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Press release

ERGA stands united and ready to contribute to the effectiveness of new EU economic sanctions on Russian state-controlled media

Following the statement by EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine made on 27 February 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted Decision (CFSP) 2022/351 amending Decision 2014/512/CFSP and imposing further restrictive measures against Russian propaganda media, as well as Regulation (EU) 2022/350 amending Council Regulation (EU) No 833/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine. These measures are immediately and directly applicable in all EU Member States and aim at restricting access of the main Russian state-controlled media outlets, Russia Today and Sputnik to the European media market.

Already at the beginning of February, German media authorities announced their decision concerning the distribution of RT-Russia Today Germany. Since last week, media regulators in Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Estonia and Bulgaria announced measures to restrict the transmission of certain Russian media services in their respective territories.

ERGA stands united and is committed to contribute to the swift and effective implementation of the measures by all stakeholders. In this regard, the independent media regulators in ERGA will continue to work closely with the European Commission.

Moreover, ERGA Members will further pursue their work on disinformation, including as regards disinformation related to the current aggression by Russia in Ukraine. The respective taskforce in ERGA's Subgroup on disinformation is intended to serve as a hub for sharing experiences and best practices with monitoring, analysing the media environment with a special focus on disinformation narratives from foreign actors and information manipulation related to the current developments in Ukraine.

Commenting on these new sanctions, ERGA Chair Karim Ibourki said: *“ERGA notes that these new sanctions echo the major crisis the world and Europe are facing. ERGA has full confidence in the decisions taken by the Council and is conscious of the seriousness of the situation. Independently of the present conflict, it is fundamental that countering manipulation and disinformation, in full respect of the protection of freedom of speech remains a priority in the European debate, especially in the context of future regulations including the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA). We need a robust EU framework to guarantee democratic values, while securing a thriving digital and media environment.”*

About ERGA:

The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) consists of the national regulatory authorities in the field of audiovisual media services. ERGA advises the European Commission and facilitates cooperation between the regulatory bodies in the EU. Mr Karim Ibourki, President of the Belgian CSA (Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel) is the current Chairperson of ERGA.