



ÚDARÁS  
CRAOLACHÁIN  
NA hÉIREANN

BROADCASTING  
AUTHORITY  
OF IRELAND

**Broadcasting Authority of Ireland  
Submission  
to the Future of Media Commission**

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## 1. Introduction

The BAI welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Future of Media Commission. The Authority would again like to thank the Commission for their engagement during the BAI's presentation in December 2020 and looks forward to continuing correspondence throughout the period of the Commission's tenure. The Authority agrees that the future of media in Ireland deserves substantive review and consideration, particularly in terms of funding and sustainability of the radio, audio-visual and print sectors.

As noted during the BAI's presentation to the Commission in December 2020, this submission seeks to broadly follow the same themes and subject areas, mirroring the Commission's questions, definitions, and distinctions. The Authority particularly notes the Commission's differentiation between Public Service Media (PSM) and Public Service Content Providers and applies those definitions in this submission.

As previously discussed, the BAI is happy to engage further with the Commission at any point, in whatever manner is to the Commission's liking.

## 1.1 Structure and Role of the BAI

The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (“BAI”) was established under the Broadcasting Act 2009 (“the Act”) on 1st of October 2009. The legislation sets out a range of general and specific objectives for the BAI, detailed in sections [25](#) and [26](#) of the Act.

The BAI’s Strategy Statement 2021-2023 sets out five strategic themes, which are:

- Promoting Diversity and Plurality
- Empowering Audiences
- Enhancing Innovation and Sectoral Sustainability
- Achieving Excellence and Accountability
- Leadership in Change

The BAI consists of the Board (“The Authority”) and two statutory committees – the Contract Awards Committee and the Compliance Committee. The Authority has appointed a standing committee (“The FAR Committee”) to oversee finance, audit, and risk matters. The BAI Executive supports the management and administration of the functions of the Authority, Contract Awards Committee and Compliance Committee.

The BAI is funded by a broadcaster levy, paid by the PSM (RTÉ and TG4), Virgin Media TV, 33 Commercial Radio broadcasters and 23 Community Media broadcasters.

Members of the Commission may be aware that, under proposed legislation, the BAI will be dissolved and its staff and functions will be transferred into a new “Media Commission” – which will be tasked with continuing to regulate linear broadcasting in Ireland and take on the role of regulating Video On-Demand services, as well as a wider role of regulating harmful content on online platforms . Details on the Government’s plans for the new Media Commission and the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill can be found [here](#).

The dissolution of the BAI and the establishment of the Media Commission is borne out of the revised European Audio-Visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). As part of the process of preparing for the implementation of the new legislative framework, the BAI has been significantly active at a European level, primarily through its work as a member of ERGA (the European Commission’s Regulators Group for Audio-visual Media) and on a wider European basis at EPRA (European Platform of Regulatory Authorities). The BAI is a very active member of both groups since its inception and highly values these crucial networks.

## 1.2 BAI Strategy and examples of key activities

The BAI's annual workplan is shaped by the Five Strategic Themes detailed in its Strategy Statement. Some recent examples of BAI work activities carried out under the Five Strategic Themes include:

### **Promoting Diversity and Plurality**

In November 2020, [the BAI launched a new website that provides information about ownership and shareholdings of Irish media companies](#). The BAI commissioned the School of Communications at Dublin City University to design and maintain a dedicated website [www.mediaownership.ie](http://www.mediaownership.ie). This website offers a structured and searchable reference database of media businesses that serve Irish audiences using the definitions in the [BAI Media Plurality Policy](#).

The Sound and Vision Broadcasting Funding Scheme continues to contribute to, and increase the availability of, culturally relevant Irish programme content. Rounds 34 – 37 of the Scheme awarded €14.8m to support the broadcast of 235 programmes on radio and television. These included special rounds for the Commercial radio sector relating to programmes addressing the Covid-19 pandemic and a Community Radio round which focussed on social benefit.

The BAI funds the inclusion of Ireland in the [Reuters Institute Digital News](#) study as part of its work on fostering media plurality in Ireland. Covering 40 countries across the world, the study aims to understand how news is being consumed globally, with a particular focus on digital news consumption and the devices used to access the news.

Part of the BAI's work under this theme also includes its [Gender Action Plan](#), and [Irish Language Action Plan](#).

### **Communicating and Influencing**

At a national level, the BAI engaged extensively in the debate around Online Safety and the Transposition of the Audio-visual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and prepared a comprehensive submission in response to the Minister's consultation. The submission is explained in more detail in [section 5.1](#) of this document.

The BAI also plays a significant role at a European level through our work with ERGA and co-chaired a critical AVMSD implementation subgroup in 2020. The BAI Deputy CEO was elected to the 5- person Board of ERGA in December 2020.

### **Empowering Audiences**

The multi-stakeholder network Media Literacy Ireland (MLI), facilitated by the BAI, supports audiences in having a greater understanding of, and participation in, the production and dissemination of audio-visual content. This includes national ["Be Media Smart" campaigns](#). The BAI is also playing a leadership role in relation to media literacy internationally and is a Member of the European Commission Expert Group on this topic.

A key part of the BAI's work is the implementation of broadcasting [Codes and Rules](#) which supports Irish audiences in holding broadcasters to account. BAI Codes and Rules cover the areas of [Fairness, Objectivity & Impartiality](#), [Programme Standards, General](#) and [Children's Commercial Communications Codes](#) and [Access](#).

### **Enhancing Innovation and Sectoral Sustainability**

The BAI supports the audio-visual industry through a range of initiatives, including the provision of funding support for industry networks, funding of media research, coordination of support schemes for community broadcasters and backing of training and development incentives in partnership with industry experts. The BAI also contributed to the development of the Governments 2018 Audiovisual Action plan and is represented on the implementation body. BAI initiatives are contributing to the achievement of the objectives under this plan as identified in the most relevant [progress reports](#). The need for credible current and comprehensive industry data has been a recurring challenge in relation to planning and tracking implementation of actions to develop the Irish AV Sector.

The BAI also facilitates other groups, including the Television Broadcasters of Ireland Group (TBIG). The group includes the main Public Service and commercial TV broadcasters on the Island of Ireland who meet with the BAI and Ofcom NI to discuss a range of issues affecting the sector. The BAI recognises the importance of all Ireland initiatives to develop the AV sector here especially in relation to Irish language content.

