

ASA

A N N U A L
R E V I E W



Publisher: EASA Alliance
Rue des Deux Églises 26 Tweekerkenstraat
1000 Brussels
Belgium

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This publication wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our members, partners, and contributors.

Published in May 2024

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FOREWORD

A word from EASA's Chairwoman

2023 was marked by the approval and implementation of EASA's new three-year strategy structured around three pillars: digital, development, and dissemination. It builds on EASA's 30th anniversary *declaration for proactive and effective advertising self-regulation and the enhancement of socially responsible advertising in Europe* signed in Madrid and aims to further pursue the positive momentum EASA has gained over the last years.

Digital is high on the agenda, as the largest share of ad spend is online. EASA has continued working towards ensuring that, in the wake of Google, all major digital players join our Alliance and contribute to the advertising self-regulatory systems they benefit from. "Digital" also means continuing to invest in digital transformation, funding data-driven monitoring of online ads. Additionally, EASA double-downed its efforts on influencer marketing, especially as it is a space where advertising self-regulation can play a key role, and it is getting enhanced attention from media and policymakers, and it is a space where advertising self-regulation can play a key role. EASA launched the *DiscloseMe* tool, providing information on applicable transparency disclosures, and initiated work on the Influencer Marketing Standards Training (IMST), which helps ensure content creators are aware of the applicable rules.

Focusing on digital did not mean overlooking non-digital members or issues, quite the contrary! Under the "development" pillar, EASA has continued to serve its members, catering for nascent SR initiatives in the Baltics.

Furthermore, EASA launched the *Ad Responsibility Roundtable* to provide a space for the advertising ecosystem to work together to address common challenges and make sure advertising standards are future-proof.

The third pillar is "dissemination": EASA has built on excellent relations with all EU institutions and authorities at various levels to position ad SR as a credible part of the solution, effectively complementing regulation. In this regard, we could mention EASA's work with the Irish Media Commission on the implementation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the launch of the Green Claims Taskforce with the Consumer Enforcement and Redress unit of the European Commission, which brings together and fosters dialogue between SROs and national consumer protection authorities. We can also mention the collaboration with DG JUST, leading to the recognition and referencing of SR initiatives on its Influencer Legal Hub.

I strongly believe that EASA has successfully positioned itself and its network at the core of the current policy debate and that all the efforts it has undertaken in 2023 will play out and pay off this year, thanks to the work and commitment of all our members and partners involved.



Charo FERNANDO MAGARZO
Chairwoman

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and lines, positioned below the name and title of the Chairwoman.

EASA Officers



"EASA has been working to help ensure advertising SR effectively covers all media and geographies. Throughout 2023, EASA worked with the very large digital platforms, to make sure that all those who benefit from advertising SR systems contribute to it, and support our work. We also backed nascent advertising SR initiatives, to bring the benefits of accessing a self-regulatory organisation in their home market to all European consumers."
Angela Mills-Wade, Vice-Chair



"I am delighted that, in the wake of our high-level anniversary event, EASA has developed structural and longstanding ties with policymakers and authorities, positioning advertising SR as part of the solution when tackling issues such as influencer marketing and green claims."
Orla Twomey, Vice-Chair



"I am pleased that EASA's financial situation is robust. This is beneficial for our members as it allows us to enhance the support we provide to our network, retain talent, and to safely invest in promising developments."
Conor Murray, Treasurer

A word from EASA's Director General

Collective advertising self-regulation does not operate in a vacuum. It is the emanation of an entire industry; it is embedded in a regulatory framework and is effective thanks to the time and efforts of its stakeholders and of those who make it work on a daily basis. Internal and external collaboration are the essence of our Alliance.

I hope this annual review will give you a sense of this through an overview of all actions EASA has undertaken. They are diverse but intertwined, and ultimately serve the same purpose: further strengthening advertising self-regulation, making it more effective, coherent, and recognised. Without listing all the initiatives featured in the following pages, I just wanted to highlight, here, a few "firsts" that marked 2023 and, more specifically, illustrate our interactions and support to the industry.

In June, thanks to the support of industry and digital pure-play company members, EASA launched the *Ad responsibility roundtable* which was designed as a platform to facilitate a pragmatic conversation among industry members about the future of the ad industry and responsibility. The different sessions of the roundtable allowed us to discuss issues such as trust in advertising and sustainability, enabling the ad SR network to better provide support whenever relevant and appropriate.

For the first time, in Istanbul, three events were organised in conjunction: ICAS' annual open meeting and EASA's biannual meetings took place in conjunction with the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) Global Marketer Week (GMW). In addition to the joint EASA-ICAS sessions, members of the ad SR community had the valuable opportunity, thanks to the WFA, to participate in inspiring sessions at the GMW. These sessions, such as the Better Marketing and Policy Forum, provided them with a unique insight into advertisers' concerns and perspectives.

