

Consultation on a Draft three-year Organisational Strategy for EPRA

(7 June 2016)

Why an EPRA Strategy at this time?

The Executive Board has, in the past, been guided by the needs and responses of its membership and the strength and relevance of its activities. The Board has recently considered the wide range of environmental changes that have occurred since our establishment, as well as the challenges in the current environment (as described below), and has also reflected more generally on our future on the occasion of our recent twentieth anniversary.

In particular, the Board, being mindful of the growing number of other regulatory networks, not least the establishment and activities of ERGA, considers that it is both appropriate and timely for EPRA to reaffirm our core purpose and values, and to clearly delineate our role and relevance going forward, while, at the same time, reaffirming our commitment and support to our members and our desire to stay relevant.

We consider that an appropriate means of doing this is through **the development of an organisational strategy for EPRA** which would include a set of organisational goals and objectives to be achieved over the next three years.

By responding to the evolving environment and providing clarity on our direction and priorities, a strategy statement presents an opportunity to provide a clear articulation of EPRA's role and purpose, as well as a means to create, monitor and measure our success, to identify and build on our strengths to date and to identify the means by which we will address future challenges. It offers an opportunity to reflect on the external environment and, if necessary, to understand, and adapt or respond to those changes. In addition, it will also assist us in focusing and prioritising our work.

In this context, we present **this draft Three-year Strategy** document for discussion and debate in the open spirit with which all our debates take place. The structure of the document follows a tried-and-tested formula for organisational strategies, some general guidance for which is set out in **Appendix 1**. The Introduction section to the draft Strategy provides background and context for what follows. The content of the document has been generated by the members of the Executive Board and the Secretary based on our knowledge and understanding of the work of EPRA to date and our knowledge of our members and their current experiences and challenges. We hope it accurately captures and reflects EPRA's essential purpose and functions as it is lived and experienced by our members.

That said, we would very much welcome feedback and input into its refinement. In order to do so, it might be helpful to consider a number of questions, such as:

- Do you agree that the **DRAFT VISION STATEMENT** (as stated on p. 6) is sufficiently future-focused and clear in terms of what EPRA would ultimately want to achieve?
- Do you agree with the Board's articulation of EPRA's essential purpose over the next three years, as set out in **THE DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT** (as stated on p. 6)?
- Do you agree that the **DRAFT STATEMENT OF EPRA VALUES** (as stated on p. 6) accurately captures how we behave? Are there any values that haven't been captured?
- Are the draft **EPRA GOALS AND OBJECTIVES** (as stated on p. 7) appropriate given the nature of the challenges facing EPRA? Should EPRA continue to build on its existing strengths or does EPRA need to develop or change direction and, if so, how?

In considering these questions, you are asked to take into account in particular the later section of this document setting out the challenges for EPRA as an organisation, as well as the challenges facing its individual members, over the next three-year period.

We welcome your consideration of these issues. However, please feel free to respond in any way that you deem appropriate.

Next steps

- **7 June - 4 July 2016: Consultation with Members and other Stakeholders on Draft Strategy**
- **8 July 2016: Executive Board to consider consultation responses and amend Draft Strategy if necessary**
- **September 2016: Final Draft Strategy to be circulated to Members**
- **19-21 October 2016: Plenary Meeting in Yerevan: Consideration and decision on EPRA Strategy**

Introduction

EPRA over 20 Years

EPRA has been in existence for over 20 years and, during that time, from small beginnings (just 10 members in 1996), we have grown to become an independent network of 52 audiovisual regulators who share best practice and experience and who learn from the experiences and knowledge of others. One of the key features of EPRA is the bringing together of all its members twice yearly but, in reality, it is much more than that. EPRA functions as an “**always-on**” source of knowledge and advice for its members, where any member can readily query or research any regulatory matter with its other European colleagues.

