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Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World

BRUSSELS, October 1, 2013– ETNO welcomes the European Commission’s ambitious Green Paper ‘Preparing for a Fully Converged Audiovisual World: Growth, Creation and Values’ as a timely initiative aimed at better understanding the current developments in the audio-visual sector and the likely trends ahead.

Technological progress brings with it dramatic changes in consumer behaviour and consumption patterns and new players, often coming from outside the EU region and from unregulated sectors, are emerging in the Internet value chain. These new entrants desire to have a share of the business but are not necessarily directly contributing to the financing of the sector and the needed infrastructures. If the European Digital Agenda goals are to be met, a holistic approach should be adopted and the needs of those European players that contribute the most to EU growth should be heeded with efforts made to level the playing field in the global marketplace.

In its [response](#), ETNO addresses a number of barriers which it believes are hampering the creation of a competitive EU audiovisual market. The availability of premium content is crucial to ensure the take-up in audio-visual media services, which in turn will facilitate the development of the digital market. However, new and convergent platforms are facing difficulties in accessing premium content at affordable and reasonable conditions and without undue delay, and ultimately the consumer loses out. The unharmonized EU tax system is also proving to be an obstacle to the competitive development of the EU media services industry.

Regarding access to platforms by content providers, ETNO acknowledges that this has been not regulated at EU level and that there is no objective justification for any additional regulatory intervention. ETNO is also of the opinion that the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) remains valid regarding its main provisions and should not be revised. Any eventual review should be carried out by assessing the impact of different audio-visual services on society and the risk they may pose to the main objectives of the Directive (freedom of information, media pluralism, protection of minors, consumer protection), taking into account the users’ ability to exercise control over these services.

Other considerations addressed in the ETNO response include the importance of a sound spectrum allocation policy and the need for Europe to promote (but not mandate) open and interoperable standards for the convergence business. ETNO also underlines that self and co-regulation can generally be an effective regulatory option for a variety of areas addressed in the Green Paper (e.g. marketing obligations, protection of minors).

ETNO members will continue to contribute to this important and interesting debate, which will help set the foundations of a fully converged audiovisual landscape that can provide benefits for all.





About ETNO

ETNO has been the voice of Europe's telecommunications network operators since 1992 and has become the principal policy group for European electronic communications network operators. Its 50 members and observers in 35 countries collectively account for a turnover of more than €600 billion and employ over 1.6 million people. ETNO companies are the main drivers of broadband and are committed to its continual growth in Europe. ETNO closely contributes to shaping the best regulatory and commercial environment for its members to continue rolling out innovative and high quality services and platforms for the benefit of European consumers and businesses.

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