47th EPRA Meeting

Working Group II
Achieving greater diversity in broadcasting - special focus on gender;
benefits and best practice approaches

Summary of the discussion
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1. Introduction and structure of the session

EPRA members decided to include in EPRA's Work Programme for 2018 a biannual group exploring practical ways to encourage a better representation of society - on-screen and off-screen - by addressing the issues through the specific angles of gender representation (for the spring session in Luxembourg) and social, cultural and ethnic minorities (for the autumn session in Bratislava).

In terms of structure, the session was split into two halves: on-screen gender representation and portrayal and off-screen representation - behind the camera and workforce. It was clear from the discussions that these are closely tied.

Working group Chair and EPRA Chairperson *Celene Craig* opened the session by reporting on the preliminary findings that came out of the questionnaire[1] which had been circulated to EPRA members. Five members of EPRA then shared their experience with the participants of the group and highlighted the nature and scope of the challenge:

- *Emilija Petreska-Kamenjarova,* Head of Human Rights and Media Literacy Unit (AAAMS-MK)
- *Joëlle Desterbecq*, Head of Research and Studies (CSA -BE)
- *Estela Jiménez Luna,* Deputy Head of Unit Audiovisual Department (CNMC-ES)
- *Stephanie Comey*, Senior Manager (BAI-IE)
- *Vikki Cook*, Director of Standards and Audience Protection (Ofcom-UK).

2. Key themes coming out of the discussions

Overall, there seems to be a consensus that women are under-represented compared to men both on-screen and off-screen, in programming and in advertising.

- Monitoring is key

Having data is very important and it is where each regulator must start the journey to tackling underrepresentation in order to understand the scope and scale of the issue. Once the gaps are identified, it is easier to create focussed strategies and initiatives to help close them, because what gets measured gets managed.

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[1] You can consult the list of responses to the questionnaire at the following link: https://www.epra.org/surveys/achieving-greater-diversity-in-broadcasting-special-focus-on-gender/results (members' only)

But it is not only important to collect data and to monitor the make-up of the industry that audiovisual regulators regulate and hold to account, NRAs also need to monitor the make-up of their own organisations, ensuring that they reflect society.

There was also some useful discussion around **what kinds of initiatives** could be employed to target underrepresentation both on screen and off screen and colleagues shared their thoughts of these. Such initiatives included for example creating databases of talent, such as an **expert database**, which can then be used by industry as a resource to improve on screen representation. This was mentioned by both the Irish BAI and the Belgian CSA.

There was also some discussion around the use of **setting targets particularly in the off-screen environment** to improve representation.

- Statutory powers

Several EPRA members reported that they were doing good work, conducting comprehensive research but that they only have **limited regulatory powers** to make change happen.

In terms of representation and portrayal in on-screen programming many regulators rely on national provisions which prohibit incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality, which is a high bar and does not cover more subtle forms of gender discrimination.

With regards to off-screen representation, members mostly rely on national equality or employment law in their countries or laws prohibiting hate speech, but there are limited powers that give regulators scope to promote equal opportunities.
The advice given from those who are doing work in this area is to **encourage broadcasters and other AVMS providers**, to make them aware of the research and to keep working and keep discussing the problems around the lack of women or stereotyped portrayal in the industry.

The **Council of Europe Recommendation on Gender Equality in the Audiovisual Sector**[2] of September 2017 was also noted as an important reference document, which includes many of the key themes mentioned in the session such as collecting data and sharing information.

- Accountability - leading from the top

A key aspect also discussed by *Vikki Cook* and *Stephanie Comey* in the off-screen part of the session was the importance of looking at diversity and gender representation in our own organisations.

Regulators have a role to play and should be considering what work they can do to ensure women are represented generally and in senior positions in their own organisations.

An important part of making this effective is ensuring that the work is driven from the top of an organisation. Change is unlikely to happen if the CEO, board or senior leadership of a regulator or

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[2] Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)9 of the Committee of Ministers to member States
on gender equality in the audiovisual sector (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2017 at the 1295th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies):
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016807509e6

stakeholder company is not committed to promoting gender equality and giving support to the work.

3. Next Steps

The Content Producers expressed their thanks to the speakers and everyone who came along to contribute to what was an extremely interesting, engaging and well-attended session. They also thanked those members who completed the gender diversity in broadcasting questionnaire and remarked on the very good number of responses (29 responses were issued before the meeting).

A final version of the comparative EPRA background paper based on the responses to the questionnaire and on findings from the session will be produced at the end of June 2018.

It was also considered very positive that many more discussions are planned or in process to keep sharing data, conversations and lessons learned.

A good demonstration of leading from the top is EU Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society *Mariya Gabriel*'s interest in gender diversity. The next useful discussion will be the **Digital4Her event** organised by the European Commission on 19 June 2018 in Brussels in the course of which the key findings of the EPRA Working group will be shared with the participants[3].

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[3] Digital4Her, more women in digital: a strategy for growth and equality Conference, 19 June 2018, Brussels: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/digital4her