

## **Reviewing EPRA's first three-year Strategy**

As adopted by the Assembly of EPRA members on 25 October 2019 in Athens

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### **Introduction**

In October 2016, EPRA members, further to a wide consultation process, endorsed EPRA's first organisational Strategy. The introduction of a Strategy for the period 2017-2019 was intended to:

- provide a clear articulation of EPRA's role and purpose, and a means to create, monitor and measure our success, to identify and build on our strengths to date and to ascertain the means by which we will address future challenges
- reflect on the changes in the wider audiovisual sector and to understand, adapt and respond to change
- focus and prioritise EPRA's work.

[The adopted Statement](#) included a **commitment to review the implementation of the Strategy** in the final six months of the period and indicated that the assessment of performance would involve consulting with members and relevant stakeholders. The **Chairpersons' Reports** delivered during the Strategy period (for [2017](#) and [2018](#)), reflecting the view of the Executive Board on progress achieved against EPRA's strategic objectives, were a first step towards a performance review.

The Statement committed to measure EPRA's performance against the Strategy but did not mention any performance indicators or refer to specific metrics although through this review process several have been identified, and used, which could also be reflected in the future strategy.

As the review process was initiated six months before the end of the strategy, the Board determined that summer 2019 would be the cut-off date for considering developments to include in the assessment.



## Time-line:

- **30 September 2019:** The draft Strategy Review is circulated to collect members' views
- **25 October 2019, Athens:** The review is presented to members at a plenary session
- **25 October 2019, Athens:** First ideas for the Strategy 2020-2022 are collected
- **Autumn 2019:** The draft Strategy 2020-2022 is to be developed by the Board
- **Early 2020:** The draft Strategy 2020-2022 is to be released for public consultation
- **15 May 2020, Antwerp:** Formal endorsement of the new 3-year Strategy by EPRA members.

## Executive Summary

Looking back at what we achieved in the period 2017-2019, the introduction of a 3-year Strategy was an **important milestone for EPRA**:

- Having defined EPRA's Vision and Mission, a set of Values and strategic objectives enabled us to focus and prioritise EPRA's work while being responsive to members' needs and demands.
- This encouraged **thematic consistency in our Work Programmes and the quality of deliverables** produced (notably in the area of gender, PSM and Media Literacy) and helped us to identify and keep members informed about important new policy challenges.
- Having a Strategy allowed us to **clearly articulate EPRA's role and purpose**. This helped us delineate our activities from those of other regulatory networks, while developing close cooperation with them, especially with ERGA.

The Board came to the conclusion that EPRA **has achieved its strategic goals** for the period and had **added value for its members**:

- One highlight was the **increased level of interaction** with members, notably with the help of the "World Café" format and taskforces (on the MAVISE database and Media Literacy), and the recognition of the important space that EPRA creates for members to enhance strong informal working relationships.
- A major achievement for the period - and the most time-consuming task for the Board - was the reinforcement of EPRA's support structures that led to the **hiring of an additional full-time staff member for the Secretariat**. The process involved extensive consultation with EPRA members and a major review of budgetary and fee arrangements. In the Board's opinion, the outcome was a testimony of the robustness and transparency of its work processes. The Board and the Secretariat believe that the new arrangements are key for an improved functioning of the Secretariat and, more generally, for the long-term sustainability of our organisation.
- More detailed consultation with members, during the **review of tools and processes to achieve greater participation and involvement of the members**, has allowed the Board to focus even more intensively on needs and priorities.

Introducing a 3-year Strategy was a learning process for the Board and the Secretariat and, in retrospect, there are several things that we **could have done better**:

- We feel that we can still improve our formats and debates; this is something that we would like to continue addressing in the next Strategy.
- Finding active and engaged content producers for the sessions remain a challenge; we should do more to help members better understand that role and encourage wider take-up.
- While we have significantly increased EPRA's visibility and voice, we hope to reap further benefits by building on the reinforced Secretariat. We feel that we could better identify and exploit synergies between the EPRA and ERGA Work Programmes for the benefit of our respective membership.

**We very much welcome your views on this review: you will find a brief list of questions on p. 14.**

## 1. Fulfilling EPRA's Strategic Objectives for 2017-2019

### 1.1. Objective 1 Continue to serve our members

#### 1.1.1. By being an informed and relevant source for our membership

The Strategy committed to host twice-yearly meetings, considering EPRA members needs and interests, facilitating learning and development, growing EPRA's resources and ensuring continuity of quality outputs and procedures.

