[IE] Media Regulator publishes work programme

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On 20 June 2023, the Irish national regulatory authority - *Coimisiún na Meán* – published its first work programme. The Commission was established in March 2023, succeeding to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), which was dissolved under the provisions of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022.

The work programme runs until February 2024 and includes the following main objectives:

- Implementing new regulatory regimes for how online service providers deal with harmful and illegal content

- Regulating broadcasting and on-demand services

- Supporting the development of the wider media sector with funding schemes, together with initiatives to promote the Irish language, media literacy, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion in the media sector

- Building the *Coimisiún na Meán* organisation

While big decisions are taken collectively, each commissioner leads on a particular area.

Online safety:

The main objective in this area is to reduce the risk of harmful and illegal online content. The Commission is responsible for regulating large online platforms and search engines with a view to protect users of platforms based in Ireland as well as Irish users in relation to platforms based elsewhere. During the following months, the Commission will prepare for the enforcement of the Digital Services Act. Out of the 19 very large platforms and search engines identified by the European Commission, 11 indeed have their headquarters in Ireland.

Another major angle for the online safety area over the next months will be dedicated to video-sharing platforms (VSPs). The Commission plans to adopt an online safety code which will mainly include measures to be taken by VSPs in relation to protection of minors.

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Broadcasting and video-on-demand:

The Commission will pursue the regulatory work undertaken by the BAI regarding broadcasting and will expand to cover all audiovisual media services (ie: non-linear services). It will, in this regard, establish a new scheme for complaints and update codes and rules.

The Commission will also address the difficulties and possible solutions in relation to the prominence of public service content.

Media Development:

The Commission operates funding schemes to support the development of content for Irish audiences that reflects and shapes Irish society, including The Sound & Vision scheme (support to the production of culturally valuable broadcast content, including in the Irish language), two new journalism schemes, and an archiving scheme (support to the preservation of the historic record of Irish culture, heritage and experience).

Besides, while this branch of the Commission will continue the development of media literacy activities and the promotion of environmental practices conducted by the BAI, the Commission will develop a Gender, Equality, Inclusion and Diversity strategy for the media sector by the end of the year. It will also review of the provision of Irish language services across the media landscape and finally hopes to implement the recommendation that a working group be established with Sport Ireland to develop a strategic plan for sports broadcasting.

Building the organisation:

The Commission is prepared to expand its personnel to include: staff devoted to the supervision of platforms and to formal investigations of suspected contraventions; staff devoted to regulatory policy and to making codes and rules; staff devoted to user support and to handling complaints; staff devoted to broadcasting regulation, media development and research; experts in data science; legal advisors; and support staff in areas such as finance, HR, IT and communications.

The Commission will also put in place arrangements for an industry levy to fund its new responsibilities. More details as to the public deliverables and milestones envisaged by *Coimisiún na Meán* are available on page 6 of the work programme.

In February 2024, the Commission will add the enforcement of the EU's Digital Services Act to the functions it already undertakes under the Broadcasting Act 2009 and the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022.

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Work Programme June 2023

https://www.cnam.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Coimisiun-na-Mean-Work-Programme-_Web.pdf

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