

EPRA Chairperson's Report 2016

1. OVERVIEW OF 2016

2016 was a year of many developments and activities in the European Audiovisual field and this was reflected in the level of activity within EPRA as a network as well as for the members of EPRA who, in addition to all their usual regulatory duties, had added work arising from the activities of the European Commission and ERGA in the review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

In addition to reflecting and responding to the many developments happening throughout Europe, EPRA undertook the development of its **first Statement of Strategy**, not least because it was timely to do so but also because the level and pace of developments demanded such a response. In addition to the development of its first strategy statement, EPRA set itself an ambitious programme of activities that aimed to build upon its work to date and in particular to foster and grow relationships with key stakeholders who support and complement our work. A summary of these activities are set out in the report which follows.

2. EPRA STATEMENT OF STRATEGY

The EPRA Executive Board took the decision to develop a three-year Statement of Strategy for the period 2017-2019 in the context of the changing political, economic, technological, social and legislative landscape and the impact of changes on the European audiovisual sector. It was considered timely to do so, also given the growing number of other regulatory networks in the audiovisual sphere.

Twenty years after the establishment of EPRA, the preparation of the strategy provided a meaningful opportunity to reaffirm our core purpose and values, to provide clarity on our direction and priorities over the next three years, as well as to reaffirm our commitment and support to our members going forward.

The process of consultation with members and stakeholders was a really positive one and I would like to formally record the appreciation of the Executive Board and the EPRA Secretariat for the level and quality of the submissions received, as well as the engagement with the issues raised. I believe our final strategy is strengthened as a result and will guide us in the years ahead as we continue to serve our members in meeting the regulatory challenges of the ever-changing audiovisual landscape.

Arising from the development of our Statement of Strategy, the Executive Board has adopted a high-level three-year work plan on 27 January 2017. The three-year work plan has been [annexed to the EPRA Strategy](#) and will support the achievement of our strategic goals and objectives over the strategy period.

3. EPRA MEETINGS

- Two very successful plenary meetings were held in the course of 2016. The first of these - the 43rd meeting of EPRA - was held in the vibrant city of [Barcelona](#) (25-27 May) - the third occasion on which our colleagues in the Catalan Audiovisual Council have hosted an EPRA meeting. There was a very high level of participation with 175 delegates from 47 countries and representatives from 50 of our members. The 44th meeting of EPRA took place in [Yerevan](#) (19-21 October). By contrast, it was the first occasion on which an EPRA meeting was held in Armenia at the invitation of the National Commission on Television and Radio of the Republic of Armenia. For the majority of EPRA members, it afforded an opportunity to visit Armenia for the first time. On both occasions, the range of contributions and the quality of content was particularly high and feedback from our members was very positive. Each meeting also provided our members with first-hand experiences of a rich heritage: local culture and traditions were reflected in the agenda with musical, culinary and sportive highlights.
- Activity of Executive Board: The Executive Board met on four occasions in the course of the year - two meetings were held in the course of the plenary sessions in Barcelona and Yerevan. At a meeting in Zagreb on 4 February, the [Work Programme for 2016](#) was finalised and work on EPRA's Statement of Strategy got underway in earnest. At the meeting of the Executive Board on 8 July in London, the Barcelona meeting was reviewed. In addition, the outcomes of the consultation with our members and other stakeholders in respect of EPRA's Draft Strategy were considered and the final text of the Statement of Strategy agreed.

4. CO-OPERATION

Reflecting EPRA's key value of collaboration with other networks, the audiovisual industry, governmental and non-governmental organisations, academia and sectoral interests, our co-operation activities continued apace in 2016:

- **ERGA:** EPRA representatives participated in two ERGA plenary meetings in the course of 2016: the first meeting in **Amsterdam on 2nd March** and the second in **Brussels on November 29th**. At both these meetings, EPRA was afforded the opportunity to provide updates to the ERGA membership on EPRA activities and on elements of its Work Programme for the year. ERGA representatives also contributed actively to the deliberations of our plenary meetings in Barcelona and Yerevan.
- **European Commission:** A representative of the DG CONNECT participated in our plenary meetings and provided comprehensive and timely information updates, notably on the review process of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The EPRA Secretariat also participated in meetings of the Commission's working group on media literacy further details of which are set out below.
- **Council of Europe:** Representatives of the Media and Internet Division participated in our plenary meetings and reported on developments and activities of interest to our members. EPRA was also represented at a number of Council of Europe events in the course of the year, further details of which are set out below.