In June 2020, the BAI also launched a new report, '[Community Radio – Delivering Social Benefit](#)', as part of the delivery of its 2019 Community Media Action Plan. The report examines the development and implementation of an evaluation methodology that addresses the statutory requirement for community media to deliver a social benefit to the community it serves.

The BAI has also played a leadership role in relation to innovative national and international partnerships to promote and develop the Irish AV Sector and Irish content. These include the [Ireland Canada Co-Development Fund](#) Cine 4 and an initiative with the with the Department of Education and Skills to ensure that Irish AV texts are included as core texts for all subjects on the [Junior Certificate cycle](#).

### **Achieving Excellence and Accountability**

In November 2020, the BAI launched the [Broadcasting Sustainability Network and a sustainability roadmap for the Irish broadcasting sector](#). The Network is a voluntary, sector-wide sustainability group of Irish broadcasters and representatives of their supply chains. It aims to foster best practice and to provide the support to make the Irish broadcasting sector a sustainability leader that uses its collective voice to create a greener, more inclusive, more resilient future for all.

As set out in detail in [section 3.1](#) of this document, the BAI has a number of statutory requirements relating to the oversight of PSM.

### 1.3 Definitions of PSM and Public Service Content

The BAI acknowledges and agrees with the Commission's definition of "Public Service Media", namely that PSM are "publicly-owned, publicly-funded media organisations that primarily provide public service content and have a clear focus on responding to and serving the needs of the public."

The BAI also agrees with the Commission's definition of Public Service Content, namely that such content seeks to Inform, Educate and Entertain and reflects Irish culture, identity, sport and language. PSM, in particular, are uniquely positioned and required via their public objects to deliver a range of programming in the Irish language for Irish audiences and the diaspora.

The BAI also agrees that Public Service Content can include the range of News and Current Affairs output provided by local, regional and national media – across a range of platforms. PSM, Commercial, Community Broadcasters and print media all provide Irish audiences with high quality, impartial and independent journalism - a core part of Irish life which needs to be sustained as an integral factor in a free, open democracy. The BAI notes that the current legislative position does not allow for news and current affairs to be funded by the BAI though the competitive Broadcast Fund. This has been a recurring issue in submissions from stakeholders in reviews of the operation and impact of BAI Sound and Vision schemes developed to allocate such funding.

BAI Annual and Five-Year Reviews of PSM, as well as [the BAI Audience Tracker Survey, undertaken on our behalf by Behaviour and Attitudes](#) all note that Irish audiences both value and want trusted, diverse content which reflects who they are as Irish citizens. Irish Public Service Content Providers are key in an age of disinformation and "fake news", and reports such as the Reuters Institute Digital News Study show that Irish audiences still value and trust PSM, broadcast and print media as sources of news<sup>1</sup>.

The need for trusted and reliable content is not just specific to News and Current Affairs and in an increasingly globalised market where SVODs are increasing their audience penetration, the need for high quality national, regional and local content has rarely been greater. This need can be applied to drama, factual programming and documentaries, as well as Children's' content and other programming not normally substantively provided by internationally focused SVODs.

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<sup>1</sup> While Social media is increasingly the main source of news for 18-24-year-olds, TV is the main source for over 55s. TV remains the main source of news overall (33%), radio (13%) continues to poll strongly in Ireland, with more Irish consumers citing this medium as their main source of news than counterparts in the UK (10%), North America (6%) and the EU (8%) – **Source: Reuters Digital News Report 2020 (Ireland)**

## 2. Support for the AV sector

### 2.1 Broadcast Funding Scheme (Sound & Vision)

Part 10 of the Broadcasting Act 2009 makes provision for disbursement of 7% of the net television licence fee receipts (“the Broadcasting Fund”) through funding schemes, including the Sound & Vision schemes, managed by the BAI and approved by the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. The Fund covers both the costs of the administration of any scheme, or schemes, and funding grants for the development and production of content.

The objectives of the current Sound and Vision 4 Scheme are derived from [Section 155](#) of the Act, and are as follows:

- **Quality:** develop high quality programmes based on Irish culture, heritage and experience.
- **Irish Language:** develop these programmes in the Irish language.
- **Additionality:** increase the availability of programmes referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b) to audiences in the State.
- **Diversity:** represent the diversity of Irish culture and heritage.
- **Heritage:** record oral Irish heritage and aspects of Irish heritage which are disappearing, under threat, or have not been previously recorded; and
- **Local & Community Broadcasting:** develop local and community broadcasting

The BAI accepts applications covering all programming formats and genres with the exception of programmes which are produced primarily for news and current affairs, as these are excluded pursuant to the provisions of [Section 154 \(2\) \(d\)](#) of the Act.

Sound & Vision is central to the delivery of the BAI’s vision and to our related strategic objectives – increasing culturally relevant audio and audio-visual content for Irish audiences; fostering a media landscape that is representative of and accessible to the diversity of Irish society; and supporting quality programming in the Irish language.

Sound & Vision facilitates the production of culturally relevant content for Irish audiences that would not otherwise be made, including programmes in the Irish language, and is a fundamental part of the funding infrastructure for the Irish independent production sector.

Operating on an open basis, the scheme facilitates the engagement of a diverse range of programme-makers, from small independent radio and TV producers making programmes for community and local broadcasters, to large production houses making films for national and international audiences. Through its ancillary measures, the scheme also supports much needed skills training and development.



## 2.2 Examples of recent activities

As noted above, the BAI provides support to the Irish audio-visual sector via a number of different sources. Principally, this is delivered via the Sound & Vision scheme but during 2020, the Minister requested that additional support be provided to the independent radio sector by means of a levy waiver. Examples of recent rounds of the Sound & Vision scheme, and further details on the levy waiver are set out below:

### **Sound & Vision Round 34**

This round funded 90 radio projects totalling €605k, and 36 TV projects totalling €6.4m of funding.

### **Sound & Vision Round 35**

A specific round of [funding](#) was delivered in 2020, ringfenced for independent commercial radio services across the country supporting public awareness and understanding of COVID-19. The special COVID-19 funding initiative was operated by the BAI under the BAI's Sound & Vision 4 Scheme, following a request from the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Richard Bruton. The round allocated €2.5m and funded 35 projects.

### **Sound & Vision Round 36**

This was a specific round ringfenced for Community Radio services. The round focused on the social benefit offered by stations in their community and awarded €669k to 22 projects.