This objective lies at the heart of EPRA's value to members, and our approach to developing the Annual Work Programmes, populating the website, providing curated updates and facilitating connections and communications among members are all motivated by this goal.

The Board based its assessment of the fulfilment of this objective on the analysis of the content output produced during the period, the review of procedures and work processes and the consideration of key quantitative elements.



#### *How has EPRA achieved its goals and objectives and added value?*

Between 2017 and 2019, we have:

- Delivered three [Work Programmes](#) that have reflected developments in European media and regulatory policy as prioritised by our members. The output of the Work Programmes notably included presentations by key academics and stakeholders and the production of many background papers, several of them comparative in nature<sup>1</sup>.
- Compiled and disseminated timely and relevant information, particularly through leveraging our network of contacts and information sources. An average of 100 [news items and announcements](#) have been uploaded on the website and shared on social media every year.
- Facilitated requests from individual NRAs for information, including through the [survey function on the EPRA website](#), which hosted an average of 20 questionnaires each year.



#### *What have been the highlights?*

EPRA covered a **breadth of topics**, ranging from the challenges posed by the Digital Age for News provision (2017) and for Public Service Content (2018), to the implications of Digital Disruption for long-standing regulatory policy – pluralism and advertising regulation – and to the risks associated with Political Communications over social media. In 2019, EPRA is turning to the complex issue of Artificial Intelligence to further expand our understanding and awareness of relevant media topics.

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<sup>1</sup> Such as "[News in the Digital Age and the role of regulators](#)" (2017); "[Media Literacy: Focus on the role of regulators](#)" (2017); "[Achieving Greater Diversity in Broadcasting - special focus on Gender; benefits and best practice approaches \(2018\)](#)"; "[Public service and public interest content in the digital age: the role of regulators](#)" (2019).

This breadth has meant that EPRA has been at the **forefront of debates** on some of the most crucial topics facing media policy and regulation, including running sessions on algorithmic content curation already in 2017, long before it was a term on everyone's lips. In part, we've been able to do this kind of foresighted work because of our continued collaboration with internationally recognised **external participants** from academia, as well as senior-level speakers from key stakeholders, including online platforms, broadcasters and expert consultants.

The ambitious topics tackled by EPRA in Plenary sessions were also complemented by a **practical and responsive working group programme**. Media Literacy has been a particular focus of interest for our members and one of the ways in which EPRA has shown its ability to react to the changing environment: participation in 2018's Taskforce on Media Literacy grew over the course of the year, including through email, to produce several concrete outputs and become a permanent working group in 2019 with more ambitious plans for the future.

What is particularly notable is the **thematic consistency** running through the programmes of work that EPRA members have set themselves over the 3-year Strategy. In part, this consistency reflects the benefits of such a Strategy in the first place: in addition to setting concrete goals, we drew out the challenges facing regulators and thus lay the groundwork for series of Work Programmes that flowed naturally from each other and built on the work done in the previous year. This has helped to reflect our members' interests and to grow EPRA's reputation as a practical, forward-thinking organisation.



#### *What have been the challenges and what could we do better?*

As reflected in the [survey conducted in the autumn of 2018 on the structure and content of EPRA meetings](#) (discussed in more detail, below) not every session in our meetings is equally successful. The pressures on resources mean that preparation time for content producers can be limited and there has been an over-reliance on long presentations, a lack of coherence and insufficient time for debate. All of these are legitimate criticisms that any self-aware organisation hoping to bring value to its members should reflect and act on. As the EPRA Board prepares its next 3-year Strategy for 2020-22 we welcome further views from members on this.

##### 1.1.2. By growing the participation and involvement of members

The Board based its assessment of the fulfilment of this objective on the analysis of the participation of members in meetings, the level of interaction during meetings and involvement in content, cooperation and interaction in-between meetings, as well as a review of past consultation processes, and of feedback by members. The discussion at our Plenary meeting in Bratislava, and the post-meeting feedback we have begun to collect after our meetings were particularly helpful.

Strong engagement has been evident throughout this three-year period, but this remains a challenge for the Board, particularly in terms of finding engaged content producers for the sessions. The Board is preparing to tackle this challenge ahead by consulting members on these issues and making a series of initial changes and improvements to try to make participation easier and more inherently valuable.



