



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) / Council

Subject: Connected Citizens: changing behaviour of viewers in the converged media environment
- *Policy debate*
(Public debate pursuant to Article 8(2) CRP [proposed by the Presidency])

Following consultation of the Audiovisual Working Party, the Presidency has drawn up the attached discussion paper as the basis for the policy debate on the above subject at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 25-26 November 2013.

Presidency discussion paper

CONNECTED CITIZENS:

changing behavior of viewers in the converged media environment

I. Introduction

The proliferation of devices that can be connected to the Internet and the wide availability of faster broadband connections are changing business models and consumer habits. The same applies to consumption of audiovisual media content, whether films, TV series, news or other forms of content. The possibility of watching TV programmes on PC screens or tablets is now taken for granted. The option of browsing Internet content on a TV screen is offered by many of the TV devices on the market, although it is not yet widely taken up by citizens.

Changes in the media landscape are in fact shaped not only by technological progress, but also by citizens' expectations and by the way they make use of the new opportunities.

In general, familiar twentieth-century consumption patterns of watching linear (i.e. scheduled) broadcasts on a TV screen are changing towards active consumption of on-demand services on computers, smart phones, tablets, etc. Moreover, now that every mobile device enables the recording as well as the watching of audiovisual clips, there may be a future shift from 'lean-back' consumption to active participation.

In particular younger viewers do no longer focus on one screen. Many consumers are already using tablets or smart phones while watching TV, for instance to find out more information about what they are watching, or to interact with friends through social networks. Dedicated "second screen" applications on these devices offer the prospect of "social TV" which provides for an enhanced and shared experience for the consumer whilst creating commercial opportunities for the content providers.

At the same time, applications have made the move from smart phones and tablets to the TV screen, which now looks like a kind of large tablet in the living room. The Internet connection on the TV screen allows content from traditional broadcasters to be fed onto the same screen alongside content from online providers. Sometimes the content can be interlinked as broadcasters explore the possibilities offered through Internet connections to enrich their scheduled TV programme, for example with catch-up libraries.

The different approaches between linear and non-linear broadcasting are currently based on different levels of consumer control. It remains to be seen whether the lines between linear and non-linear services will blur from a viewer's perspective to such a degree that this differentiation could appear artificial. Moreover, these developments raise the question of citizens' expectations and needs in terms of consumer protection when watching audiovisual content which has so far been obliged to follow certain rules related to scheduled broadcasting and fewer, less stringent rules related to on-demand services.

The Commission's Green Paper "Preparing for a fully converged audiovisual world"¹ sought feedback on these and similar issues and on the pace at which these changes are likely to develop into the new, everyday audiovisual experience. This has opened up an important debate.

II. Ministerial interventions

In the light of the above, the Presidency would like to invite the Ministers to address the following general questions in their interventions:

What do these changes in the media and audiovisual market mean for the EU's regulatory framework for audiovisual media services? Do new services already comprise a substantial part of your national audiovisual market? If so, does it still make sense to have different rules for broadcasting (linear) services compared to non-linear services? Do the new developments in the market bring new risks for consumers that were not present before and need specific regulation?

¹ Doc. 8934/13 - COM(2013) 231 final.

In order to promote interactive, free-flowing debate, the Presidency will be inviting an external speaker to initiate the debate by giving his perspective on this issue. The speaker will be *Mr. Dean Donaldson*, expert and researcher in the field of converged media.

In their interventions, Ministers should be guided both by the questions set out above and by the presentation by the external speaker. Ministers will be encouraged to intervene freely in response to the speaker, without scripted interventions, by asking questions or commenting. The external speaker will be given the opportunity to respond to the debate as it unfolds and reflect on points made by Ministers.

In order to give all Ministers an opportunity to contribute and to promote a more interactive discussion, interventions should be as brief and concise as possible (maximum 1-2 minutes). This will give Ministers the chance to intervene more than once.
