

Press Release

Publishers call for an EU VAT system promoting the democratic role of print and digital newspapers

Newspaper sector notes the launch of new EU Communication on the Future of VAT

Brussels, 6th December, 2011 – Newspaper publishers from all over Europe today called for the lowest possible rates of VAT to be applied to both print and digital editions, in view of the vital role of newspapers in democratic society. The European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA) sent this message to EU institutions and Member States, as the European Commission launched a new Communication on the Future of VAT.

The current zero, super-reduced and reduced rates for printed newspapers provided in many Member States help to ease consumer access to professional news and information. ENPA therefore believes that it is essential to maintain these existing rates for printed editions, in light of their important contribution to public policy goals.

Ivar Rusdal, President of ENPA, said: “Newspapers play an essential role in society by stimulating open debate and promoting the exchange of views and information. We call on the EU institutions to ensure that any future changes to the VAT system promote, rather than hinder, access to independent and professional press which is the foundation stone of democratic society.”

While printed newspapers generally benefit from lower VAT rates, standard VAT rates apply to newspapers in digital formats. ENPA therefore noted with interest the reference in the new Commission Communication which states that **similar goods and services should be subject to the same VAT rate and progress in technology should be taken into account.**

Francine Cunningham, Executive Director of ENPA, said: “Aligning the VAT rates for digital newspapers with the existing rates for printed press would help to achieve the EU goal of a developing vibrant digital market for paid-for content. It would also promote the role of news media in contributing to a well-educated and highly literate European population.”

About ENPA:

The European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA) promotes the professional interests of the European newspaper publishing industry on all platforms. ENPA members represent over 5,200 national, regional and local newspaper titles, published in 23 European Union Member States, plus Norway, Switzerland and Serbia. More than 150 million newspapers are sold and read by over 300 million Europeans every day, in addition to many millions of readers of newspapers in digital formats.

For further information contact:

Francine Cunningham, ENPA Executive Director

Email: francine.cunningham@enpa.be

Tel: +32 (0)2 551 01 90