Over that time also, EPRA has reached out to other relevant stakeholders in the European audio-visual arena. While remaining firmly focussed on serving our members, staying connected to the wider world is central to EPRA’s success. We are outward-looking to the fields of industry, academia, and audio-visual expertise and to both governmental and non-governmental organisations, in our willingness to learn from others and our desire to be current and relevant for the membership. Carefully selected representatives of industry, academia, and audiovisual experts have been participating in our meetings as speakers and panellists. Over the last five years, joint events with partner organisations have regularly been organised on an ad hoc basis. Lately, the sharing of key documents with EPRA members has also been encouraged.

While complementary audiovisual networks have become established during our lifetime, we believe that EPRA has remained strongly relevant to our members. It is a truly European forum and this is reflected in the breadth of representation in the membership which goes well beyond the borders of the European Union and the fact that it is owned and directed by its members. Our work reflects European values as is evidenced in our attitude to co-operation and sharing of information and experience and in the democratic functioning of the network itself. We strongly value our independence and we are non-political in our approach and operations. This approach is strengthened by the fact that we are a non-policy making body and by providing the highest degree of transparency in our processes and procedures as illustrated by our three-step adoption process of the yearly Work Programme.

Over its lifetime, EPRA has developed and compiled a significant, relevant and high quality set of resources which are available on an on-going basis to the members mostly through dedicated tools on the EPRA website. One of our core objectives is to be responsive and flexible to the interests and needs of our members and, therefore, through our repository, we are able to inform and support any one member regardless of its own particular stage of regulatory development.

Arising from our activities and reputation to date, EPRA is highly regarded at the European level as a professional and knowledge-rich organisation, priding itself on the high quality of its communications, operations and outputs.

The Current Environment

Since its foundation, EPRA has existed in a world of change and evolution at many levels. Indeed, the extent of the change has been transformational.

Political change has redrawn the map of Europe and the footprint of organisations such as the European Union and the Council of Europe have been extended dramatically. These changes have resulted in the establishment of new regulatory bodies, together with the challenges that are frequently faced in emerging and developing democracies.

This period has also seen significant **economic** cycles, as well as rapid **technological** developments, which have affected, indeed revolutionised, the audiovisual industry, challenging it to find new ways of serving audiences while preserving its core values and remaining economically viable. Television has moved from the analogue world to more complex digital forms of delivery, with content being offered on both a linear and non-linear basis.

The accompanying **social** changes are reflected in the increasingly multi-cultural composition of communities and the way in which both individuals and communities use media and generate content.

In 1995, when EPRA was founded, the *Television without Frontiers* Directive concerned itself with traditional linear forms of television content and distribution. This legislative basis for audiovisual regulation changed significantly with the scope and jurisdiction of the *Audiovisual Media Services* Directive (AVMSD) which now faces a new construction to reflect the speed and evolution of audiovisual content and its distribution.

It is important to recollect at that stage that the new draft of the AVMSD will only constitute one element in the bigger picture of the Digital Single Market strategy (DSM), which intends to include a modernisation of the EU copyright framework, of the EU telecoms rules, rules on Internet speed and quality and ICT standards, and will also look at platforms, online intermediaries, data, cloud computing and the collaborative economy.

Finding appropriate **legal and regulatory** responses to developments in the changing audiovisual sphere has been a significant focus for both governments and regulators in order to achieve the goals of providing diverse, culturally-relevant and pluralistic content with which to serve European audiences. Central to EPRA's ongoing relevance, therefore, has been our ability to respond to, indeed anticipate, the impact of such changes for our members and to offer an opportunity to highlight and debate the impacts in a non-combative, politically-neutral forum.

Future Challenges

Turning more specifically to the challenges facing EPRA as an organisation over the next three years, the Executive Board considers it appropriate that, firstly, it is both desirable and necessary to consider the challenges facing our members. They include:

- Multiplication of AV services and service providers: the increased level of services and activity results in an increased regulatory workload and a consequent requirement for EPRA members to stay abreast of developments in the wider environment.