### **Sound & Vision Round 37**

This was an open round and funded 32 Radio projects totalling €289k and 20 television projects totalling €4.3m.

### **Levy waiver**

During 2020 and in a direct response to the impact of COVID-19 on the independent commercial radio sector, the Minister requested the BAI to waive the Broadcasting Levy payable by the radio sector for the first six months of the year. The BAI agreed to the Minister's request, and, as a consequence saved local radio and independent stations approximately €1 million in operating costs. The waiver was funded by a combination of BAI 2020 budget reductions and Exchequer funding.

## 3. Public Service Media

### Part A – Current media & regulatory landscape

#### 3.1 Key BAI statutory requirements

The Broadcasting Act 2009 ("the Act") sets out a broad statutory objective for the Authority to "facilitate public service broadcasters in the fulfilment of their public service objects as set out in this Act". The Act also sets out specific statutory obligations for the BAI relating to the PSBs - RTÉ and TG4.

The Authority's areas of focus are generally concerned with transparency and accountability in the performance of the PSBs in respect of their statutory objects, their use of public funding, and the impact of their commercial and economic activities. The principal activities of the Authority include:

#### ***Annual Statement of Performance Commitments (ASPC)***

Section 102 of the Act requires the PSBs to prepare and submit, before the 31st January of each year, their respective commitments and targets for that calendar year. The PSBs are required to publish these statements of commitments following consultation with the Minister and the BAI.

While the statements are those of the PSBs (and it is not the Authority's role to determine commitments), it is the practice of the Authority to set the framework for the setting of commitments and to provide some feedback concerning whether it considers the PSB's objects (as set out in the Act - section 114 for RTÉ and section 118 for TG4) are adequately reflected in their ASPCs and whether the information provided assists the BAI in fulfilling its regulatory oversight role.

#### ***Annual Reviews of Performance and Public Funding (ARPPF)***

Section 124(2) of the Act requires the Authority to carry out a review of the extent to which each public service broadcaster in the State has fulfilled its commitments in respect of its statutory public service objects as stated in its annual statement of performance commitments for that financial year. This section of the Act also requires the Authority to review the adequacy or otherwise of public funding in enabling a PSB to meet its public service objects.

Arising from such reviews, the Authority is then required to make a recommendation to the Minister on any modification in the licence fee (in the case of RTÉ) and on any adjustment in public funding (in the case of TG4).

Previous ARPPFs have focused on the PSBs' performance across the following five broad thematic areas: Audiences; Content; Transparency and Efficiency; Trust and Good Governance; and Irish Language Promotion and Development.

The ARPPF documents are published once laid before the Oireachtas. With this in mind, the most recent review available covers the 2018 period and can be seen [here](#). The

2019 ARPPF has not yet been laid before the Oireachtas but will be shared with the Commission on a confidential basis.

### ***Five Year Review of Public Funding***

Pursuant to section 124(8) of the Act, the Authority is required to conduct a review, every five years, of the adequacy of public funding to enable the PSBs to meet their public service objects, and to inform the BAI's recommendations to the Minister in respect of the public funding needs of the PSB's over the next five years. The BAI concluded its most recent Five Year Review in 2018 which covered the five-year costed strategies of each PSB for the years 2018-2022.

Since 2009, the BAI has carried out eleven Annual Reviews of Performance and Public Funding and two Five-Year reviews. As well as including an in-depth review of financial expenditure across the PSBs' operations and services, having regard to a wide set of factors, including economic, market and environmental factors, these reviews also ensure that PSBs' use of public funding accords with the principles of the European Commission's 2009 Communication on the application of State aid rules to the financing of public service broadcasting – 2009/C 257/01<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Other BAI Functions re PSBs***

The Authority also has a number of functions relating to economic operations of PSBs. These include conducting Sectoral Impact Assessments and providing analysis on proposed Joint Ventures and Guidance on Code of Fair-Trading Practice.

In summary, the BAI's activities are designed to ensure efficient, effective and transparent use of public funding and to ensure that public funding is used in pursuit of the broadcaster's public service objects - as set out in sections 114 (RTÉ) and 118 (TG4) of the Act.

## **3.2 Insights from the past decade**

The BAI's most recent Five-Year Review (2018) undertook significant analysis of the market and audience challenges facing the Irish PSBs. The report's conclusions, which are still broadly relevant in the current climate, were as follows:

- A challenging macro-economic environment exists, with slower growth and rising inflation, with various implications for the PSBs but RTÉ particularly.
- The high production values of SVOD services resets audience expectations and PSBs are challenged to provide content with high production values in order to compete.
- There is increasing competition for advertising spend from other media and indigenous commercial broadcasters, with further growth in online advertising spend likely.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:257:0001:0014:EN:PDF>

- Competition for rights has put upward pressure on the costs of rights, especially for premium content such as sports where, traditionally, PSBs have been dominant.
- Generally, European PSBs face specific challenges in a more dynamic environment, including making the case for continued public funding against the backdrop of competitive challenge and declining audience shares; protecting linear broadcasting while moving to digital markets and engaging with younger audiences; the need to address the tension between offering popular content to win audiences and commercial revenue, while retaining distinctiveness to justify public status and public funding.
- While Irish PSBs are relatively well-funded on a per capita basis, in absolute terms, funding of RTÉ and TG4 lags the larger European markets as well as similar-sized countries in Northern Europe.

In terms of changes in consumption over the past decade, research carried out by Mediatique for the [BAI's Broadcasting Services Strategy Review 2018](#) (BSS) concluded the following key points, which are still reflective of the current habits of Irish audiences:

- Media consumers undertake an increasing range of activities, although both broadcast TV and radio remain the largest media in terms of activity and time spent.
- Younger age groups are reducing their consumption of broadcast media at a faster rate than other groups, although even among youngest adults, television and radio remain two of the most used media.
- In-home use of traditional broadcast equipment remains the primary means of receiving and consuming video and audio content, although take-up and use of connected devices continues to increase.
- There was broad consensus that Irish television channels reflected diversity and delivered fairly well on plurality.
- On average, most Irish audiences are happy with the provision and performance of television and radio broadcasters and, while Irish audiences claim broad satisfaction with the range and quality of content available on Irish broadcast media, there is some scope for Irish broadcasters to improve the way they reflect Irish culture and diversity and to increase the amount of available content that is made in Ireland.