I could also mention other milestones, such as EASA sitting for the first time on several juries, bringing in a responsibility component: taking part in the jury of Euro Effie Awards for the "Best of Europe category" –thanks to their organiser, the European Association of Communication Agencies (EACA)– and also in the jury of Ferrero and JA Europe's "Responsible Marketing Challenge", an initiative raising awareness about the importance of responsible marketing among students.

Whilst different in nature, a special mention goes to the Ukrainian Marketing Association and its work on ethics in ads tackling gender discrimination. Its President attended EASA's November Executive Committee and updated us on the current difficult times. Thanks to the support of our network, we were able to pursue the relationship as well as provide equipment aid to the organisation.

On this note of solidarity, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people –Directors, members, colleagues, as well as public and private partners– who, through their genuine commitment and actions, have made all the achievements featured in this annual review possible.



I wish you a pleasant read,

Lucas BOUDET
Director General

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. BouDET'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right at the end.

EASA Board and Executive Committee

The Alliance is administered by a Board of Directors. Directors are elected by the General Assembly for a period of two years and are eligible for re-election.

Charo Fernando Magarzo (AUTOCONTROL) serves as the Chairwoman of EASA, alongside the three other EASA Officers: two Vice-Chairs, Angela Mills Wade (EPC) and Orla Twomey (ASAI), as well as Conor Murray (egta), EASA's Treasurer.

EASA's Board of Directors

As of 31 December 2023

Self-Regulatory Organisations Members

Charo FERNANDO MAGARZO, Chairwoman, Autocontrol, Spain

Orla TWOMEY, Vice-Chair, ASAI, Ireland

Jennifer BEAL, WBZ, Germany

Markus DEUTSCH, ÖWR, Austria

Eleni DONTA, SEE, Greece

Ulya DURAN, RÖK, Turkey

Ildikó FAZEKAS, ÖRT, Hungary

Vincenzo GUGGINO, IAP, Italy

Otto VAN DER HARST, SRC, the Netherlands

Piotr KWIECIEŃ, RR, Poland

Niamh McGUINNESS, Clearcast, UK

Stéphane MARTIN, ARPP, France

Miguel MORAIS VAZ, ARP, Portugal

Bernd NAUEN, DWR, Germany

Paula PALORANTA, LTL, Finland

Guy PARKER, ASA, UK

Ana PREDOVIC, SOZ, Slovenia

Eva RAJCAKOVA, SRPR, Slovakia

Sandrine SEPUL, CC-JEP, Belgium

Elisabeth TROTZIG, Ro, Sweden

Industry and Digital Pure-Play Company Members

Angela MILLS WADE, Vice-Chair, EPC

Rebecka ALLÉN, WFA

Alexis BLEY, EACA

Tamara DALTROFF, EACA

Francesca FABBRI, AER

Townsend FEEHAN, IAB-Europe

Enrico GIROTTO, FEDMA

Ilias KONTEAS, EMMA

Stephan LOERKE, WFA

Joy DE LOOZ-CORSWAREM, ENPA

Conor MURRAY, EGTA

Rui DOS SANTOS, WFA (P&G)

Richard SATURLEY, WOO

Konrad SHEK, AIG

Dagmara SZULCE, IAA

Michael TODD, Google

Wout VAN WIJK, NME

Invited for consultative purposes:

Laura FRUNZETI, SR Development Council Co-Chair

As of 31 December 2023

The Executive Committee determines the broad policy of the Alliance between the meetings of the Board of Members of the Executive Committee, who shall be drawn from the Board of Directors, and are elected every two years (50% of which shall be representatives from self-regulatory organisations).

Self-Regulatory Organisations Members



Charo FERNANDO MAGARZO
EASA Chairwoman, AUTOCONTROL



Orla TWOMEY, EASA Vice-Chair, ASAI



Markus DEUTSCH, ÖWR



Ildikó FAZEKAS, ÖRT



Vincenzo GUGGINO, IAP



Otto VAN DER HARST, SRC



Stéphane MARTIN, ARPP



Bernd NAUEN, DWR



Guy PARKER, ASA

Invited for consultative purposes:



Anders STENLUND, Ro.

Industry and digital pure play company members



Angela MILLS WADE, EASA Vice-Chair,
EPC



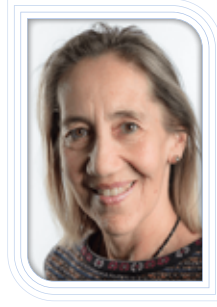
Conor MURRAY, EASA Treasurer, egta



Rebecka ALLÉN, WFA



Tamara DALTROFF, EACA



Townsend FEEHAN, IAB Europe



Enrico GIROTTO, FEDMA



Ilias KONTEAS, EMMA



Konrad SHEK, AIG



Wout VAN WIJK, NME

Invited for consultative purposes:



Michael TODD, Google

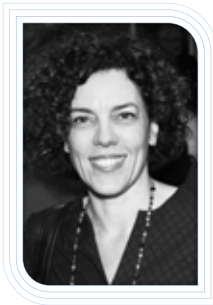
Committees and Working Groups

Self-Regulatory Committee

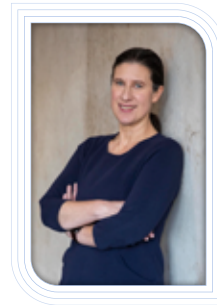
The Self-Regulatory Committee is a permanent committee grouping the representatives of Self-Regulatory Organisations. Its purpose is to deal with matters relating to the operation and practice of advertising self-regulation. It provides a forum for national self-regulatory organisations to discuss the operational aspects of advertising self-regulation. The platform is ideal to exchange information and best practice on ad standards as well as their enforcement.



Chair: Madalena Bettencourt e Silveira, ARP (Portugal)



Vice-Chair: Monica Davò, IAP (Italy)



Vice-Chair: Katja Heintschel von Heinegg, DWR (Germany)

Self-Regulation Development Council

The Self-Regulation Development Council is a working group consisting of the representatives of Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in countries located in Central and Eastern Europe or in countries where advertising self-regulatory initiatives are relatively recent or nascent. Its purpose is to assist recently established or developing SROs in creating effective best practice-sharing systems across key European countries by stimulating transnational communication and collaboration. Its aim is also to enhance awareness of EU self-regulation and local ad Self-Regulatory Organisations, as well as to assist the formation and training of new SROs, especially in the emerging markets in the region.



Chair: Piotr Kwiecień, RR (Poland)



Vice-Chair: Laura Frunzeti, RAC (Romania)

Working Group on the collaboration with digital players

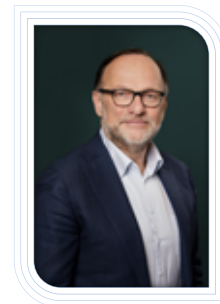
The objective of EASA's working group on the collaboration with digital players is to facilitate and enhance EASA's relationship with Digital Players and, more generally, to obtain further commitment and investment from Digital Pure Play Companies in advertising self-regulation. The working group aims to support the extension of EASA's network to new Digital Pure Play Companies as well as to facilitate, deepen, and make the most out of the relationships with EASA's Digital Pure Play Company Members. It acts as a platform gathering Self-Regulatory and Industry Members when discussing relationships with Digital Pure Player Company Members, always keeping in sight the interests of all EASA members, including Digital Pure Play Company Members.



Chair: Guy Parker, ASA (United Kingdom)

Data-Driven SR Working Group

The objective of EASA's Working Group on Data-Driven SR is to foster exchanges on technological innovations in the area of advertising self-regulation, as well as to coordinate the dissemination of such technology-driven solutions at the European level, where deemed relevant. These innovations may include, but are not limited to, the adoption of machine learning, AI, and other technologies that leverage data and automation processes to improve the workflow of ad Self-Regulatory Organisations and to help increase the overall advertising compliance in the online advertising space.



Chair: Otto van der Harst, SRC (The Netherlands)



Data-Driven SR Working Group meeting during Istanbul Meetings

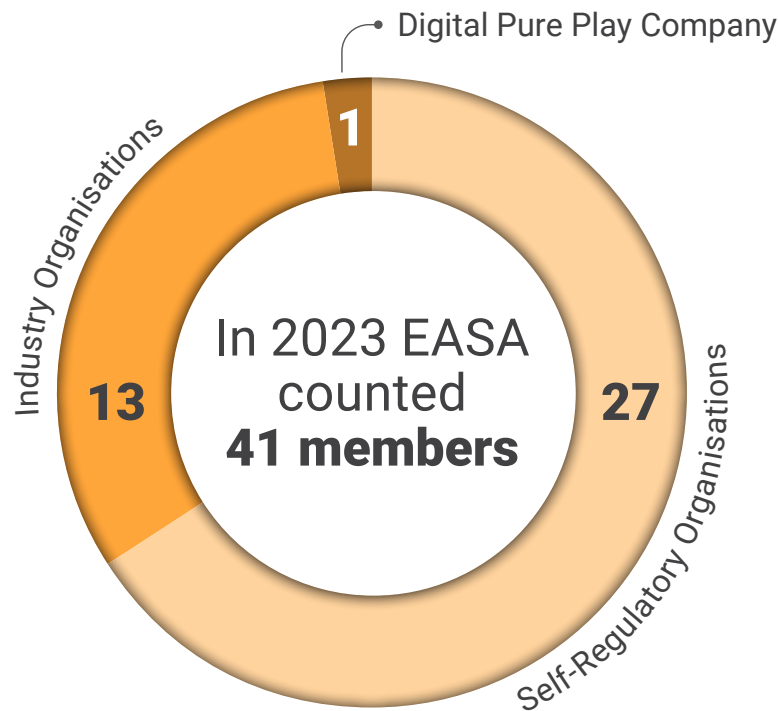


ABOUT EASA

EASA Members

The European Advertising Standards Alliance is the single voice of advertising self-regulation in Europe. The Alliance represents and coordinates collective advertising systems across Europe which help ensure advertising is legal, decent, honest, truthful and prepared with a due sense of social and professional responsibility.