- Changes in consumption patterns and audience behaviour: changing consumption patterns, particularly amongst young people, driven by new technology and the plethora of new sources of content, are by now well documented. Such changes are causing fragmentation of audiences, and traditional television viewing – although still strong – is beginning a pattern of long-awaited decline. In turn, this impacts on the revenues available to support the development of quality content.
- The necessity for audiovisual regulators to adapt in a time of flux: as a consequence of the far-reaching environmental changes described in the previous section, audiovisual regulators are required to find appropriate regulatory responses in the interests of audiences, as well as sectoral players.
- EU Legislative Changes: contributing to changes in the audiovisual legislative framework whether through attendance at meetings, making of submissions or participating in the transposition of new legislation at the national level.
- Challenges of increasing transnational cooperation: The increased participation of regulatory authorities in many regional and European cooperation fora and networks constitutes a strain on the resources of EPRA members in terms of time, personnel and finances. This could ultimately lead to prioritization of cooperation activities to the ones considered as essential.
- Independence: there are specific threats to the independence of certain audiovisual regulatory bodies and the independence of the media at a national level.

Consequent upon the challenges facing our members, EPRA considers that its own challenges arising over the three-year period of this strategy will be:

- Providing support: how can EPRA best position itself to continue to support its members in responding and adapting to change in the audiovisual environment in ways that are relevant, and future-focused?
- Resources: how can we harness the ability of our members to participate in and contribute to the activities of our network (presenting papers at meetings; responding to questionnaires etc.), given the necessity to divert resources – time, personnel and finance – to other regulatory activities at national and European levels, including participation in other regulatory networks?
- EPRA support structures: in what ways can the development of EPRA's support structures contribute to the delivery of EPRA's strategic objectives?
- Add Value: through the breadth of its activities, how can EPRA add value both for its members and for other participants in the wider European audiovisual field?

The Draft Strategy Statement presented below aims to respond to the challenges of EPRA as a network and the challenges facing individual members.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) supports independent, professional and effective regulation of the audiovisual media, and through such support, promotes freedom of expression and culturally diverse and pluralistic media.

Mission

EPRA is a diverse, connected community of audiovisual regulators which provides an independent and transparent forum for sharing relevant information, best practice and experience.

Values

The following core values of EPRA have been strengthened and reinforced over many years and, we believe, are central to its success to date. They remain as relevant going forward as they have for the past 20 plus years.

- **Adds Value:** EPRA adds value to the work of its members through the timeliness and relevance of its work, and the willingness of the members to contribute and co-operate in the sharing of information, experience and best practice. EPRA is responsive to, and its work is informed by, the practical and learning needs and interests of our members.
- **Independent:** we are non-political and impartial in our approach and operations and are strengthened by the fact that we are a non-policy making body. We respect the independence of the members we serve.
- **Informal:** informality characterises our deliberations and interactions and facilitates a safe, free-flowing discourse and the exchange of a frank and diverse set of views, which ultimately contributes to building a feeling of community amongst members.
- **Transparent and Accountable:** we are transparent and accountable in our processes and procedures as is evidenced by our open and consultative approach to developing and implementing our work programme and activities and in our annual reporting to our members.
- **An Expert, Informed and Learning Organisation:** EPRA prides itself on being an expert and informed voice in European audiovisual regulation. Our twice-annual fora for regulators aim to demonstrate an openness to listen and a willingness to learn.
- **Communication and Co-operation:** EPRA builds strong internal and external links, both formal and informal, and stays connected with its membership and other networks, the audiovisual industry, governmental and non-governmental organisations, academia, and sectoral interest groups.

Strategic Goals and Objectives 2017-2019

Below, we set out our high level goals for the period of the Strategy, together with the objectives which will assist us in realising our goals.

As mentioned in the part dealing with challenges, one overarching goal is to provide EPRA members with appropriate tools to increase the understanding of the changing nature of regulation by giving keys to better grasp the complexity of the new media environment. The overarching objective of EPRA will thus be to remain future-focussed and reactive to change.

