

EPRA Statement of Strategy 2017-2019

(as adopted by the Assembly of EPRA Members on 21 October 2016 in Yerevan)

Foreword

Since its establishment, EPRA has been guided by the needs and responses of its membership and the strength and relevance of its activities. On the occasion of its twentieth anniversary (2015) and since, EPRA considered the wide range of sectoral changes that have occurred since the organisation was established, as well as current and future challenges.

At this time, EPRA is mindful of the growing number of other regulatory networks, not least the establishment and activities of ERGA, and considers that it is appropriate 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 it is timely to introduce an organisational strategy for EPRA, including a set of organisational goals and objectives to be achieved over the period of the strategy 2017-2019.

By responding to the evolving media landscape 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 ascertain the means by which we will address future challenges. It also offers an opportunity to reflect on the changes in the wider audiovisual sector and to understand, adapt and respond to change. Furthermore, it assists us in focusing and prioritising our work.

It is in this context we present **EPRA's Three-year Strategy**. While the structure of the Strategy employs the common convention for such documents, the substance of our Strategy was the subject of engagement and consultation with both our members and other stakeholders who have been actively involved in EPRA's activities over many years.

We believe it accurately captures and reflects EPRA's essential purpose and functions as it is lived and experienced by our members. Our hope is that it will assist in scoping and directing EPRA's work over the next three years, thereby ensuring that we stay relevant to our members and assisting them in addressing the inevitable regulatory challenges that lie ahead.



Celene Craig
EPRA Chairperson
On behalf of the EPRA Executive Board

Background, context and challenges

EPRA over 20 Years

EPRA has been in existence for over 20 years and, during that time, from small beginnings, we have grown to become a voluntary, independent network of 52 audiovisual regulators which shares best practice and experience and which learns 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. Although operating on a voluntary basis, 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.

At the beginning of its life, EPRA was comprised of only 10 regulatory bodies, from somewhat smaller jurisdictions, which came together to share the experience of cross-border broadcasting and, for a number of those which were newly-established regulatory bodies with no tradition of media regulation, to draw on the experiences and practices of other, longer-established regulators. However, over time, and reflecting geo-political changes and developments, EPRA’s membership has expanded. It is now a truly European forum, serving both EU and non-EU members who share, not only a common mandate and common goals, but common regulatory challenges as well. In responding to the common but diverse needs of its members, the EPRA regulatory agenda aims to bridge political, legislative, cultural, social and technological variances in the operations of its members. The sources of regulatory challenges vary. Because not all challenges arise from the implementation of European Union law, (and, indeed, European legislation does not purport to address all audiovisual regulatory challenges), EPRA’s EU and non-EU members have the opportunity to learn from and support each other in responding to such challenges.

Reflecting the expansion and breadth of its membership over twenty years, 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 audiovisual 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 our membership. In particular, our deliberations have been strengthened by regular participation by, and engagement with, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European Audiovisual Observatory and the Office of the OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media (RFOM) – all of whom act as permanent observers at EPRA plenary meetings. Carefully-selected representatives of industry, academia, and audiovisual experts have participated in our meetings as speakers and panellists. Over the last five years, regular joint events with partner organisations (such as the European Audiovisual Observatory, CERRE, Cullen International and MEDIADDEM) have been organised on an ad hoc basis. A further positive development, more recently, has been the selective exchange and sharing of key documents with other relevant organisations in the European audiovisual field (such as the EBU and ERGA).

While complementary audiovisual networks have become established during our lifetime, we believe that EPRA remains strongly relevant to our 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 self-financing, 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 annual Work Programme.

Over its lifetime, EPRA has been guided by the belief that research is key to better understanding the issues which are faced by regulators and enabling appropriate responses to be developed. Consequently, 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 our 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, including the role of the Secretariat in providing scientific assistance and guidance to its members and in sharing the fruits of its knowledge.

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.

Reflecting technological developments, **legislative** changes have also continued apace in the past twenty years. In 1995, when EPRA was founded, the EU's *Television without Frontiers* Directive and the Council of Europe's *European Convention on Transfrontier Television* concerned themselves 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 of change in the evolution and distribution of audiovisual content as well as in the behaviours of audiences.

It is important to acknowledge that the new draft of the AVMSD only constitutes one element in the bigger picture of the Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategy, which proposes a modernisation of the EU

copyright framework, the EU telecoms rules, rules on Internet speed and quality and ICT standards, and which will also look at platforms, online intermediaries, data, cloud computing and the collaborative economy.

From a regulatory perspective, it is also important to acknowledge the decision of the European Commission to establish **ERGA** in 2014, which, *inter alia*, acts as an advisory body on the revision of the AVMS Directive and which will assist the Commission on implementation aspects of the proposed legislation in the era of convergence. It is an important policy and structural development, given the future statutory role envisaged for ERGA under a revised Audiovisual Directive. Although both ERGA and EPRA clearly have common interests, it is our belief that they also have quite distinct roles, purposes and strengths. EPRA aims to work collaboratively to achieve complementarity with ERGA as well as with other audiovisual regulatory networks in order to achieve synergies, most particularly in the use of the resources of our members.

All of the above changes present challenges for traditional media, including public service media organisations, who must find appropriate new responses, while holding firm to their essential purpose. Consequently, 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, sustainable, 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, EPRA considers 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 media 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 sectoral 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.
- *A sustainable audiovisual sector*: because of the challenges faced by traditional players in the audiovisual field from new and wide-ranging sources of content, regulators are becoming increasingly involved in having to find policy as well as practical solutions to ensure a sustainable ecosystem for the delivery of culturally-relevant content to national and European audiences.

This of course comes even more sharply into focus in the case of public service media organisations.