### *How has EPRA achieved its goals and objectives and added value?*

- Participation in meetings has remained extremely high, with almost all 53 members attending our biannual meetings. Participation has ranged between about 130 and 170 individuals, including external speakers.
- We have developed a discussion paper and consulted members on the tools and processes to achieve greater participation and involvement of members<sup>2</sup>.
- We have reviewed the policy of Membership of EPRA and potential expansion, developing a discussion paper for consultation with members<sup>3</sup>.
- The list of contact persons and the fact sheets ("[Members' profiles](#)") on the website have been regularly updated.
- We have facilitated greater and wider working level participation and involvement in focused and output-oriented Taskforces on the MAVISE database and Media Literacy.



### *What have been the highlights?*

We have seen a high degree of **senior-level participation** by members in Plenary and Working group sessions. In addition, there has been consistently **active engagement from members** at the working level, in particular in the Working groups on [Gender in Media](#) and [Regulatory Cooperation under the AVMS Directive and beyond](#).

As part of our objective of consulting with members on tools and processes, the Board began a review of the content and structure of EPRA meetings. A discussion in 2018 in Bratislava **endorsed the rationale of twice-yearly meetings and a "small-steps" approach** to making the meetings more effective. Satisfaction surveys of members completed at the end of the last two meetings threw up several constructively critical points, but also gave us much to be satisfied with, including the **continued relevance of the topics** at our meetings to members. In addition, **informal networking** at meetings is a source of ever greater value for members, and working group formats are increasingly preferred, as these foster better interaction.

The **theme of interaction** runs through two recent developments: the increased use of the "World Café" format in Working group meetings; and through the evolution of temporary taskforces as part of EPRA's annual Work Programme. Taskforces have been used to support greater practical cooperation in the fields of Licensing and Media Literacy, resulting in:

- The improvement of the quality of information in the MAVISE database, and a network of permanent, expert regulatory contacts for the EAO's team;
- The production of several [guidance documents on various approaches to Media Literacy](#), as well as highly participatory roundtable meetings to share and discuss best practice.

Both Taskforces have evolved into permanent Working groups and have **provided value beyond their immediate membership**. The work on licensing has supported the European Commission (via the improvement of MAVISE and the publication of an [EAO report on licensing procedures in the EU 28](#))

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<sup>2</sup> Fulfilling EPRA's Strategic Objectives for 2018: Reviewing the Structure of EPRA Meetings" - Paper by the EPRA Executive Board: <https://www.epra.org/attachments/epra-strategic-objectives-document-on-reviewing-the-structure-of-epra-meetings>

<sup>3</sup> Discussion paper EPRA/2019/07 by the EPRA Executive Board "Fulfilling EPRA's Strategic Objectives for 2019: discussing the potential for expansion of EPRA membership": <https://www.epra.org/attachments/epra-strategic-objectives-discussing-the-potential-for-expansion-of-epra-membership>

in improving the transparency on the licences granted by regulators and thus enabling the improved application of the AVMS Directive. Meanwhile, in the field of Media Literacy, media regulators are increasingly thinking creatively about how they can be more active, supported and inspired by examples and guidance from their fellow EPRA members.

Looking at the participation and involvement of members also meant **reviewing the policy of EPRA membership and potential expansion**. A discussion in May 2019 endorsed the proposal not to expand full membership to non-European countries in the short to medium term as the risks and burdens appeared to clearly outweigh the benefits. Instead, members approved the continuation of the practice of extending invitations to regulators beyond the geographical scope of Europe to participate in meetings as guests on a case-by-case basis, depending on relevance and agenda.



### *What have been the challenges and what could we do better?*

The **planning of informative and interactive Plenary sessions** could be improved. Board sponsors can certainly work more closely with content producers to reflect on these points and improve on the focus, length and balance of our high-level debates.

These tasks are not straightforward, and rely on **engaged content producers**, which in turn puts greater pressure on already busy members. We must do more to help members better understand the role of content producer, to encourage wider take-up of this role, and to ensure EPRA members can justify prioritising this kind of work within their other responsibilities. The Board aims to make this an objective of EPRA's next strategy and welcomes views on how best this can be achieved.