Over the period of this strategy, EPRA shall:

1. Continue to serve our members by:

(a) Building on our core work of being an informed source for our membership:

Towards this end, we will:

- * Continue to host two plenary meetings of EPRA each year.
- * Facilitate the learning and development of our members through the compilation and dissemination of timely and relevant information and to grow our repository of audiovisual regulatory resources.
- * Avail of opportunities to co-operate in the hosting of joint events (e.g. with the EAO).
- * Build fruitful relationships through information exchange, consultation and collaboration with relevant interest groups at the European level.
- * Ensure continuity in the quality of our outputs and procedures to date by reviewing and enhancing our consultation and review processes.

(b) Growing the participation and involvement of members

Towards this end, we will:

- * Consider ways of encouraging greater participation and involvement by the members in the twice-yearly plenary meetings and, in consultation with the members, explore other possibilities such as the establishment of thematic groups on regulatory matters or the revival of permanent online working groups.
- * Present a discussion paper to the members, debating the potential for growing the membership of EPRA to reflect interest expressed by close regulatory neighbours and make a decision on whether such a course of action is desirable and viable.

(c) Ensuring our work stays relevant:

Towards this end, we will:

- * Consider our members' needs and interests in all aspects of our work.
- * Stay abreast of developments at the European level and reach out to external expertise.
- * Ensure that our work programme and priorities are complementary to the activities of other networks in the audiovisual field.

2. Strengthen EPRA's support structures – build secretariat and other resources to support the work of EPRA and our ability to deliver our strategic objectives

Towards this end, we will:

- * Through discussion with the EPRA members and with the EAO/Council of Europe, ensure that a sufficient level of resources (both personnel and financial) are secured to support EPRA's work.

3. Communication and Participation: we will actively communicate and engage at the European level to share EPRA's learning and expertise

Towards this end, we will:

- * Increase the visibility and voice of EPRA through communication, engagement and promotion of EPRA in relevant European fora.
- * Strengthen our relationships and engagement with key stakeholders.
- * Articulate the role and purpose of EPRA and distinguish it from the activities of other regulatory networks.
- * Use the Executive Board to ensure maximum EPRA representation and participation at international events.

Appendix 1

Why have an Organisational Strategy?

A strategy statement sets out the **direction** and **scope** of an organisation's work over the medium to long term. It typically acts as a guiding light for an organisation and those who participate in it. As a **high level plan**, it can help an organisation to achieve one or more goals and is particularly useful in conditions of uncertainty. Having a strategy is also a helpful way of ensuring that an organisation remains relevant to those it serves.

The component parts of an Organisational Strategy

Typically, there are a number of component parts to an organisational strategy and it is helpful to understand the purpose of the component parts. They are statements of **Vision; Mission** and **Values** that direct and guide an organisation over a sustained period of time. It also typically contains a set of **Strategic Goals and Objectives** that the organisation hopes to achieve over the period of the strategy.

Briefly, these can be described as follows:

- **Vision:** a vision statement asks “where are we going?” and “are we there yet?” It is future-focused and aspirational. The vision is a big picture idea of what we want to achieve and flowing from this are the long-term goals of an organisational strategy – the impact it will have and the activities it will pursue.
- **Mission:** A mission statement is a practical statement, defining the fundamental purpose of an organisation and its reason for existing over the period of the strategy. It provides direction for the organisation and guides all its strategic decisions. A mission statement should communicate who the organisation is, what it does and who it serves.
- **Values:** values identify the principles and ethics by which an organisation conducts itself and its activities. It is a statement of what we stand for and how we behave while trying to achieve our vision. Values underpin an organisation's policies and procedures and act as a reference point when making decisions.
- **Strategic Goals and Objectives:** the goals of an organisation's strategy are a list of potential achievements over the period of the strategy. The objectives concern the *specific steps* to be taken in order to reach those achievements. They operationalise the mission statement and they help to provide guidance on how an organisation expects to achieve its mission and vision. Typically, they set out specific outputs and outcomes that an organisation expects to achieve within a well-defined timeframe. They outline the “who, what, when, where and how” of reaching the objectives.