It should also be noted that findings from the aforementioned BAI Audience Tracker Survey conclude that Irish audiences strongly agree that RTÉ and TG4 meet their wide range of public objects, particularly in terms of reflecting Irish culture and experience in their services. The survey also concluded that Irish audiences value Irish PSM to inform them on their understanding of national and global events from a uniquely Irish perspective.

### **Statutory framework vs pace of change**

As noted in the BAI's Annual and Five-Year Reviews, the statutory framework of Irish PSM regulation has struggled to keep pace with the change in market choice and audience consumption over the past decade. Technology has driven this seismic shift in consumption, leaving legislation drafted in a pre-Netflix age appearing outdated and increasingly less relevant.

As noted throughout the BAI's reviews and subsequently this document, the BAI recommends a revision of the PSM's public objects as set out in the 2009 Act, and consequently a revision of some of the more technical aspects of how PSM are regulated, e.g., the timing of review cycles set out in section 124 of the Act.

### **3.3 Insights from other jurisdictions**

As evidenced in BAI Annual Reviews and Five-Year Reviews, and in external reviews of PSM by other European regulators and media consultancy firms, the issues facing Irish PSM are common to most if not all European PSM. Challenges such as fragmenting audiences, lack of secure funding and declining commercial revenue are particularly relevant to smaller countries, where economies of scale have more protracted impacts on PSM institutions.

#### **Benchmarking**

During the BAI's [2018 Annual Review of Performance and Public Funding](#), Mediatique, on behalf of the BAI, conducted a benchmarking exercise. While the purpose of the exercise was to compare Irish PSM performance efficiency with comparable European PSM, the analysis<sup>3</sup> also considered the systems of funding and regulatory oversight currently in operation in other jurisdictions.

In the 2018 Review, Mediatique approached the selection of the set of PSM with three criteria in mind: proximity to the Irish market (i.e., Europe); adjacency to a same language neighbour in a larger market; multi-language territory. A mix of 'hybrid' funding (commercial and licence fee) and exclusively public funding (licence fee only) models were also reviewed in the analysis.

#### **Funding models**

While licence fee models are often seen as inefficient and outdated, as explored in significant detail in the [2017 Report of the Joint Committee on the Future Funding of Public Service Broadcasting](#), the model is still used across many jurisdictions. The evasion rate in other countries, however, is substantially lower than the rate in Ireland<sup>4</sup>.

Other countries deviate from the Irish model in different ways, particularly in terms of the length of funding cycles, (thereby providing a greater degree of certainty regarding funding), and the designated organisation responsible for making and enacting PSM funding recommendations. The Irish system, where funding cycles are annual only and

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<sup>3</sup> See sections 6.17- 6.24 & 7.20 -7.25 of the BAI's [2018 ARPPF](#)

<sup>4</sup> See page 25 of [RTÉ Annual Report 2018](#)

funding decisions are made directly by Government, are rarely replicated in other comparable countries.

Norway for example<sup>5</sup>, employs a four-year funding cycle for the funding of their PSM, NRK. This is designed to unlink funding decisions from election cycles and remove the political dimension from the overall PSM funding process. Other jurisdictions employ other methods to ensure that funding decisions are apolitical and independent. German broadcasters, for example, employ an independent auditor (KEF) to review their performance using a multifaceted approach. The KEF reviews the broadcasters' previous three years spend in parallel with its own forecasts for those years. Then, considering this review, it provides a recommendation to municipal governments on the state of the licence fee. This approach, structurally at least, bears similarity to the method that Ireland currently employs. However, it is enhanced because of the more central role that KEF adopts in the process.

Most comparable jurisdictions employ multi-annual funding cycles, e.g., Sweden uses a six-year funding cycle. As noted throughout this submission, certainty of funding for PSM via multi-annual funding cycles is crucial in ensuring strategically adept and sustainable PSM. The BBC, for example, is funded by a licence fee and is governed by the Royal Charter and Framework Agreement, agreed with the government every 11 years. The Charter sets the BBC's funding for an 11-year period. There is a midterm review of the Charter, where government can change the level of funding but not the funding structure.

Universal tax-based funding models, e.g., the funding of the Finnish PSM Yle, are index-linked to ensure that any increases are in line with cost-of-living. Index-linking is also employed by the UK Government in determining the UK licence fee and the subsequent funding of the BBC.

Other jurisdictions, e.g., Italy have attempted to address widespread licence fee evasion by funding PSM via the mechanism of an existing utility charge – the licence fee is collected via household electricity bills. While changing to this type of model is becoming more prevalent in some jurisdictions, such a transition requires concerted political application and widespread buy-in.

The BAI is mindful of the Irish experience in terms of other public service and utility taxation, e.g., water charges. That said, it should be noted that BAI supported the implementation of a household charge when it was initially proposed in the 2011 Programme for Government<sup>6</sup>, and considers that it should be looked at again. Despite the challenges experienced by this proposal, a broadening of the funding base in this manner could result in a reduction of the amount of the fee payable by Irish tax payers and could provide PSM and Public Service Content Providers with certainty of funding on a more sustainable scale.

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<sup>5</sup> See page 5 of EY's October 2020 report for Ofcom: "[International Perspectives on Public Service Broadcasting](#)"

<sup>6</sup> See page 61 of the [Programme for Government 2011](#)



### ***Wider effects of a healthy PSM***

Regardless of what specific type of funding models are used to sustain PSM, BAI benchmarking and other external reviews and reports from across Europe and beyond contend that a healthy PSM ensures healthy competition within the indigenous audio-visual sector. A securely funded PSM is often the core of a creative AV sector, acting as the fulcrum of an ecosystem involving independent production companies and rival commercial broadcasters.

In many instances, PSM also act as the core provider of skills training and development for the wider AV sector and, in the past, have been first to introduce innovative approaches to content development and production. Sustainability of the PSM is therefore intrinsically linked to the sector – a diminished PSM would have a direct negative impact on the Irish AV sector and on audiences as noted elsewhere in this document.

