



## Summary of the 36<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Festival of Cinema and Television

*International Day of EUROVISIONI*  
An initiative in cooperation with AGCOM

30 October 2023, Villa Medici, Rome

The 36<sup>th</sup> edition of Eurovisioni, the International Festival of Cinema and Television, just ended at the Academy of France in Rome, at Villa Medici. During the **International Day**, the urgency for Europe to adopt its regulation on Artificial Intelligence, which has been under discussion for months between Parliament, the Commission and the Member States, was discussed.

In his opening remarks, the Director General of the *European Commission's DG Connect*, **Roberto Viola**, announced the importance of adopting the measure in Europe, setting December 8 as the deadline for European negotiations. His speech came just before President Joe Biden signed an immediately enforceable decree in the United States imposing a series of precise rules to be respected by Internet and AI companies. According to what has been explained, the European regulation under discussion reflects the lines adopted by Biden, namely the obligation for companies producing Artificial Intelligence to make sure that AI tools are compatible with human rights and the rights of citizens BEFORE putting these new products on the market.

**Francesco Giorgino**, Director of the *RAI Studies Office*, intervening on behalf of RAI's President, Marinella Soldi, also commented on this topic, stating: "The Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA), as well as the Regulation for Artificial Intelligence, which will hopefully be approved in the coming weeks, are a fundamental contribution to build the "common level playing field" requested since longtime from all other medias. This because finally the new legislative framework subjects Internet platforms to the competence of national authorities and of the European Commission (for companies with more than 40 million users in the EU) on fundamental issues such as transparency and access to data, the protection of minors, the fight against disinformation and hate speech. Rai appreciates the commitment of the Italian AGCOM authority and the French AGCOM authority, which have been indicated as partners of the European Commission for the implementation of these new rules that will come into force from

February next year. It is hoped that the current 'trilogue' of negotiations between the European institutions will soon produce a *white smoke* and that soon (before the European elections in June, hopefully) Europe will be able to equip itself with a common tool that will allow the development of AI applications that respect citizens' fundamental rights and are capable of pursuing the common interest."

All the speakers at the round table dedicated to the topic agreed on the urgency of adopting the European regulation on artificial intelligence as soon as possible. In particular, the data and cases cited by **Tim Dawson**, Deputy Secretary General of the *World Federation of Journalists*, and **Erik Lambert**, *Eurovisioni*, made a particular impression, recalling the dismissal of 50% of journalists by Euronews (to replace them with AI algorithms) and the introduction in China of a news programme developed by an algorithm and led by a totally virtual presenter that reads news produced with the help of artificial intelligence.

The Commissioner of the French supervisory authority *ARCOM*, **Benoit Lautrel**, agreed on the urgency of having new legislation, but argued the indispensability of proceeding with global actions rather than country-by-country solutions. **Richard Burnley**, Legal Director of *European Broadcasting Union* (EBU) emphasised the importance of having clear principles to define how public services can use artificial intelligence and reiterated the relevance of creating algorithms that, rather than having profit as their main objective (like those of platforms), have the common good and public interest as their priority.

**Andrea Stazi** from Google explained that artificial intelligence will be a quantum leap for the economies of the countries that adopt it and hoped and urged that the forthcoming European regulations will be in line with the American ones that have just been announced.

Another topic of debate addressed the **role of bloggers and influencers**. Austria was the first European country to regulate by law the activities of vloggers – as **Susanne Lackner** explained on behalf of the Austrian supervisory authority. Such decision was particularly timely in the current climate of wars, where bloggers, vloggers and influencers tend to take political sides, them being dictated by ideology as well as economic reasons. For instance, in Arab countries, vloggers pose as fundraisers for Palestinians in Gaza, while in the United States, influencers pretend to raise money for Israel. Such activities are explicitly prohibited for vloggers in Austria, as well as influencers in France, where a similar law on this new professional figure has just come into force.

Professor **Catalina Goanta** from *Utrecht University* presented a fairly detailed picture of the activities of vloggers and influencers around the world, presenting data that already estimates the market for influencers and vloggers at several tens of billions of dollars worldwide, and growing. According to the professor, the existing laws need to be extended to all member states of the EU, and then, possibly, to the rest of the world, because a clear framework of rules is needed at the global level. Such rules must be easy to implement while also giving platforms the duty to intervene whenever a breach occurs. This process must necessarily go hand in hand with the training of vloggers and influencers, who, having come from nowhere, have not undergone any training process to face the major responsibilities they now hold for being followed by millions of followers.

*AGCOM* Commissioner **Elisa Giomi** also endorsed these principles and offered precise estimates of the markets, at least those already available for vloggers and influencers, while **Stefano Luppi**, CEO of *Tivù*, addressed the ongoing transformation of his distribution platform passing from TV channels to online signals as well as the most significant responsibilities that these changes entail.

In the panel dedicated to the entry into force of the Digital Service Act and the Digital Market Act, Commissioner **Laura Aria** from *AGCOM* and **Mauro Giorello** from the *European Commission* explained how the world is about to change through the allocation of responsibilities to national regulatory authorities such as *AGCOM* or *ARCOM*, now able to intervene also on global Internet platforms to eventually protect the rights of national consumers. In this respect, the **signing of the agreement between *AGCOM* and the European Commission**, that took place in the frame of Eurovisioni XXXVI, is a clear sign that things are moving forward, and that the new system of rules will already be fully in place by the deadline set by the European regulation (February 2024), as prescribed by European legislation.

**Bertrand Scirpo** of *France Télévisions*, speaking on behalf of European public televisions, underlined the delays that still remain with regards to the '*prominence*' and '*findability*' of traditional television signals. In particular, he addressed the two principles contained in the revision of the European AVMS (Audiovisual Media Services) Directive outlining their commitment to ensure that, during the transition from the analogue to the digital world, the signals of the television channels traditionally watched by the public continue to be visible, findable and easily accessible. This objective is made particularly difficult by increasingly high-tech television sets that give priority to this or that streaming platform on the basis of concluded commercial agreements rather than to the real interests of users.

It was precisely on the issue of prominence that the Italian and French authorities saw their proposed regulations rejected by the European Commission, in that it was claimed they did not guarantee effective coordination with the 'country of origin' authorities. A difference of opinion which – according to Roberto Viola and Giacomo Lasorella – should be resolved in the upcoming weeks. Precisely on this subject, **Franco Siddi**, President of *Confindustria Radio TV*, insisted and pointed out that the principle of accessibility and visibility of television signals should not be reserved for public services alone, but also for all the other players in the system, first and foremost local and national commercial television stations, which otherwise risk disappearing from the radar of most of the citizens.

The International day event was closed by the statement of *AGCOM* President, Lasorella – who has also been holding the Presidency of ERGA, the body that brings together all the European audiovisual regulators – claiming that meetings such as Eurovisioni's, where various players exchange their views and enrich the debate with frank and passionate contributions, are the real places where opinions are formed and the most appropriate solutions to the complicated and controversial issues on the table can be found.

**Michel Boyon**, President of *Eurovisioni* and former President of the French regulatory authority CSA (now renamed *ARCOM*), and **Luciana Castellina**, Vice President of *Eurovisioni*, added that the importance of preserving a public communications space free from the conditioning of algorithms

and the economic interests of global platforms is one of the main challenges Western democracies must come to terms with.

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