



Paris, 14 April 2015

ERGA statement
on freedom of expression

In January 2015 in Paris and in February in Copenhagen, terrorist attacks have targeted and caused the death of journalists, civilians and police officers, with the desire to harm freedom of expression, opinion and creation in Europe.

In the wake of these tragic events, the European regulators of audiovisual media services, gathered within ERGA, wish to reaffirm the significance of freedom of expression and their unwavering support to the defence of this fundamental right.

Therefore, ERGA members,

- whereas audiovisual media plays a crucial role in guaranteeing full respect for freedom of expression, in promoting the free flow of information and ideas, in helping people to take decisions with full knowledge of the facts and in contributing to and strengthening democracy;
 - whereas ERGA members are concerned about the fact that freedom of expression and freedom of communication are increasingly subject to threats;
 - whereas ERGA members wish to express their joint commitment to ensure that all audiovisual media services do not contain any incitement to hatred;
 - whereas they seek to promote the utmost respect for freedom of expression and the free flow of information and ideas, in which audiovisual media has an essential role;
1. recall that freedom of expression is a fundamental and inalienable right, recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as in other international legal instruments and national constitutions;

2. recall that the Council of the European Union adopted, on 12 May 2014, EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline;
3. express their firm conviction that freedom of expression, including art expression, is one of the highest values shared by all European people;
4. insist on the paramount importance of freedom of expression as an individual human right and as a means of guaranteeing the development and the expression of individual identity within society, as well as the exercise of a great number of other human rights and fundamental freedoms;
5. underline that freedom of expression is essential to the functioning of a truly democratic society, in an environment favourable to cultural diversity. Each individual must have an equal chance to exercise his/her right to freedom of expression, without any kind of discrimination;
6. highlight the fact that media development and pluralism support freedom of expression and contribute to fostering democracy and peace between peoples;
7. therefore unanimously express, their solidarity in defending freedom of expression, one of the most precious human rights.