## **Part B: PSM – future considerations**

### **3.4 Role of Government & Regulation**

As demonstrated in the BAI's Annual and Five-Year Statutory Reviews of the PSBs, the rationale for maintaining PSM in Ireland remains strong. A supplementary piece of research conducted between 2016 and 2018, [the BAI Audience Tracker Survey, undertaken on our behalf by Behaviour and Attitudes](#), specifically addressed key audience perceptions of PSM in Ireland. Respondents felt strongly that RTÉ performed well in terms of *'Representing diversity & alternative viewpoints'*, *'Informing our understanding of the world'* and *'Trust & Liberty of expression'*. TG4, meanwhile, is perceived to be performing particularly well with regard to reflecting Irish linguistic and cultural identity, and at the same time representing diversity and alternative viewpoints. Our research concluded that Irish audiences clearly want and value high quality content that reflects who they are as Irish citizens.

### ***Certainty of Funding***

Over the past decade, PSM have struggled to maintain their connection with all audiences, as choice increases, audiences fragment and consumption patterns change. Younger audiences in particular are moving away from consuming PSM in the same manner as their parents and grandparents. In order to meet this demand, PSM require radical strategies, supplemented by certainty of funding, delivered via multi-annual agreements. This recommendation was made by Communications Chambers in *section 9.3.2<sup>7</sup>* of the BAI's most recent Five Year Review. The consultants also recommended that funding decisions should be index-linked, notably to CPI. The BAI supports this view and believes that multi-annual agreements (e.g., 3 - 4 years) would provide PSM

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<sup>7</sup> Page 84 of the [BAI's Five Year Review \(2018\)](#)

with certainty of funding and aid in the delivery of more strategically developed content and services to Irish audiences.

Recent BAI Annual Reviews have also noted that certainty on *types* of funding of PSM needs to be addressed. PSM require funding outside of meeting operational costs and certainty in funds to support capital development and changes in infrastructure are central for the PSM to progress in the digital environment.

As set out in the [Olsberg/SPI/Nordicity report on Economic Analysis of the Audio-visual Sector in the Republic of Ireland](#) and the Government's Audiovisual Action Plan<sup>8</sup>, secure PSM funding and wider funding for Public Service Content is critical to the development of the Irish AV sector more broadly.

### **Certainty of Access**

Given the wide range of content and services available to Irish audiences, it is increasingly important that all Irish audiences are given universal access to PSM content. Aspects of this principle are evident in the ["Must Carry-Must Offer" section of the 2009 Act](#). However, the legislation is technologically outdated, does not capture current consumption habits and focuses on the delivery of linear services only. Current legislation is also service-specific and does not deal with the wider prominence of PSB content via other platforms, e.g., SVODs such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

This area may require further review by legislators, considering the circumvention of EPGs via Smart TVs and Voice-activated search functions available to Irish audiences. This issue is being widely discussed at broadcaster and regulatory levels across Europe. A recent [report](#) carried out by Mediatique for Ofcom UK addresses many of these points and may be of interest to the Commission.

While there is a responsibility on Government and Regulators to ensure universal access to PSM content and services, the individual broadcasters are also tasked with meeting this demand in their respective Strategies and Public Objects. The BAI believes these obligations are crucial and require focus and innovation from broadcasters, particularly in terms of connecting with harder-to-reach audiences (including the Irish diaspora) and making their content accessible to all. This also means finding new ways to reach audiences who have hearing or visual impairments. The BAI is committed to working alongside Irish broadcasters and Access advocate groups in order to develop such provisions.

### **Serving all audiences**

While the current focus of broadcasters and regulators alike is on engaging with younger audiences, it is also key that PSM maintain their established connections with existing audiences, including the older demographic. A phased transition towards serving all audiences is required, not an immediate switch to catering for younger audiences only. Older audiences provide PSM, particularly RTÉ, with a significant portion of their commercial advertising income and any further negative impact on this already reducing revenue stream could result in significant financial strain on the broadcaster.

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<sup>8</sup> The AV plan is currently unavailable online, however first progress report on the Plan can be see [here](#).



Serving all audiences equally is a core tenet of PSM’s public objects as set out in the Act, and the BAI has responded to ensuring that this key consideration informs the broadcasters’ decision-making by developing a specific type of analysis known as “Audience Yield”. Audience Yield analysis provides an in-depth look at audience consumption and respective spend trends across the PSM’s services and genres. This analysis is undertaken as part of the ARPPF and the outcomes can be seen in more detail in the [BAI’s recent ARPPFs](#)<sup>9</sup>.

### 3.5 PSM focus on Culture, Sport, and Irish language

As demonstrated in the BAI’s Audience Tracker Survey, Irish audiences expect and value high quality and nationally-specific content from their PSM. The survey showed that Irish audiences agree that PSM fulfil their public objects in terms of providing content which reflects Irish culture and language. As previously noted, Irish audiences also greatly value PSM’s key ability to deliver content across genres from a uniquely Irish perspective, an insight not always provided by SVODs in comparison.

PSM content, particularly programmes reflecting Irish culture and in the Irish language, have been regularly funded via the BAI’s Sound & Vision Scheme. Such content strongly meets the objectives of the current Scheme and the BAI is keen to ensure that programming of this nature continues to be funded in order to provide Irish audiences with a range of high-quality output. Coverage of sport, particularly that of national games, is protected by existing European and Irish frameworks – notably via the Major Events provisions set out in Part 11 of the Broadcasting Act 2009. The BAI supports the view that such events and coverage need to be universally accessible to Irish audiences on a free-to-air basis.

### 3.6 Alternative Funding Sources

#### **Section 481 Reform**

As set out in the [Olsberg/SPI/Nordicity report on Economic Analysis of the Audio-visual Sector in the Republic of Ireland](#), the scope of Section 481 could also be widened to provide more scope and capacity for PSM to seek high quality partnerships and co-production ventures.

#### **Levy on VOD**

In terms of new funds potentially available to the PSM, the [proposal to legislate for a levy on television broadcasting services and video on-demand services available in Ireland](#) to fund audio-visual content production in Ireland could also be beneficial in funding specific types of content. This proposal emanates from the provisions set out

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<sup>9</sup> Please see sections 4.67 and 5.41 of the BAI’s [2018 Annual Review of Performance and Public Funding](#)

in Article 13(2)<sup>10</sup> of the AVMSD and given the complexities of its establishment, could take some time to enact as a functioning fund in Ireland.

### **Partnerships**

Whatever further funds are available to PSM, recent BAI and external reports from the wider industry have shown the crucial role of exploring partnerships. Given that audiences now expect high quality content across all genres, the scale of production has exponentially grown in order to keep pace with the budgets available to SVOD-own productions from Netflix and Amazon. Simultaneously, the SVODs will soon be required to meet AVMSD quotas relating to EU/Independent works and will need to increase the level of such content on their services in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Directive.