EASA provides a space for the advertising ecosystem to work together at the European and international level to address common challenges and make sure advertising standards are future-proofed.



EASA's SRO members are present in **25** countries.

Self-Regulatory Organisations members, also known as "ad standard bodies", enforce national advertising standards.

Industry organisations members represent all the components of the advertising value chain, ranging from advertisers to agencies and media.

Digital pure play company members consist of companies with a commercial presence across Europe and globally, hosting advertising on their owned and operated digital platforms.

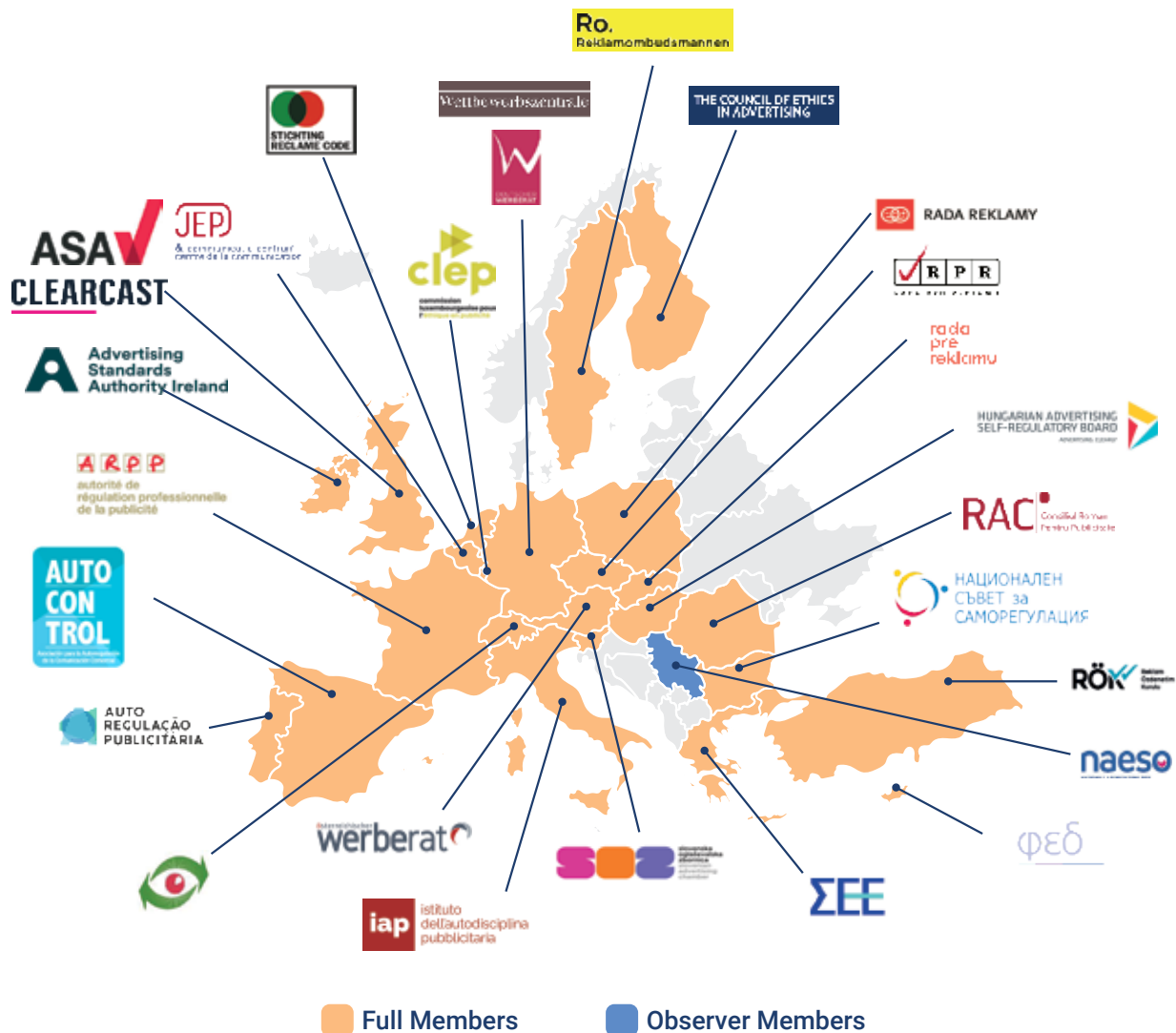
What unites them?