Maintaining momentum for active participation remains a challenge for the EPRA Board, which is aware of the continued pressure on resources. **Opportunities for greater efficiencies**, particularly in view of the coming implementation of the revised AVMS Directive, will be increasingly important. This is discussed under Objective 3., below, where we discuss EPRA's cooperation with other networks.

Finally, we rely on **members as hosts of our meetings**. This was acutely highlighted in the autumn of 2018. In that sense, the commitment of the CBR (SK) in hosting the meeting at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour could also be cited as a highlight. One of our challenges in the coming years will be to ensure that EPRA does everything it can to support members who are interested in hosting future meetings well in advance.

## **1.2. Objective 2 Strengthen EPRA's support structures: build the Secretariat and other resources**

As EPRA had grown in membership over time, taken on new activities and tasks, and thus gained overall importance, the **Secretariat had gradually reached its limits**. The hiring of a temporary assistant, although providing some relief, could no longer sufficiently compensate for the increasing workload and could not guarantee continuity within the organisation. Finally, there was a risk of unexpected absences of the Secretariat, which could potentially lead to a standstill of EPRA. In summary, a review was needed if the Secretariat was to continue to provide a high-quality service to members to deliver on the strategic objectives.

The aim of this strategy point was to **secure the optimum level of resources** (personnel, IT and financial) to support EPRA's work. In particular, it involved:

- **Reviewing staffing arrangements and** agreeing a revised staffing arrangement with EAO
- **Implementing** a revised staffing arrangement **with EAO**
- **Reviewing budgetary and other resources** (such as IT development) needed
- **Seeking approval of EPRA members** to changes in resources and budget.

In this instance, the Board based its assessment on the analysis of the process, the acceptance by EPRA members and the implementation of the new staffing and budgetary arrangements.



### *How has EPRA achieved its goals and objectives and added value?*

At the meeting in Edinburgh in 2017, the board presented a first concrete proposal on the staffing of the Secretariat<sup>4</sup>. The members endorsed in principle this proposal, which contained the **hiring of a full-time administrative assistant**. The Board was further asked **to develop suggestions for a tiered-fee structure to replace the flat fee system**.

Further to discussions with the EAO to ascertain additional cost expectations, **we launched a wide consultation procedure**<sup>5</sup> in August 2017 to obtain the views of members on various options that might be open to EPRA regarding its funding, fee-charging and its staffing arrangements.

Specific points brought forward by the members were clarified, an initial budget proposal for 2018 – 2020 revised, and a letter of support from the EAO provided<sup>6</sup>. At the meeting in Vienna in October 2017, members voted on a set of proposals and agreed on:

- A set of principles underpinning EPRA's Fee-charging policy i.e. fairness; proportionality, simplicity, transparency, ability to pay, stability/predictability and equality in treatment of members.
- The hiring of an additional full-time staff member for the Secretariat.
- A new Membership Fee model to replace the flat fee system with a simple tiered fee structure.

Following the successful vote, the decisions have been fully implemented:

- The new tiered fee structure was introduced. The Board duly assessed the 15 applications for derogations to the flat fee received, identified four authorities who should benefit from the reduced fee and issued reasoned decisions on each application.
- The implementation of the staffing proposal was undertaken in conjunction with the Council of Europe. After a lengthy evaluation period, the vacancy was filled. Ms. Géraldine Denis, a lawyer with a specialization in Media Law joined the EPRA Secretariat on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019 as a full-time and permanent administrative assistant.



### *What have been the highlights?*

This strategic objective presented a **major challenge** for EPRA, because it directly affected the financial capacities of the members. With that in mind, the Board and the Secretariat have taken this issue very seriously and made a point of being **as transparent as possible by constantly providing members with clear and comprehensive information**.

Care was also taken to **give members the opportunity to express themselves at each stage of the procedure**. Members have accordingly actively participated, which helped to guide the process. The Edinburgh meeting provided the first substantial feedback by members, amongst them the proposal

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/edinburgh-executive-board-proposal-on-epra-secretariat-staffing>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/epra-secretariat-and-budget-towards-increased-sustainability-consultation-document>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/document-on-the-outcomes-of-the-consultation-on-the-epra-secretariat-and-budget-2018-2020>



to take into account the limited financial capacities of very small regulatory authorities. This gave us the opportunity to react and this finally led to the adaptation of the system of the annual fee.

Furthermore, it also led to the development of key fee charging principles. These **provide sustainable guiding principles for the organisation's future budget planning**.

