



In 2016, European citizens spent an average of 230 minutes watching TV. During these four hours, the viewers are entertained, inspired and sometimes educated by the productions of the European and international audiovisual industries. Around 11, 000 hours of fictional TV material are produced in the European Union annually and many more hours of non-scripted formats such as talk shows, news formats and reality TV. When they flicker across the screens, they open the window to a different world in European living rooms. The audience can experience faraway places and cultures and discover stories of people whose paths they would never cross in real life with universal emotions like their own: hope and fear, defeat and triumph, loss and love. In addition, television also remains one of the most trusted sources of information. 77% of Europeans even name it their preferred resource when looking for information on political events.

The huge impact that television has as a medium led the United Nations to first proclaim World Television Day on the 21st November 1996. Since then, the influence of television has not ceased. Platforms and formats have changed over time, but audiovisual content still captivates, informs and inspires 500 million European citizens and influences the daily debates around kitchen tables all over Europe. To ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) find their place in these debates and reach a broad audience, the United Nations launched the SDGs Media Compact in September, providing material to all those media companies that commit to integrating the SDGs into their broadcasting and their corporate culture.

One of the first signatories of the Media Compact was ACT, the Association of Commercial Television in Europe. To underline the significance of this new partnership, ACT invited the Deputy Director of the United Nations Regional Information Center, Caroline Petit, to join the celebration of this year's World Television Day at BOZAR in Brussels. Around one hundred leading European broadcasters were present to reveal their premium content for the next season. Michel Magnier, Director for Culture and Creativity at the European Commission's DG

for Education and Culture spoke on the importance of the audiovisual industry as a talent engine and the significance of creative content produced in Europe.

Ms Petit highlighted the connecting and informing power television can have in the context of global issues. She thanked broadcasters that are already advocating for a sustainable and more equal future, developing formats supporting inclusiveness and diversity, raising their voice on issues of discrimination or even taking a bold stand for climate action. Non-discrimination against AIDS, the fight against obesity and appeal to healthy eating or strong female characters in TV series are on the rise.

“There is a growing audience for responsible broadcasting, as there is a growing audience for sustainable brands”, Ms Petit pointed out, underlining that the challenges facing the world could also be harnessed as business opportunities for entertainment and TV networks.

In the end, now is the time to act and broadcasters have a part to play, Ms Petit announced. “We are on a journey to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. And if we all work together in a creative yet meaningful way, we can reach a happy ending.”

- [World Television Day 2018](#)
- [Media Compact](#)
- [Media Compact – Trello](#)