- *EU Legislative Changes*: regulators are called upon to contribute to changes in the audiovisual legislative framework whether through attendance at meetings, the 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 prioritisation of cooperation activities to the ones considered only as essential.
- *Independence*: there are specific threats to the independence of both public service media organisations as well as to audiovisual regulatory bodies themselves, which ultimately threatens the core European value of freedom of expression.

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 sector 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?
- *Complementarity*: how can we achieve complementarity with other audiovisual networks in order to achieve the best use of resources, i.e. those of EPRA, as well as those of its constituent regulatory members?

The overall aim of EPRA's Strategy – presented below – aims to respond to the challenges of EPRA as a network and to the challenges facing individual members in the period 2017-2019.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

The European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) promotes freedom of expression as well as a culturally diverse, sustainable and pluralistic media environment through its support for independent, professional and effective regulation of the audiovisual media.

Mission

EPRA provides an independent and transparent forum for audiovisual regulators to share relevant information, best practice, experience and expertise. It explores innovative means of regulating and analysing the audiovisual sector and sharing that with a wider audience of stakeholders.

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 been for the past 20 plus years.

- **Independent:** we are non-political and impartial in our approach and operations and are strengthened by the fact that we are a self-financing, 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 a sense of community amongst our members. We value the opportunity which informal engagement brings to our Members' understanding of each other's history, culture and traditions.
- **Transparent and Accountable:** we are transparent and accountable in our processes and procedures as is reflected in 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 and share.
- **Collaborative:** 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. A three-year EPRA Work Programme will give practical effect to our strategic goals and objectives.

Reflecting the challenges faced by EPRA, the overarching goal of the Strategy 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 responsive to change.

Over the period of this strategy, EPRA shall:

1. Continue to serve our members by:

(a) Being an informed and relevant source for our membership:

Towards this end, we will:

- Consider our members' needs and interests in all aspects of our work;
- 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;
- Grow our repository of audiovisual regulatory resources;
- Ensure continuity in the quality of our outputs and procedures 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 our members and exploring other means of interacting, e.g. thematic or online working groups;
- Present a paper to the members for debate and decision on the potential for expanding the membership of EPRA.

2. Strengthen EPRA's support structures: build the EPRA secretariat and other resources

Towards this end, we will:

- In conjunction with members and the EAO/Council of Europe, secure the optimum level of resources (personnel, IT and financial) to support EPRA's work.

3. Communicate and Participate: actively 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, consistent with EPRA's mission and strategic goals;
- Strengthen our relationships and engagement with key stakeholders. Stay abreast of developments at the European level and reach out to external expertise;
- Avail of opportunities to co-operate in the hosting of joint events (e.g. with the EAO);
- Articulate the role and purpose of EPRA and distinguish it from the activities of other regulatory networks. Ensure that our work programme and priorities are complementary to the activities of other networks in the audiovisual field.

Commitment to Review

EPRA commits to assessing the implementation of its Strategy in the final six months of the Strategy period. A key element of this will involve consultation with members and other relevant stakeholders in order to assess our performance.

EPRA recognises that it exists in a dynamic and shifting audiovisual landscape and, therefore, commits to revisiting its current Strategy, in whole or in part, within the Strategy period, should external circumstances change and should such a review be deemed appropriate.

Measuring our Performance

EPRA commits to developing measures to assess our performance. In measuring our performance against the Strategy, EPRA will endeavour to answer the following questions:

- **Vision:** has EPRA's adequately pursued its *Vision*, as set out in the Strategy Statement?
- **Mission:** has our Mission reflected our core purpose in practice? Has it provided direction for the organisation and guided its strategic decisions?
- **Values:** have EPRA's values been reflected in its day-to-day conduct and been a guiding light in decision-making for the organisation?
- **Achievement of Goals and Objectives:** have we achieved our goals and objectives – in full, in part or not at all? In its activities, has EPRA been future-focussed and responsive to change? What was instrumental in achieving our objectives; what hindered or impeded their achievement? What have been the particular highlights over the period of the strategy? What do we need to work on and what could we do better over the next strategy period?
- **Has EPRA added value?** Over the period of the strategy, has EPRA added value to the work of its members? Was EPRA responsive to their practical and learning needs and interests? How did EPRA achieve this and was EPRA's aim of adding value reflected in the work programme over the strategy period? Did EPRA achieve its objective of assisting members in using their resources efficiently by being complementary to other networks?

Annex: EPRA Three-year Work Plan 2017-2019 (as adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting in Brussels on 27 January 2017)

Strategic Objective	Key Actions/Deliverables	2017	2018	2019
1(a) Continue to serve our members by being and informed and relevant source for our membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twice-yearly Plenary Meetings: plan, host and review • Review structure of plenary meetings, consult members and implement any changes agreed • Consider resources to support development of Annual Work Programme • Agree strategy and annual plan for knowledge-building, information compilation and dissemination • Review existing Strategy and prepare and consult on new EPRA Strategy 	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p>
1(b) Continue to serve our members by growing the participation and involvement of Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop discussion paper and consult with members on tools and processes to achieve greater participation and involvement of the members • Develop discussion paper and consult with members on potential for expansion of EPRA membership 		<p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	
2. Strengthen EPRA's Support Structures: Build EPRA Secretariat and Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review staffing arrangements. Agree a revised staffing arrangement with EAO • Implement a revised staffing arrangement with EAO • Review budgetary and other resource (such as IT development) needed • Seek approval of EPRA Members to changes in resources and budget 	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p> <p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	
3. Communicate and Participate: actively engage at the European level to share EPRA's learning and expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree annually a programme of engagement with other organisations and stakeholders, 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 	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">√</p>