- **Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom for the Media:** A representative of the OSCE-RFOM participated in our plenary meeting in Barcelona and was a panellist and active contributor in the Working group “Media in Times of Crisis: focus on Media Service providers”.
- **European Audiovisual Observatory:** Staff of the Observatory participated actively in various aspects of EPRA’s Work Programme during 2016. In what has now become a feature of the co-operation between our two organisations in recent years - the December Workshop in Strasbourg - the focus in 2016 was on “Addressing Regulatory Asymmetries: video-sharing platforms, targeting on-demand services and services outside the EU”. Adopting the format of previous workshops, the successful one-day event gathered together national regulators, industry representatives and experts to examine and discuss issues such as: the material scope of the AVMSD and video-sharing platforms; the principle of country of origin and targeting services; the internal market and services outside the EU; and tools and remedies for dealing with regulatory asymmetries.
- **MAVISE:** Co-operation between EPRA and the European Audiovisual Observatory on the development of the [MAVISE Database](#) was on-going throughout 2016 and meaningful progress was made in the year. 8 EPRA member authorities have participated in the “MAVISE Taskforce” led by Ofcom and met twice to develop a methodology to improve the data collection on licences with the aim of improving the quality and accuracy of the MAVISE database managed by the European Audiovisual Observatory. In 2017, the project will be extended to all EPRA members who are covered by the database.
- **EBU:** co-operation with the EBU was strengthened through on-going liaison and through the exchange of information and publications. These were made available to our members for the first time. Exchanges also took place in respect of planning for the hosting of a joint workshop which it is hoped will take place in 2017.
- **KU Leuven, TNO and Sparks & Co:** on the invitation of Peggy Valcke, KU Leuven, EPRA agreed to participate as an advisor in a project which is seeking funding under the ICT 19b call in the Horizon 2020 Programme, and in which KU Leuven is a key partner. The project aims to establish a European media technology and policy exchange to connect technology/app developers with policy-makers/regulators and vice versa. A decision in respect of the award of funding (and consequently EPRA’s future role in the project) is expected by mid-2017.

5. REPRESENTATION

A significant level of representation was undertaken once again by the Secretary, as well as the Chairperson and members of the Executive Board. The following highlights the key activities in 2016 in this regard:

- **Conference of the Dutch Presidency, 3-4 March:** alongside the ERGA meeting held in Amsterdam, EPRA was represented by Chairperson Celene Craig and Secretary Emmanuelle Machet at a Conference organised by the Dutch Presidency entitled: *Promoting Cross-Border Circulation of European Audio-Visual Content*.

- **Media & Learning 2016 Conference, Brussels, 10-11 March:** Emmanuelle Machet participated as a panellist at the *Media & Learning 2016 Conference*, on the theme - *Media literacy and media education in a changing media landscape – who are the key players and what are their motivations?*
- **IIC Telecommunications and Media Forum, Brussels, 16-17 March:** Celene Craig spoke at the IIC Forum, addressing a session on *Cross Border Content and Online Services*.
- **AGCOM conference, Naples, 21 March:** Vice-Chairperson Damir Hajduk represented EPRA as a speaker during a conference on public service broadcasting organised by AGCOM.
- **MSI-MED Committee, Strasbourg, 22-23 March:** Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA at the 1st meeting of the Council of Europe Committee of experts on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership. Helena Mandić (EPRA Vice-chair) was appointed Chair of the Committee.
- **Sarajevo, 19th May, Future of Public Service Media in the Western Balkans:** EPRA Vice-chairs Damir Hajduk and Helena Mandić represented EPRA at a conference organised by the University of Fribourg and the Center for Social Research Analitika in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They made presentations on *The Challenges of Regulating PSB in the Western Balkans and the Public Value Test*, and on *PSBs and the Media Market*.
- **EMR/ERA Annual Conference on European Media Law 2016:** 2-3 June, Brussels. Damir Hajduk, represented EPRA at this annual event which focused on the reform of the AVMS Directive; geo-blocking; and media convergence, fundamental rights and cultural diversity.
- **CERRE Executive Seminar: *The new AVMS Directive: Fit for the Internet Age?*** 23-24 June, Brussels. Damir Hajduk participated as a panellist at the event, which included many industry representatives, and which discussed all of the key elements of the draft Directive.
- **MSI-MED Committee, Strasbourg, 27-28 September:** Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA as an observer at the 2nd meeting of the Committee of Experts on Media Pluralism and Transparency of Media Ownership. The draft of a future Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership was discussed, as well as two draft feasibility studies related to the media coverage of electoral campaigns (on gender equality and media coverage of elections and on the shift of electoral campaigning to internet platforms).
- **IRIS Editorial Board:** Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA as an observer at the meeting of the IRIS Editorial Board which took place on 13 October in Strasbourg.
- **Council of Europe, EBU and Czech Parliamentary Assembly Conference, Prague, 10-11 November:** Celene Craig and Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA at a Conference on *Public Service Media and Democracy*, hosted by the Czech Parliamentary Assembly. Celene Craig participated as a panellist in a discussion on the sustainability of public service media and Helena Mandić, EPRA Vice-Chair, participated as a panellist in a discussion on hate speech and the role and responsibilities of parliaments, regulators and public service media.