A shared **dedication** and **commitment** to **responsible advertising**

Industry and Digital Pure Play company members as of 31 December 2023



SRO members as of 31 December 2023





EASA Secretariat

Located in Brussels, EASA's Secretariat oversees the day-to-day operations of the Alliance, ensuring it delivers against the objectives set by its members and representative bodies and outlined in its multi-annual action plan. EASA's Secretariat works with members of the Alliance to promote advertising self regulation as a mean to help foster responsible advertising.

EASA's role is to assist in the development and coordination of self-regulation across Europe through:

- **Advocacy & Policy:** ensuring the visibility and recognition of advertising self-regulation by European policy makers and authorities, promoting it as a relevant part of the regulatory mix
- **SR Development & Coordination:** supporting a coherent, vibrant and strong European network, overseeing the cross-border complaints system, and setting up task forces and Committees to address issues of common interests and ensuring ad SR remains fit for purpose. EASA also develops Best Practice Recommendations (BPRs), designed to provide support and advice to EASA's members on the practice of advertising self-regulation.
- **Projects and services:** facilitating compliance with industry commitments, by coordinating sectoral monitoring exercises
- **Communications:** ensuring the actions of the Alliance of its members regarding self-regulation are put in the limelight, thanks to an online presence (social media, campaigns, website, webinars...) and offline presence (face-to-face meetings, such as the Biannual Meetings).

Staff members

As of 31 December 2023



Lucas Boudet, *Director General*



Giulia Bazzano, *Communications Officer*



Alexandre Dérobert, *Public Affairs and Policy Officer*



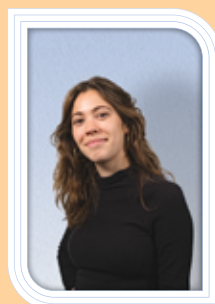
Eloísa López Sánchez, *Project Assistant*



Tudor Manda, *Self-Regulation Development Officer*



Delphine Muller, *Office Manager*



Inés Ollero Candau, *Project Officer*

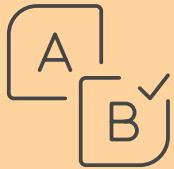
The Alliance's work in numbers

Key Statistics

The numbers you will find below illustrate the main trends in complaints lodged through SROs, the copy advice services provided, and the number of pre-cleared ads throughout 2022. These numbers are based on data collected by 27 European SROs in 25 European countries.



In 2022 **50,029** complaints related to **24,420** advertisements were received by 26 European SROs



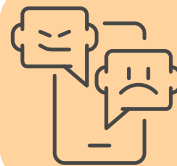
90,817 requests for **copy advice** were submitted to the SROs



82,681 ads were pre-cleared by the SROs providing this service to the industry



179 cross-border complaints were registered last year, **decreasing by 34.59%** compared to 2022



Misleading advertising remained the predominant issue complained about at **67%** followed by **taste & decency** issues at **13%**



On average, SROs resolved half of received complaints within the first week, **77%** in two weeks, and **92%** within one month



Online advertising surpassed the **50% mark of complaints**, followed by **television** at **31%**, whilst **outdoor advertising** saw an increase to **6%**

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

EASA collects complaints and copy advice statistics from its advertising self-regulatory organisation members each year. The annual reports are published online – for an extended version of the data presented in this chapter, you can scan the QR code below:





DEVELOPMENT

Cross-border complaints



Cross-border complaints (CBCs) are consumer or competitor complaints filed against advertisements that appear in media or originate from advertisers based in another country than that of the plaintiff. The EASA Secretariat coordinates these types of complaints through a system that has been in operation since 1992, when it was set up in response to the creation of the European Single Market. This mechanism was built to address issues whereby advertising originating from one EU Member State is circulating in media from another. **SROs receive around 236 cross-border complaints annually on average.**



EASA's **Self-Regulatory Organisation** (SRO) members ensure that all CBCs are handled effectively and efficiently with a thoroughly developed mechanism based on a network of independent, impartial, and recognised SROs that exchange constant flows of information.



EASA's CBC system covers **27 EASA SRO members in 25 European countries** that handle complaints. It also reaches out, on an ad hoc basis, to international SROs that are members of the International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS).

EASA has members both inside and outside of the European Union who participate in the CBC mechanism. Each CBC is assessed based on the rules, laws, and regulations of the SRO in the country of origin of the medium or the advertiser, depending on the type of ad.