With this in mind, there does seem to be an opportunity for Governments and legislators to facilitate PSM/SVOD partnerships - with the net outcome being more high quality PSM content being made available to a wider audience. Ofcom UK has recently suggested this very approach in their recent [PSB Review](#).

There is also potential for PSM to partner with non-broadcasting stakeholders and while there is a rich history of the Irish PSM working alongside cultural institutions, this has largely taken place on an ad hoc basis. Given the recent restructuring of Government departments, there may be more opportunity for more strategic and cross-sectoral partnerships in this area.

Following on from this approach, it may also be beneficial for PSM to explore an All-Island approach to initiatives and funding. Some partnership between Irish and Northern Ireland broadcasters currently exists. However, given the potential opportunities brought about by Brexit, there may be a more substantive role for Irish PSMs in Northern Ireland and vice versa.

### **Urgency of funding**

It should be noted that bringing about changes such as the ones noted above, takes considerable time, whether for legislative or other operational reasons. Given the precarious nature of the sustainability of the Irish AV sector, heavily impacted by COVID-19, urgent action is therefore required via a combination of short and medium-term actions.

## **3.7 PSM audience connection**

### **Statutory structures & support**

As set out in the Commission's suggested questions for consideration, the Irish PSM's connection with its audience is the most important partnership in ensuring high quality content that reflects Irish society. Statutory structures and frameworks can aid this connection, and broadcasters are receptive to audiences' needs particularly if it has a commercial advantage.

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<sup>10</sup> Please see Article 13(2) on page 18 of the [AVMSD](#)

As set out in the BAI's Five Year Review of the PSBs, the PSBs (particularly RTÉ) require both political and regulatory support for potentially radical changes in the provision of services and content<sup>11</sup>. Flowing out of this, the PSM's respective strategies need to be radical, as well as practical and achievable. The BAI is confident that the existing framework for commitment and target setting (ASPC) and subsequent review process (ARPPF) can facilitate the realisation of such Strategic Plans.

### ***Commitments and targets***

[Recent BAI ARPPF's](#) have noted and encouraged the PSM's adoption of more public perception-orientated targets. While such metrics can be volatile and are open to fluctuation as a result of unrelated external factors (e.g., presenters' salaries), it is important that they are included as a suite of analysis to understand and respond to audiences' expectations and needs. The BAI would encourage the development and further use of such metrics, particularly in targeted areas relating to underserved audiences, e.g., 15-34-year olds.

### ***Developing existing connections***

[Section 96](#) of the Act set outs the role of Audience Councils, which are tasked with working alongside PSM in ensuring structured audience feedback. This provision could be reviewed and further developed, given the lessons learned from the recent Citizen Assembly process and the democratisation of access brought about by COVID-19 and remote working.

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<sup>11</sup> See section 10.2.3 of the [BAI's Five Year Review of the PSBs](#)

## 4. Public Service Content Providers

### 4.1 Definition of Content

The BAI agrees with the Commission’s definition of Public Service Content, as set out in [section 1.3](#) of this document. The BAI agrees that Public Service Content should seek to Inform, Educate and Entertain and reflect Irish culture, identity, sport and language.

The BAI also agrees that Public Service Content can include the range of News and Current Affairs output provided by local, regional and national media – across a range of platforms.

### 4.2 Funding

Successive BAI reports and studies have emphasised that a secure and sustainable audio-visual ecosystem needs to exist in Ireland in order for Irish Public Service Content Providers to continue to serve Irish audiences with the content they want and expect. While existing funds are available via the Broadcast Funding Scheme (Sound and Vision), Screen Ireland, Section 481 and other sources, the scope and scale of this funding is not sufficient to sustain or grow the Irish audio-visual sector.

As previously mentioned, the [Olsberg/SPI/Nordicity report on Economic Analysis of the Audio-visual Sector in the Republic of Ireland](#) recommended a mix of direct and contested funding, alongside increased scope of tax incentives and cross-sectoral Government support. The BAI supports the view that a mix of funding sources would be advantageous to the Irish AV sector.

#### **Funding News & Current Affairs**

Existing funding sources currently largely exclude News and Currents affairs output – the [Simon Cumbers Media Fund](#) being one exception. The inclusion of News and Current Affairs content in existing funds, e.g., Sound & Vision, would require legislative change and reduce the potential amount available to other types of content, given that the Fund is a set percentage of licence fee receipts.

The [Broadcasting \(Amendment\) Bill 2019](#) proposes the establishment of a “Scheme for professional journalistic practices in certain sound broadcasters”<sup>12</sup>. While welcome in principle, significant practical challenges may face such a scheme. Namely, the pace of legislative progression, the subsequent time period required in order to establish such a scheme, and the limited scope of the proposed scheme could detract from the scheme’s immediate impact on the sector. Should the Scheme be administered via the Broadcast Funding Scheme, it will also directly reduce the amount of overall funding available to other Sound & Vision applicants, namely the independent production sector in Ireland.

The BAI therefore recommends that new, **additional** funding is also required for News and Current Affairs content providers. Such funding needs to be established and

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<sup>12</sup> See pages 12 and 13 of the [Broadcasting \(Amendment\) Bill 2019](#)

delivered in a structured and strategic manner, across platforms, in order to have a substantive impact on the traditional journalism sector in Ireland. Urgency of funding is crucial here, particularly given the current strain on content providers as a result of COVID-19. A range of short-to-long term funding sources should be considered for content providers in order to address this crucial issue affecting a key component of the Irish media landscape.

An additional source of funding could be designed to directly address disinformation via the provision of high-quality journalism and could also incorporate wider training and development opportunities across the sector. An example of this targeted approach was evident in Round 35 of the Sound & Vision Scheme, noted earlier in this document. This Round was specific to commercial radio broadcasters and to the provision of COVID-related content.

As also previously noted in this submission, the levy reflective of Article 13(2) of the AVMSD to fund audio-visual content production in Ireland could also be beneficial in funding specific types of content such as News and Current Affairs programming.

### **Partnerships**

As noted in [section 3.6](#) of this document, alternative funding sources are potentially applicable to Public Service Content Providers as well to PSM. These include partnerships and co-production opportunities with traditional broadcasters and VOD and SVOD providers.