- **EU Media Literacy Expert Group**, 15 November, Brussels: Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA at the meeting of the [EU Media Literacy Expert Group](#). About 90 participants from civil society, academia, media players and public authorities gathered to exchange updates and best practices about media literacy.
- **CDMSI, Strasbourg 1 December**: Emmanuelle Machet represented EPRA at the meeting of the Council of Europe Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI). On that occasion, she briefly updated CDMSI members about the EPRA 3-year Strategy, and on the final output of the Working group on Media in times of crisis.

6. PUBLICATIONS

The following main comparative research documents were published by EPRA in the course of 2016 and are available on our website - in addition to many other working papers and presentations.

An overarching theme in the EPRA Work Programme for 2016 was the exchange of experience and best practices concerning internal processes relating to the governance, the functioning and the daily operations of media regulators - ultimately to encourage independent, accountable and efficient regulation. Four deliverables are particularly worth mentioning in that regard:

- The challenges of compliance and enforcement in a changing media ecosystem: [Comparative background document](#) by the EPRA Secretariat. The paper presents an overview of how regulators strategically determine their objectives, priorities and activities in the area of compliance and enforcement and how they effectively plan and implement their activities in this regard.
- The challenges of compliance and enforcement in a changing media ecosystem: [keynote address by Jean-François Furnémont](#) (Wagner-Hatfield). The keynote address looks at the challenges of compliance and enforcement in a changing media ecosystem and invites broadcasting regulatory authorities to urgently adjust their practices and mindset to the new environment while keeping key regulatory objectives in mind.
- Case study on the protection of minors: focus on reality and TV shows; [Comparative Background Document by Maida Ćulahović](#), CRA (BA). The document presents an overview of approaches to regulation of reality and talent shows, the main issues at stake as well as experiences in relation to these specific programme formats.
- [Media in times of crisis](#): Comparative paper on the role, strategies & regulatory practices of NRAs by Asja Rokša-Zubčević (CRA, BA). The paper focuses on the role that regulators play in times of crisis and discuss recent cases, concrete challenges and tools including “soft” measures.

Members are reminded of the 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 43rd EPRA meeting in Barcelona](#)

- [Overview of country reports submitted by EPRA members for the 44th EPRA meeting in Yerevan](#)

In addition to the meetings, the EPRA Website continued to be a favourite place of interaction for the EPRA network; over the period, more than 100 news items were produced as well as 16 questionnaires.

7. 2017: THE YEAR AHEAD

The year ahead promises to be no less busy than 2016. Consultation on the draft EPRA Work Programme 2017 got underway in January. The EPRA Board adopted the [WP on 27 January 2017](#).

EPRA Plenary Meetings will be held in **Edinburgh, Scotland (17-19 May)** and in **Vienna, Austria (11-13 October)**. In line with the EPRA statutes, we will hold elections to the EPRA Executive Board, at our meeting in Edinburgh in May.

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, the EPRA Board has very recently adopted a high-level three-year work plan to achieve strategic goals and objectives. It is the intention of the Executive Board to start with the implementation of the actions arising from the high-level three-year work plan in 2017.

A busy programme of representation and co-operation activities is also expected once again this year, commencing with participation in the first ERGA plenary meeting to be held in Brussels on 9 March. As always, reports of our participation and representation activities will be reported throughout the year.

CONCLUSION

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your co-operation and participation in EPRA's activities during 2016 and to wish you all a successful year ahead in responding to the opportunities and challenges of audiovisual regulation. I look forward to our continued collaboration in 2017!



Celene Craig
EPRA Chairperson