation and Data Protection](#) was arranged in collaboration with the European Audiovisual Observatory on Friday, 11th December 2015. It was a very successful one-day event which gathered together national regulators, industry representatives and experts to look into the overlap between the two sectors of media regulation and data protection, focusing in particular on the impact of data protection on freedom of expression, and on pluralism of information and editorial responsibility. The potential for future co-operation between regulators in both areas was also explored.

- **MAVISE:** In autumn 2015, EPRA received a proposal for reinforced co-operation between EPRA, the EPRA Members and the European Audiovisual Observatory for the **Development of the MAVISE Database**. We very much welcome this proposal and are giving it our detailed attention at the present time. We are confident that a meaningful route to enhanced co-operation will be effected during 2016.
- **EBU:** *Emmanuelle Machet*, Secretary, and *Celene Craig*, Chairperson, met with Director General *Ingrid Deltenre* and other senior staff at the **European Broadcasting Union** in Geneva on **24th November**, to examine ways in which our co-operation might be strengthened. In conjunction with the meeting, the EBU also extended an invitation to the EPRA representatives to participate in an expert workshop on the following day, **25th November**, on the **Regulation of Audiovisual Platforms**. EPRA is currently liaising with senior staff at the EBU to agree appropriate channels of co-operation in the future.

4 REPRESENTATION

The year was a particularly busy one and a significant level of representation was undertaken by the Secretary, as well as the Chairperson and members of the Executive Board. In addition to the activities set out above, the following highlights the other key activities in this regard:

- **Paris, 16th January:** *Emmanuelle Machet* represented EPRA at a legal seminar organized by the University of Paris XIII, entitled, [Le droit de la régulation audiovisuelle à l'épreuve du numérique](#) where she presented a comparative overview of regulatory authorities in Europe.
- **Riga, 9-10th March:** EPRA was invited to the high level conference, [Strengthening the European audiovisual media market – for the development of the European identity](#) organized by the National Electronic Mass Media Council of Latvia in the framework of the Latvian presidency of the Council of the European Union in Riga. EPRA was represented by *Emmanuelle Machet*, who took part in the panel dealing with the independence of regulators. EPRA Vice-Chair *Damir Hajduk* also attended the conference representing both his national authority as well as EPRA.
- **Strasbourg, 26-27th March:** *Emmanuelle Machet* represented EPRA at the yearly meetings of the IRIS Editorial Board and of the Advisory Committee (AdCo) of the European Audiovisual Observatory.
- On **16-19th June**, *Emmanuelle Machet* represented EPRA at the meeting of the [Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Media and Information Society](#).

- On **14-15th September**, *Emmanuelle Machet* represented EPRA at a **UNESCO Seminar** in Paris on the [Sustainability of Community Radio](#). The objective of the seminar was to promote favourable regulation, policy and funding of community radio with a view to facilitating knowledge sharing in this area of media activity.
- On **13-14th October**, *Emmanuelle Machet* attended on behalf of EPRA the **Council of Europe Conference** in Strasbourg, on the topic: [Freedom of Expression: Still a Precondition for Democracy](#).
- On **20th-22nd October**, the Chairperson represented EPRA at a [national conference](#) hosted by the **Croatian Agency for Electronic Media**, held in Opatija, at which *Tanja Kerševan Smokvina* of the AKOS, Slovenia, also participated. The EPRA representatives addressed the meeting on developments at the European level regarding the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and on the funding of public service content.
- On **6-7th November**, *Damir Hajduk*, Vice Chairperson, represented EPRA at a workshop organized by the European Communication and Research Association's Thematic Section on Communication Law and Policies (**ECREA CLP**) held in Slovenia at the Ljubljana Faculty of Social Sciences. The topic of the event was [Communication and Media Policy in Europe: Policy Challenges in the Austerity and Surveillance Environment](#). *Tanja Kerševan Smokvina* of AKOS presented a comprehensive report on EPRA's survey of the use of research in the practice of media regulators, while *Damir Hajduk* presented EPRA's wider set of activities including its co-operation with academia. Possible ways for further, improved co-operation between academia and regulators were explored.
- On **17th November**, *Damir Hajduk* represented EPRA at the [Eurovisioni](#) Festival organized by AGCOM, in Rome. The meeting discussed the review process of the EU audiovisual regulatory framework. The issue of enforcement of copyright online was also discussed.
- On **17th November** in Brussels, the Chairperson represented EPRA at the European Audiovisual Observatory's Workshop on [Public Service Media Online: Remit and Financing](#).

An invitation was received by EPRA to participate in an event being hosted by the [Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom \(CMPF\)](#), at the University of Florence, on **6th November**. This conference considered the draft report of the Second Pilot Implementation of the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM 2015). Unfortunately, however, EPRA was not in a position to send a representative to the event.

5 PUBLICATIONS

The following main comparative research documents were published by EPRA in the course of 2015 and are available on our website - in addition to many other working papers and presentations:

- [*Monitoring Media Pluralism - an exercise in futility*](#), published in June 2015, this comparative paper looks at the evolution of methodologies and processes in the array of recent initiatives to monitor media pluralism at the national and European level and identifies key principles, practicalities and emerging wisdom.
- [*Research and Regulators – Towards an Evidence-based Approach*](#), published in summer 2015, the comparative document highlighted the variety in concepts of mission, responsibilities and organisation of regulatory authorities, as well as the great differences in scale and resources available to the regulatory bodies in support of research activities.
- [*How to ensure a sustainable ecosystem for media content in Europe?*](#), published in May 2015, focuses on consumption and distribution aspects of media content in Europe and covers inter alia issues of fragmentation of markets, access to platforms and content for users and service providers. It also looks at the changes in distribution and consumption triggered by digital technologies and analyses the role that regulatory authorities play in documenting new consumption and distribution patterns and in providing fair access to content and platforms.
- [*Local/Regional TV: financing models*](#), published in October 2015, this paper revisits the issue of local and regional media and puts an emphasis on television and on financing models. It was prepared on the basis of a questionnaire circulated in September-October 2015 to EPRA members which received answers from 29 regulatory authorities and on a comparative study commissioned by OFCOM (CH) on "[Future prospects of regional television](#)", encompassing best practices in Germany, Belgium, France and the UK.

I would also like to remind you about our bi-annual **thematic overview of EPRA country reports**, which is produced for each EPRA meeting, and which provides an important source of information for the members of our network on national developments:

- [Overview of country reports submitted by EPRA members for the 41st EPRA meeting in Berne](#)
- [Overview of country reports submitted by EPRA members for the 42nd EPRA meeting in Nuremberg](#)

6 2016: THE YEAR AHEAD

The year ahead promises to be no less active than 2015. Consultation on the draft EPRA Work Programme 2016 got underway in January; the programme was finalised after having been discussed at length by the Executive Board at its meeting in Zagreb in early February. The EPRA Work Programme for 2016 is available at this link: <http://www.epra.org/attachments/epra-work-programme-2016>

EPRA Plenary Meetings will be held in [Barcelona, Spain](#), (May 25th-27th) and in Yerevan, Armenia, (October 19th-21st).

Preliminary work on a draft EPRA Strategy is underway, with the hope of introducing this to the members at our plenary meeting in May.

Finally, EPRA is pleased to represent its members at the forthcoming plenary meeting of ERGA in Amsterdam on March 2nd. The EPRA representatives will also be present at the EU Conference on ***Promoting Cross-border Circulation of European Audio Visual Content*** to be held at the same time in Amsterdam on March 3rd-4th.

As always, reports of our participation and representation activities will be reported throughout the year.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a successful year in fulfilling your regulatory duties.

Celene Craig