**The fact that this is an important and future-oriented topic is also shown by the broad response of the EPRA members to our public consultation** (30 responses out of 52 members).

Taking into account the feedback by members, we therefore believe that our communication efforts were successful. **Members welcomed the opportunity to respond and expressed their appreciation for the work of the Board and Secretariat** in preparing the Consultation. Overall, the proposals were deemed well developed and the reasoning for changes clearly communicated.

Hiring an additional staff member for the Secretariat was a **major achievement** for the functioning of the EPRA Secretariat and the long-term sustainability of EPRA. The candidate who was recruited, a media law expert, perfectly matched the expectations for the post which required a person able to handle content matters in addition to providing support and undertaking organisational tasks.



### *What have been the challenges and what could we do better?*

Not everything can be thought through from the beginning on this complex subject. This was also **a learning process for the Board**. One prime example for this was the challenge that arose in conjunction with our proposal of three specific membership fee models in our first consultation document. Members could choose between different models:

- Model A (traditional system): same rate flat fee for everyone
- Model B: same flat fee for everyone with some exceptions for very small members
- Model C: categorise membership by small, medium, large

The replies showed that most of our members preferred Model C as the most appropriate in the future. However, the Board came to the conclusion that Model C was more complex to implement than originally thought. Model B was much easier to apply and was considered by us as the most practical means for future fee-setting.

Consequently, we had to be careful to communicate the great difficulties to implement Model C to our members. We are aware that we may have had to evaluate the practical consequences of the models somewhat more carefully from the outset. However, we wanted to give members a choice between three variants and the reasons for proposing Model C were obvious. In the end, members also recognised the important disadvantages of Model C.

Another difficult issue was the hiring procedure of the assistant, which, for various reasons, was slower than expected. In addition to the already complex employment mechanisms, the fact that budget policy at the Council of Europe was going through a difficult phase also caused difficulties and considerable delays in the hiring procedure. These challenges were caused by external circumstances and to a large extent outside of the Board's control.

### **1.3. Objective 3 Communicate and Participate: actively engage at the European level to share EPRA's learning and expertise**

Being the oldest and largest network of audiovisual regulators, EPRA is already a highly relevant organisation in the European audiovisual sector, offering an abundance of expertise in this field. In addition, EPRA aims at collaborating and sharpening its profile externally to create better visibility. It does and should continue to do so by promoting co-operations and other engagements with important European stakeholders.

For the strategy period 2017 - 2019 we developed several aspects of this aim:

- Increasing EPRA's visibility and voice through communication, engagement and promotion in relevant European fora, consistent with EPRA's mission and strategic goals;
- Strengthening our relationships and engagement with key stakeholders, staying abreast of developments at the European level and reaching out to external expertise;
- Availing ourselves of opportunities to co-operate in the hosting of joint events;
- Articulating EPRA's role and purpose and distinguishing it from the activities of other regulatory networks. Ensuring that our work programme and priorities are complementary to the activities of other networks in the audiovisual field.

Concretely we committed to:

- Agree a programme of engagement with other organisations and stakeholders annually, and provide representation in external events, on the basis of clear priorities and criteria consistent with our broad remit, our strategy and our annual Work Programme



### *How has EPRA achieved its goals and objectives and added value?*

In this instance, the Board based its assessment on the analysis of the breadth and the number of representation activities, the cooperation with stakeholders and the development of a meaningful engagement with other network of regulators.

Many representation and cooperation activities with key stakeholders took place in the years 2017 to 2019. In many cases we were able to make an active contribution and thus generate added value:

#### **ERGA/European Commission:**

In their role as observers, the EPRA Chairperson and Secretary ensured participation and representation at all **ERGA plenary meetings** and informed about EPRA's on-going activities.

With the aim of **creating complementarity and synergies**, ERGA, EPRA and the Commission launched a discussion in spring 2017 to agree formal processes for working together to avoid duplication. By the close of 2017, we had had helpful exchanges of information regarding the respective 2018 Work Programmes of ERGA and EPRA to ensure complementarity in the content of both organisations. There were further productive exchanges between the ERGA Chairman and the Board in Bratislava in October 2018, suggesting that **it might be of added value to formalise the relationship between EPRA and ERGA**. A meeting with representatives from both networks took place in February 2019 to discuss modalities of a meaningful cooperation and mapping potential areas of work and interaction over the next years.