In 2023, EASA's SROs transferred **179** complaints

85.5% of cross-border complaints were lodged by **UK complainants**



Misleading advertising continues to be the main issue complained about

Ads from **Ireland** and the **Netherlands** generated the highest number of CBCs in 2023

Digital Marketing Communications gathered the most complaints among all media categories at **97%**



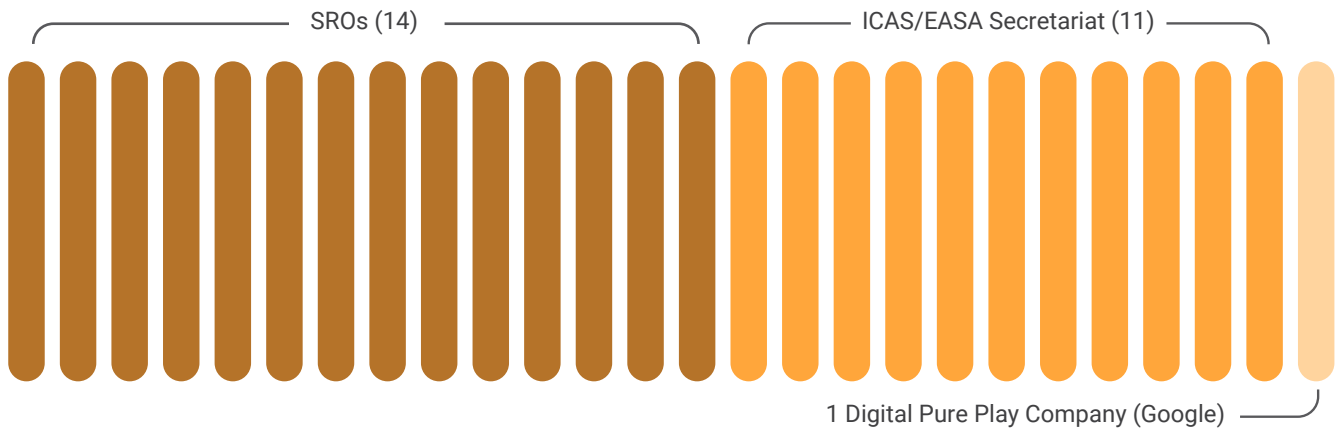
CBCs were mostly concerning advertising of **leisure services, health & beauty, and food & alcohol**

Exchanging best practices and information

Info requests

EASA fosters information exchange among its members by circulating information requests throughout its network, collecting pertinent data on topics of significant interest to its members.

Overall, 26 info-request were launched in 2023 across the EASA and ICAS networks, of which:



EASA webinars and events

In 2023, EASA increasingly resumed face-to-face events, providing more live opportunities to connect and exchange ideas within its network. Additionally, it continued its series of online events (a total of 21), with several organised in collaboration with its partner ICAS, the International Council for Ad Self-Regulation.



Self-Regulatory Committee and Self-Regulatory Development Council

EASA's Self-Regulatory Committee serves as a permanent forum for SRO representatives to address operational matters and practices within advertising self-regulation. This committee provides an invaluable platform for national SROs to exchange insights, information, and best practices, ultimately enhancing the standards and enforcement of advertising self-regulation practices across regions.

Concurrently, EASA's Self-Regulation Development Council, comprised of representatives from SROs in Central and Eastern European countries, and those where self-regulatory

initiatives are in early stages, aims to facilitate the growth and effectiveness of nascent SROs. By fostering cross-border communication and collaboration, this council endeavours to establish robust best practice-sharing mechanisms across key European regions while also raising awareness of EU self-regulation principles.

Both the Self-Regulatory Committee and the Self-Regulation Development Council provide a space where SROs can talk about latest developments that may affect SR practices.

Self-Regulatory Committee

IN CONVERSATION WITH MADALENA BETTENCOURT E SILVEIRA, CHAIR OF THE SELF-REGULATORY COMMITTEE AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF AUTO REGULAÇÃO PUBLICITÁRIA (ARP)



"The Self-Regulatory Committee is a catalyst for members to exchange studies, insights, and expertise in a confidential yet open manner about arising ad content issues that govern the priorities of the industry and also develops detailed best practice guidance notes."

What has the group been focusing on mostly in this past year?

As a body that brings together all the network's SROs from Europe, the Self-Regulatory Committee focuses on the most recurrent hot topics at the national level. Over the past year, this meant focusing on the advertising of, for example, food and beverages high in fat, salt, and sugar content (HFSS food), gambling services, and environmental claims. As a forum that is also open to industry actors and welcomes external speakers, it is where SROs and the EASA Secretariat kickstart conversations that might continue through dedicated working group discussions and eventually lead to concrete solutions for the whole industry. For example, if we take influencer marketing, the first earnest discussions in the Committee probably took place some 7 years ago, when it was still a marginal but promising new marketing practice. This has trickled down to a portfolio of solutions

for SROs and for the industry, such as the Best Practice Recommendation on Influencer Marketing and the EASA-supported online training, to name just two. Now, we have increased our focus on HFSS food and environmental claims - I can only imagine the solutions that this will lead to in a few years from now.

What are the main priorities, in your opinion, for the group for next year, or short-term?

2024 is an election year in 9 European countries that are represented in the Committee - that's a third of the Alliance! And that's not counting the European Parliament elections. All this political uncertainty leaves a lot of room for speculation. Nonetheless, it's likely that some of the files that have been brewing in several markets may perhaps continue to be a priority for the new administrations. I can think of advertising of HFSS food and environmental issues.