Irish Public Service Content Providers could also benefit from working together more closely. COVID-19 has seen Irish news teams from different broadcasters pool resources, resulting in more cost effective and efficient newsgathering and reporting.

Public Service Content Providers could also work together to address common challenges, the migration of advertising revenue to online. The sector could benefit from enhanced audience consumption data collection, which would accurately reflect the depth and value of traditional media to advertising agencies.

### **Wider reform**

Irish Public Service Content Providers could also benefit from a range of other reforms and revisions. Positive changes to the licence fee system, where receipts are increased and/or evasion is reduced could result in a larger allocation to Sound & Vision and, in turn, to broadcasters and independent producers.

The Government's proposed revision and reform of Defamation legislation<sup>13</sup> could also have a positive impact on the sector, particularly on News and Current Affairs content providers. The threat and cost of High Court challenges has had a significant impact on Irish journalism, particularly investigatory journalism. Reform of current legislation could improve both financial status of news outlets and provide Irish citizens with "a balanced

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<sup>13</sup> See page 122 of the [Programme for Government](#)

approach to the right to freedom of expression, the right to protection of good name and reputation, and the right of access to justice” as set out in the current Programme for Government.

### 4.3 Access and Findability

As noted in [section 3.4](#) of this document, PSM content requires due prominence across platforms and services in order to facilitate universal access for all audiences. This requirement is by nature extended in principle to Public Service Content Providers in an increasingly platform-agnostic and saturated market, underpinned by subscription-based and personalised services. Irish Public Service Content needs to be made available to audiences via traditional platforms, but also needs to reach audiences who consume content outside of an EPG and on a personalised subscription basis.

As noted previously in this document, ensuring findability of Public Service Content would require legislative change. Should specific legislation be enacted, it will need to be radical and flexible in order to keep pace with change to technology and audience consumption habits.

Public Service Content by its very nature needs to be accessible to all audiences, and this includes visually impaired and hard of hearing audiences. The BAI recognises that more needs to be done in this area and will continue to work closely with user access consultative groups, broadcasters and platform providers to improve the quality and range of accessible content available.

As set out in the BAI’s submission to the Government’s Public Consultation on the Regulation of Harmful Content and the Implementation of the Revised Audio-visual Media Services Directive<sup>14</sup>, Article 7a of the revised Directive provides that Member States may take measures to ensure the appropriate prominence of audiovisual media services of general interest (e.g. public interest content).

Given the limited current scope of legislation and regulation in Ireland, the BAI considers it appropriate for the regulator to have such an increased role. In this regard, the overarching regulatory objectives of Section 4: Audiovisual Media Services (Strands 3 & 4) 74 plurality and diversity in the range of services and content available to Irish audiences provide a useful rationale for such an approach.

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<sup>14</sup> See section 4.3.4, pages 73 & 74 of the [Submission](#)

## 5. Media Governance & Regulation

### 5.1 BAI's vision for the future of media regulation in Ireland

The BAI proposed the introduction of new statutory regulation for video on demand and harmful online content in June 2019, and published this [submission](#).

The BAI's vision for the future of media regulation in Ireland was explored in its submission to the Government's Public Consultation on the Regulation of Harmful Content and the Implementation of the Revised Audio-visual Media Services Directive, which was initiated by the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, Richard Bruton TD in early 2019.

A summary of the BAI's proposals under each of the strands highlighted in the Minister's consultation document are set out below:

#### ***Strand 1: New online safety laws to apply to Irish residents***

In the submission, the BAI welcomed the Minister's intention to introduce regulation to protect Irish residents from harmful online content. It said that regulation introduced to ensure online safety and new EU regulation specific to online video-sharing platforms should be implemented in a separate – but complementary – manner, with aligned strategic objectives.

In the longer term, the BAI envisions the development and enforcement of an online safety code applicable to relevant Irish online service providers in order to minimise harms. The BAI also proposes a role for the regulator in promoting awareness of online safety issues among the public and industry.

#### ***Strand 2: Regulation of Video Sharing Platforms***

The submission notes the growing reach and influence of new types of services that make videos available on the internet and the revised Audio-visual Media Services Directive's requirement to regulate video-sharing platform services. It also notes that most of Europe's largest providers of video-sharing platform services, such as YouTube and Facebook, are based here in Ireland and will be regulated in this country for their European activities.

The BAI proposes that video-sharing platforms should be directly regulated by a statutory regulator and that the Directive's rules should be implemented through legislation and statutory codes. It believes that fundamental protections for freedom of speech on video-sharing platform services should be enshrined in these codes, while addressing significant protection issues that arise on such services in respect of content carried.

The BAI envisages the role of the media regulator as being responsible for the development of high-level rules and regulations, and then assessing the measures taken by video-sharing platforms to implement those rules. The BAI also envisages a



robust and transparent complaints system and independent appeals mechanism as part of that regulatory framework.

### ***Strand 3: Regulation of on-demand services***

The submission welcomes a greater degree of regulatory consistency between on-demand services and linear broadcasting services, which reflects the changing consumption patterns amongst audiences. The BAI notes that the use of on-demand services in Ireland continues to increase, with over 50% of Irish adults now regularly accessing videos through these platforms.

The BAI believes that the most appropriate means of introducing the revised Directive's new rules for on-demand services is through statutory regulation and codes, and to assign the role of overseeing on-demand services to the proposed new statutory regulator.

### ***Strand 4: Minor changes to regulation of linear television broadcasting***

In its submission, the BAI notes the essential role played by Irish broadcasters in the delivery of news and current affairs content, their strong ties to the Irish State and its culture, and the key role they play in the creation of Irish content.

The importance of broadcasting to the Irish State and its culture justifies the continued regulation and oversight of these services in the current manner, except to the extent that changes should be made pursuant to the transposition of the revised Directive.

## **5.2 Media Plurality and Ownership in Ireland**

Media Plurality is a core objective and consideration of the BAI, and is reflected across a wide range of BAI work activities. In 2018, the BAI published a new [Media Plurality Policy](#) and a revised [Ownership and Control Policy](#). The primary purpose of the Media Plurality Policy sets out how the BAI supports and promotes media plurality. The policy provides context for the BAI's role in respect of media plurality and provides a definition for media plurality which reflects the definition in the Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014. The Policy sets out a range of activities that the BAI takes to promote and support media plurality.