In terms of content, we had fruitful cooperation with ERGA and the Commission. In the area of **gender**, we prepared a report on regulatory activities as part of the Work Programme item **Achieving Greater Diversity in Broadcasting**, participated at the [Digital4Her](#) Conference on 19 June 2018 and presented EPRA's final [Comparative Background Report](#) to Commissioner Mariya Gabriel on 18 September 2018. In addition, EPRA contributed on the subject of **Regulatory Co-operation** on [matters of jurisdiction at a DLM/ERGA meeting in April 2018](#) and by a Working group at the Bratislava meeting in October 2018. Finally, on the subject of **Media Literacy**, the Board participated in the EC Expert Working Group on

15 June 2018. It further presented EPRA's activities on the occasion of the European Media Literacy Week at the [ERGA Academy Event on 18 March 2019](#) and at the Commission's high-level conference on the next day.

#### **Council of Europe:**

EPRA was represented at the **meetings of the CDMSI**, and regularly informed the Committee about EPRA's activities. EPRA also participated in several meetings of the CDMSI subgroups, notably the MSI-MED on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership and the MSI-JOQ on the quality of journalism.

With regard to content, we had fruitful cooperation with the Council of Europe. For example, EPRA participated in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Gender Equality, which reached an agreement on a Recommendation on Gender Equality in the Audiovisual Sector in 2017 and in March 2019, EPRA participated in a Council of Europe conference to report on media literacy initiatives and best practices in Europe.

#### **European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO):**

EPRA and the EAO maintained a strong co-operation for the improvement of the [MAVISE Database](#), based on a network of MAVISE Contact Persons within EPRA members for the collection/checking of relevant information. In addition, EPRA was actively involved in the yearly Workshops of the Department for Legal Information on "[The financial ecosystem of the European audiovisual production](#)" (2017) and "[Gender imbalances in the audiovisual industries](#)" (2018). EAO also provided expert contributions during EPRA meetings, notably during sessions on Licensing (2017), Cooperation (2018) and European Works (May 2019). Moreover, as a member of the Advisory Committee (ADCO) and the IRIS Editorial Committee of the EAO, EPRA participated in the annual meetings of both organisations and shared EPRA's recent findings.

#### **Other important activities:**

- **Cooperation with EBU:** a joint EBU/EPRA workshop was held in Geneva in July 2017, on "The Future of Public Service Media – Dealing Successfully with Disruption" gathering 30 representatives from EBU and EPRA members. It was deemed to be a valuable opportunity to exchange views and to identify issues of common interest. The informal agreement on the exchange of documentation and publications between the EPRA and [EBU-MIS](#) also continued throughout the strategy period: links to [relevant documents and reports](#) were shared with EPRA members.
- **Research Project on News Consumption:** The Board agreed to offer its support to Loughborough University for a project on news consumption, political polarization and illiberal democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, the aim of which is to engage with policy makers and media regulators and to influence the contemporary debate on polarized digital media environment.
- **Engagement with other networks of regulators and think-tanks on regulation:** during the period, EPRA participated as an observer in the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the network of the French-speaking regulatory authorities REFRAM (2017), in the IIC International Symposium on Converging Technologies and Disruptive Communications (2018) and in a CERRE event on the *The New Audiovisual Media Services Directive (2017)*.



### *What have been the highlights?*

In consideration of the aforementioned large list of events, **in quantitative terms we have achieved our goal** to increase EPRA's visibility and voice in relevant European fora. We have also achieved a lot in terms of quality.

Not surprisingly, EPRA was primarily present in fora within the Council of Europe and the EU, which can certainly be traced back to the origins, objectives and work environment of EPRA. An important and fruitful development is the **ever-closer cooperation with our closest regulatory network ERGA**, which goes beyond the regular mutual updates during plenary sessions. Overall, there is general recognition that cooperation between the two networks is very important, and that time has shown that there was space for both platforms. Even though they operate under different frameworks, **they should support each other to deliver common goals – ultimately the promotion of professional, independent, future-proof and forward-looking regulation**. With the thrust to create synergies, EPRA and ERGA are in the first stages to establish a mechanism of coordinating each other's work programmes so both can offer real added value to their members.