Even if they won't be, it is likely that the Committee will focus on these issues and try to find pragmatic and proactive solutions to help keep the industry responsible. In fact, part of the Committee's added value is that EASA members can hear about issues popping up in one market that might spill over into another one later.

But national or European policy priorities are not the whole or only source of discussion. SROs will continue their work on all the other pressing matters, and this will naturally feed the Committee's future agenda. For instance, there are many questions around AI-generated ads, gender depiction, image alteration, and the cross-over between these issues. I suspect that we will dive deep into this matter sometime in the short term. Our focus as SROs on influencer marketing is also very likely to continue, which would continue making it a priority for us as a group. Finally, the ad industry's latest marketing practices and their latest technology in advertising will most likely also influence our priorities - like the metaverse for example.

Have there been any takeaways for you, or your SRO, in chairing this group so far?

It has been an honour for me to work more closely with the committed and dynamic EASA Secretariat and participate in discussions about relevant topics that impact SROs' work. The information exchange between the SROs has been a fundamental tool that has brought a lot of insights into solving our current challenges, contributing to the improvement of advertising standards facing continuous technological developments, and adding value. I am looking forward to continuing to work together next year, always remembering the African proverb that I like very much and that applies perfectly to what we have achieved together: 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

Self-Regulatory Development Council

IN CONVERSATION WITH PIOTR KWIECIŃ, CHAIR OF THE SELF-REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AND DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RADA REKLAMY



"It's truly inspiring to witness the remarkable achievements of SROs within the SR Development Council, despite facing resource constraints. From implementing data-driven monitoring of influencer marketing to integrating environmental concerns into their advertising code, they exhibit remarkable ingenuity in maintaining high standards and garnering global industry support. The growing prominence of self-regulation in our European advertising landscape, backed by EU support, is encouraging. I firmly believe that our role in advocating for and implementing self-regulatory solutions will continue to grow in significance."

What has the group been focusing on mostly in this past year?

The group brings together newly established SROs or organisations that are in the process of developing their standard SR services. Over the past year, the Self-Regulation Development Council has closely engaged with emerging self-regulatory initiatives in several markets. For example, we invited the Lithuanian Marketing Association (LiMA) to address the SR Development Council meeting in Athens, where they outlined the key role of an SRO in maintaining high-quality standards for advertising content in the local ecosystem. Similarly, we received insights from the Estonian Association of Marketers (TULI) regarding their efforts to establish an SRO, as a change in the legal framework would bolster pan-industry commitments.

Like more recent initiatives, such as the establishment of the Serbian SRO, NAESO, in 2020, the Council hopes the swift establishment of SROs in both countries, facilitating their integration into the Alliance.

In parallel, the Council has also focused on addressing its members' concerns, including the advertising of food supplements, gambling services, and environmental claims. One of the Council's main objectives has consistently been to garner the attention of major brands toward SROs operating in Central and Eastern Europe. Whether by modernising services, such as providing prompt copy advice responses, or by conducting data-driven monitoring of online advertisements, we continually try to ensure that SROs are well-equipped to attract and retain brand memberships at the local level.

This is key as their presence is beneficial both ways: it funds an operating SRO that keeps trust in advertising high, and offers them a seat at a table where the local industry discusses the top priorities and guides the SRO's strategy.

As members, we are also committed to actively engage in all pertinent topics within our markets. These encompass challenges such as combating greenwashing effectively, addressing the use of algorithms and AI in advertising, safeguarding children in advertising, and managing issues related to online advertising. Looking back at what has been achieved so far, the significance of SROs participating in our council becomes increasingly apparent. I strongly believe that our involvement in promoting and implementing self-regulatory solutions will continue to increase.

What are the main priorities, in your opinion, for the group for next year, or short-term?

We will likely continue our work to attract the attention of international brands at the local level in member countries. With support from the EASA Secretariat, we hope that this workstream will come to fruition in the future, and big brands will become members of all Council SROs.

In parallel, we will also likely intensify our exchanges of information, especially since we have so much to learn from one another. For instance, the Polish SRO, RR, has embedded environmental and sustainability concerns into the fabric of its advertising SR Code by involving the whole spectrum of industry stakeholders, policymakers, NGOs, and academia, leading the way in the region to a model that works and is supported by the entire industry. Similarly, the Hungarian SRO, ÖRT, aims to spread awareness through a series of podcasts targeting professionals, focusing on both its newly updated Code and its new Green Pledge.

Another initiative is the Greek SRO, SEE's data-driven monitoring of influencer marketing content, which later inspired a dedicated guide for content creators based on the monitoring's findings. In short, it's inspiring to see Council members achieve so much with a small secretariat and limited means. It's truly something to be proud of.

Have there been any takeaways for you, or your SRO in chairing this group so far?

