

Audiovisual media services: agreement on a directive to protect minors, boost competitiveness and promote European content

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New times call for new audiovisual rules

On 13 June **EU ambassadors confirmed an agreement** reached on 6 June 2018 between the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament representatives on modernising the existing rules **on the provision of audiovisual media services in Europe.**

Good policy-making involves ensuring that our rules are up to date and reflect modern technology. As a result of this agreement on audiovisual media services we will be better equipped to protect consumers and children, fight the spread of hate speech and safeguard media pluralism and independence.

Boil Banov, minister for culture of the Republic of Bulgaria and president of the Council

The **proposal for a revision of the directive** on the provision of audiovisual media services in the light of changing market realities (AVMSD) was **presented by the Commission in 2016** after a thorough evaluation of the previous 2010 AVMSD.

This evaluation highlighted the need to **ensure a level playing field** between the traditional broadcasting sector i.e. television, and new services like video on-demand services, video-sharing platforms, and the audiovisual content on social networks, to better **protect viewers**, encourage innovation and **promote European audiovisual content.**

The new rules will:

- create a **level playing field between all operators in protecting viewers**, independently from the service they provide and the platform they use. This means that users will get equal protection whether they

are watching a film on traditional tv or an on-demand tv. Moreover the **protection of minors and all users from violent or harmful content**, as well as **hate speech**, will be improved by introducing a **clear responsibility for video-sharing platforms**. Member states will be able to take action through their national audiovisual regulators against those operators not respecting the rules

- **increase cultural diversity and promote European content**, as providers of on-demand audiovisual media services will have to ensure that **at least 30%** of their catalogues consist of European content and that this is given adequate prominence
- **free up resources** to be invested in the production of European content as member states may require a **financial contribution from tv and on-demand media service providers**, including those established in another member state, with exemptions that could make life easier for start-ups and small companies
- **improve cooperation between member states' audiovisual authorities** by strengthening the European regulators group for audiovisual media services (ERGA) and setting out its role in EU law
- guarantee flexibility as member states will be able to **adapt the rules to national circumstances** and even **adopt stricter rules** if they so wish

Now that the agreement has been confirmed by EU ambassadors on behalf of the Council, the directive will be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote at first reading, and subsequently to the Council for adoption.

The directive will enter into force on the 20th day after its publication on the Official Journal of the EU and **member states will have 21 months to transpose** it into national legislation.

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