



Working group of experts in data collection on television and audiovisual services in the countries of Euromed audiovisual partnership

Conclusions of the 1st Meeting (Tunis, 23-24 September 2013)

Experts on television who met in Tunis on 23 and 24 September 2013 on the initiative of Euromed Audiovisual Program ⁽¹⁾ of the European Union and the European audiovisual observatory stress the importance of transparency in television and on-demand audiovisual services.

Transparency in the audiovisual sector is a fundamental element of democracy, as well as the economic development of the sector, cultural diversity, national social development, intellectual property rights and consumer protection, and for international cooperation.

Experts are pleased to note the cooperation efforts among broadcasters around the Mediterranean carried out by COPEAM, EBU and ASBU as well as the various data collection operations carried out by international organizations (such as ITU, WIPO, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics), the Higher Committee for coordination between Arab satellite channels (which operate under the umbrella of ASBU) and the Euromed audiovisual project of the European Union carried out in collaboration with the European Audiovisual Observatory.

Experts thus note the existence of internationally agreed indicators on electronic media, including broadcasting, and encourage administrations and operators in the region to collect data for these indicators.

They also acknowledged the work carried out by various private organizations (consultants, satellite operators, audience measurement institutions, media organizations...), national broadcasters and civil society actors especially those who are involved in human rights defense and/or promotion.

Though available, such works do not cover all areas for which information is desirable. Those in which transparency must be established and strengthened are the following:

¹ EAV III CDSU is a programme financed by the EU grouping the following partners: GIZ, ASBU, COPEAM, Deutsche Welle, EBU, IMED and ZDF

- Information on procedures for granting licenses or autorisation to television services
- Information on the ownership of audiovisual services (television and on-demand television services)
- Information on the distribution channels of audiovisual services (cable, satellite, digital terrestrial television, broadband and IPTV and mobile networks) in particular on coverage range
- Information on the statutes of public radio and television, their budgets and financing modes
- Statistics on program planning and sources of broadcast programs
- Information on relationships between broadcasters and producers
- Information on the economics of production and of audiovisual program distribution
- Statistics on regional circulation of audiovisual works and on co-productions
- Information on audience and on audience measurement ways
- Information on advertising investments in the various media and on the advertising revenues of channels
- Information on the development and audience of on-demand audiovisual services (catch-up television, video on-demand, etc.)
- Information on the economic weight of cultural and creative industries (which include audiovisual services and audiovisual production activities)
- Information on the organisation and scope of piracy

Experts agree that in the medium term it would be interesting to create an Audiovisual Observatory for south Mediterranean countries and for ASBU other member states. Such observatory would collaborate with the European Audiovisual Observatory and other relevant bodies. It should be established on the principle of voluntary cooperation of the various stakeholders.

In the meantime an ad hoc voluntary committee should be set up and until the best conditions allow creating such institution, actions are proposed as follows:

- That Euromed Audiovisual pursue the data collection project, while strengthening collaboration with ASBU
- That data collection activities carried out by the High Committee for coordination of satellite television channels, which operates under the umbrella of ASBU, be strengthened to allow further collection particularly on the legal status and the ownership of private television channels and collaboration with MAVISE database run by the European audiovisual observatory
- Public interest data that will be collected by a data collection and market assessment unit that will be established by ASBU. Such data should be published in Arabic, English and French.
- That the European Audiovisual Observatory pursues its policy of openness towards southern Mediterranean countries, following policies on human rights and freedom of the media aim at complying with the standards promoted by the Council of Europe. Membership of south Mediterranean countries to the European audiovisual observatory may highly support the development of data collection and circulation.

Furthermore the following best practices can be recommended:

- That the responsible administrations in the region collect data on internationally agreed indicators on broadcasting and report them to international organisations such as ITU, the UNESCO Institute for statistics and others.

- That the national audiovisual regulation bodies publish regular reports on the market of audiovisual services in their countries with the aim of improving market transparency.
- That broadcasting organisations, public, private, community or associative, publish annual reports describing their status, ownership organization, funding, income statements and balance sheets, statistical analysis of their program planning and investment in audiovisual production.
- That the satellite operators covering the region facilitate the access to their own data.
- That teaching and research programs of universities in the region support studies on media economics, media sociology ,
- media and information literacy as well as researcher exchange.
- Those broadcasters, advertisers and advertising agencies collaborate to help audience measurement institutions to offer more complete data.
- That the cooperation between various public sources (such as ITU, WIPO, UNESCO, etc.) and operators will be enhanced in view to publish regional and comprehensive indicators and reports on the converged market (audiovisual, telecom, internet...).