Equally gratifying is the fact that **EPRA has been able to make a substantial contribution through its work to the EU Commission and ERGA on the subject of gender diversity and media**. This contribution was very welcomed by the Commission and demonstrated the agility of the EPRA network, which was able not only to effectively support its own members by sharing best practice in this field but also – as a by-product – provide a valuable evidence base for the Commission to use in its current and future policy making activity. Another highlight, which concerned the Commission and its work with the EAO was the central contribution of EPRA and its members to the major update and development of the MAVISE Database, which is expected to play a crucial role under the new AVMS Directive. Both cases demonstrate the way that the EPRA network can simultaneously serve members' needs and leverage members' resources to bring benefit to numerous actors.

EPRA also benefited by **gaining insight into other organisational forms and impulses for its own activities**. A prime example was the use of the **"World Café" format at the REFRAM meeting** in October 2017, which inspired us to try this format at EPRA – an effort which has been crowned with success. Furthermore, the **joint EBU/EPRA workshop encouraged us to also distribute feedback questionnaires** to our members at the end of our meetings.



### *What have been the challenges and what could we do better?*

A major challenge in representation activities is the limited resources of the Board members and the Secretariat. As a result, not every invitation could be accepted, and priorities for representation had to be set. It is to be hoped that in the future, with the employment of a full-time assistant, more resources can be freed up to better fulfil the important representation and cooperation tasks.

Furthermore, despite the best efforts of all involved, there are still challenges to be met in terms of how best to identify and exploit synergies between the EPRA and ERGA Work Programmes to avoid overloading our members with duplicative work. This is a challenge that does not belong only to EPRA, but one that we are aware of because of our continued goal of encouraging still greater participation among our own members in the EPRA network.

In consideration of the additional resources in the Secretariat we dispose of, we should continue to address the issue of greater participation in the next strategy period. We look forward to members' input on that specific point.

## **2. Conclusions of Board Assessment**

The detailed review of the fulfilment of EPRA's Strategic Objectives made by the Board in the previous section demonstrates the way our Vision, Mission and Values are manifested day-to-day in our activities. We believe these remain fully relevant and appropriate for EPRA's future strategy but will also aim to consult on that in the context of our next three-year strategy.

**EPRA's Vision** of a pluralistic, diverse and sustainable media environment with freedom of expression at its core, supported by effective regulation, has been reflected in the broad brush of our Annual Work Programmes, through our consideration over the last three years of how European citizens will access and understand accurate, pluralistic and high-quality content in age of online content consumption. This fundamental question has been explored through Plenary sessions on news in a digital age, political communications on Social Media, the role of algorithms in content curation and the future legitimacy of Public Service Broadcasting, as well as working groups on diversity in media, media literacy, licensing and the future of radio.

**EPRA's Mission**, i.e. providing an independent and transparent forum for audiovisual regulators to share relevant information, best practice, experience and expertise and exploring innovative means of regulating and analysing the audiovisual sector and sharing that with a wider audience of stakeholders, was similarly supported by our Work Programmes. In addition, our flexible approach, which moves smoothly between high-level policy debates to informal support and practical guidelines, is an example of EPRA's mission in action.

**EPRA's Values** are to be found in our processes and the topics we explore: our independence and our status as an expert, informed and learning organisation, are evident in the way we share best practices in all of these fields and bring external experts and stakeholders into our debates to better inform thinking. Moreover, these values are now guaranteed long-term by ensuring the sustainability of our Secretariat. This provides us with the foundation for the exchange of information and practices, ensuring members continue to be kept up to date with key developments in the sector and able to knowledgeably participate in policy development discussions in their national contexts. EPRA's informality and collaborative approach is evidenced by the relationships fostered by the network between members, as well as by EPRA's direct working relationships with external bodies such as renowned universities, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the OSCE-RFoM among others. We also strive to remain transparent and accountable through changes to structure, process and budget through regular consultation and reports.

### 3. Questions for members



*Looking ahead - areas for improvement:*

- Any concrete suggestions on how EPRA could provide a **better service to members** in the future?
- Any concrete suggestions on how EPRA could **encourage more active involvement of members** before, during and in-between meetings?
- Any concrete suggestions on how to **improve EPRA's support structures** (i.e. operation of Secretariat and website)?
- Any concrete suggestions on how **EPRA could better communicate and participate** (with members and external parties) in the future?
- Do you have **any other issue**, which you deem important for the next strategy?