The Ownership and Control Policy gives practical effect to the obligations set out in the Broadcasting Act 2009 which the BAI must consider when deciding on the most suitable applicant for the award of a radio or television service contract. The first such Policy was published in 2001 and it has been reviewed and updated regularly since then. The Policy is also applied by the BAI in awarding broadcasting (radio and television) licences pursuant to the 2009 Act and in assessing requests for changes to the ownership and control structures of existing broadcasting services, for example, changes in shareholdings and directors. The Policy provides guidance and rules for the BAI when considering the desirability of allowing any person, or group of persons, to have control of, or substantial interests in, an undue number of media services in the Irish State. The BAI Ownership and Control Policy is specifically referenced in the 2014 Act as one of



the relevant criteria for consideration by the Minister in considering media merger proposals.<sup>15</sup>

The BAI is required under [Section 28M of the Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014](#) to publish research on matters relating to the plurality of media in the state. This Act sets out a specific requirement for the BAI to submit a report to the Minister every three years which contains the following:

- Describes the ownership and control arrangements for undertakings carrying on a media business in the State,
- Describes the changes to the ownership and control arrangements of such undertakings over the previous 3 years, and
- Analyses the effects of such changes on plurality of the media in the State

The BAI has produced two such reports since 2015, one covering the period [2012-2014](#) and one covering the period [2015-2017](#). Work on the next report has commenced. In addition, and as previously mentioned in this document, in November 2020, the BAI launched a new website that provides information about ownership and shareholdings of Irish media companies. The BAI commissioned the School of Communications at Dublin City University to design and maintain a dedicated website [www.mediaownership.ie](http://www.mediaownership.ie).

In 2014, the BAI initiated the inclusion of Ireland in the [Reuters Institute Digital News Report](#) project and, in addition, engaged the Institute for Future Media and Journalism (FuJo) at Dublin City University (DCU) to produce an Ireland-specific report based on the research findings. The [Digital News Report Ireland](#) has been published every year since and a new 3-year contract has recently been concluded with Reuters and DCU to ensure this work will continue. This is the only cross platform regular news consumption research published in Ireland and has provided valuable insights into how this landscape is evolving.

In its consultation questions, the Commission asked “what challenges are posed to a vibrant, independent public service media by increasing consolidation / declining plurality of ownership in the Irish market”. The Reuters Digital News Reports and the BAI Reports under Part M of the 2014 Act indicate that changes in traditional media ownership do not represent the most significant threat to media plurality. Technological, financial and regulatory barriers to the establishment of new media enterprises are becoming less relevant in a media landscape that is characterised by exponential growth in the number of viewpoints, outlets and sources of content available to Irish citizens. However, this has presented new, more complex and more concerning challenges to media pluralism as high quality trusted indigenous news is under sustained and escalating pressure. Changes in how news is produced, accessed and funded, which have impacted all public service content providers, have fundamentally and irrevocably

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<sup>15</sup> Relevant Criteria “If appropriate, the adequacy of the following to protect the public interest in plurality of the media in the State; (iii) the ownership and control policy of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland for the time being in force” [Part 4, Section 74, Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014](#)

changed the news and current affairs ecosystem in Ireland and across the globe. This is a dynamic situation that is driven by the growth in power and influence of social media platforms and video service providers where algorithms decide what content should be promoted and recommended.

A report on Media Pluralism and Competition, published by the EU Audiovisual Observatory on December 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, provides a useful framework for examining media pluralism in the context of current definitional, economic and legal perspectives. It also provides a comparative analysis of this framework and the responses being implemented across seven countries. This report clearly shows that public investment is a key component of any successful response but such investment must be compatible with EU State Aid Rules. The BAI has extensive experience of this regime in the context of its PSB reviews and the operation of the Broadcast Fund. In this context it would be available to provide an analysis that the Commission might require of potential investment initiatives.

Developing adequate responses to this disruption at a governmental and regulatory level have been challenging but significant progress is evident in recent years. Europe is seen as providing global leadership in this regard through initiatives such as GDPR, the AVMSD, the Code of Practice on Disinformation and the evolving digital legislative agenda. The BAI has been actively engaged in these processes through ERGA and is playing a leadership role in this regard. It is also stimulating debate and discussion nationally through initiatives such as the development of Media Literacy Ireland and promoting research on the impact of disinformation in Ireland. Given the global players that are based here and the Country of Origin Principle that is a cornerstone of EU policy, Ireland needs to be active in these debates. While these are global issues, the changed environment also presents particular challenges for small open countries such as Ireland. While responses must be developed and implemented at a national, European and global level, a focus on the first two is probably most practical for Ireland at this point.

This submission has made extensive reference to actions that have been taken and could be taken at a national level in relation to PSM and PSC. On December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, the EU published its Democracy Action Plan and a related Media Action Plan which aims to “support media digital transformation and recovery”. In addition, the Commission published proposals in relation to a new Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act on December 15<sup>th</sup>. While all of these recognise the need to rebalance the rights and responsibilities of technology platforms and EU citizens, they also recognise the need for enhanced public investment in quality trusted public value content that is easily accessible to users. Ireland needs to leverage the potential offered by these initiatives to support PSM, PSC and support media pluralism.

## 6. Conclusion

The BAI again welcomes the opportunity to make this submission and regards the Commission's work as crucial, given the challenges facing the audio-visual and print media sectors in Ireland. As set out in this document, Irish audiences clearly value high quality content which reflects who they are as Irish citizens, be it provided by PSM or other Public Service Content Providers. PSM and PSCP therefore need to be sustained and sufficiently nurtured in order to ensure a healthy inter-dependent audio-visual sector – a core requirement of any open, free and functioning democracy.

The common issue arising from the BAI's analysis and research conducted since its inception is funding. PSM and Public Service Content Providers require secure, multi-annual funding agreements, covering a range of both operational and capital costs. Funding is urgently needed and needs to be delivered via a mix of direct and indirect sources on short-, medium- and long-term bases.

In addition to funding, legislation, regulation, and accountability measures need to keep pace with changes in technology and audience consumption habits. Broadcasters and content providers are equipped to give audiences what they want but require wider political and regulatory support in order to deliver content and services in a sustainable manner.

The BAI believes the true potential of the Irish audio-visual sector is yet to be realised and will work with all of our stakeholders to ensure that every attempt is made to make this desire an eventuality.



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