Chairing this group has provided several valuable takeaways for both me and my SRO. Firstly, it has led to enhanced contact with the EASA Secretariat and the broader SRO network, facilitating better communication and collaboration within the industry. Additionally, serving in this role has offered us the opportunity to learn from our peers about their successes and best practices, enriching our own strategies and approaches. Moreover, the smaller size of the group of SROs has allowed for more focused discussions on operational issues, particularly those encountered by developing SROs, fostering a supportive environment for sharing insights and solutions.



EASA welcomes Iryna Lylyk, President of the Ukrainian Marketing Association (UMA), at the Executive Committee Meeting, November 2023

Biannual Meetings

The Biannual Meetings are EASA's flagship events, bringing together EASA's members, partners and stakeholders from the advertising and self-regulatory world. Hosted by SRO members, these meetings offer a distinct opportunity to delve into the latest issues concerning advertising self-regulation and gather valuable insights, besides connecting

face-to-face with other members of the Alliance, and spending some time together after the long break due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Spring Biannual Meetings - Istanbul, Türkiye



In 2023, the Spring Biannual Meetings were organised in partnership with ICAS, the International Council for Ad Self-Regulation, and hosted by our Turkish member Reklam Özdenetim Kurulu (RÖK). For the first time, the Meetings were organised in conjunction with the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)'s Global Marketer Week (GMW), in order to foster direct connections between leading marketers and advertising self-regulation professionals. Alongside the collaborative EASA-ICAS sessions, members of the Alliance had the opportunity to engage in enriching sessions at the GMW. These sessions, notably the Better Marketing and Policy Forum, granted them exclusive access to advertisers' concerns and viewpoints, offering invaluable insights.

More than 50 attendees from all over the world joined us in Istanbul from 24 to 26 April, for sessions on key advertising topics and networking opportunities.

Highlights included workshops on influencer marketing with high-level speakers from the Turkish Ministry of Trade and academia. Discussions also featured insights from external speakers including Sara Denby of the Unstereotype Alliance and Stefanie Liebner of the US Federal Trade Commission. The Biannual Meetings in Istanbul also featured the ICAS Global Best Practice Awards, showcasing innovative projects from SROs globally.

In Istanbul, we also had the opportunity to award two key members of the Alliance on the occasion of their retirement, and thank them for their work: for AIG, Sue Eustace, former Director of Public Affairs of the UK Advertising Association,, and Elly Guerganova, former Chairwoman of the Bulgarian SRO member NCSR.



EASA Director General Lucas Boudet and ICAS Director Sibylle Stanciu at the Policy Session of WFA's Global Marketer Week 2023



Autumn Biannual Meetings - Athens, Greece

The Autumn Biannual Meetings have been hosted by our Greek SRO member SEE. The Meetings featured engaging sessions with external speakers such as Antonis Kocheilas, Global CEO of Ogilvy Advertising, who shared insights on the significance of prioritising impact for brands, and Josep Puxeu Rocamora, from the European Economic and Social Committee, who emphasised the crucial role of advertising self-regulation in safeguarding children from inappropriate product advertisements, notably HFSS foods. Discussions also covered the relationship between advertising and sustainability, and responsible influencer marketing.

After introductory remarks from Marta Sanaugustin, Head of Sector – Audiovisual and Media Services Policy, DG Connect, European Commission, about influencers advertising and Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), EASA organised a panel discussion addressing the issue of

responsible influencer marketing. It featured a wide diversity of perspectives, namely from Catalina Goanta, Associate Professor in Private Law and Technology at Utrecht University, Scott Guthrie, Director General of the Influencer Marketing Trade Body, Mohamed Mansouri, Deputy Director, Autorité de régulation professionnelle de la publicité (ARPP), and Céline Mouquet, Global Influence Director, Accor. This panel also took into account the first-hand experience of a content creator, Penelope Anastasopoulou. The panellists discussed possible solutions to help ensure responsible influencer marketing practices.



Panel on Responsible Influencer Marketing during Biannual Meetings in Athens



EESC's Josep Puxeu Rocamora joins the SR Committee in Athens



Antonis Kocheilas, Global CEO of Ogilvy Advertising, at the Biannual Meetings in Athens



Advertising Roundtable at EASA's office, June 2023

Exploring pan-European solutions

Ad Responsibility roundtables

The purpose of the Alliance is to “provide a space for the advertising ecosystem to work together at European and international level to address common challenges and make sure advertising standards are futureproof”. The Declaration signed in Madrid further states that “EASA shall support the industry in enhancing advertising as a force for good” and “EASA shall act as a forum and focal point between EASA members to exchange, develop and take actions”. With this in mind, and following conversations with Google and key industry members, EASA has undertaken actions to provide a space for its industry members to brainstorm and share insights on the future of advertising.

The Ad Responsibility Roundtable serves several objectives:

- To support a cross-cutting network of individuals across Europe that represent all the facets of an ad ecosystem committed to responsible advertising. A network that can strengthen, connect and amplify these responsibility-focused, pragmatic and balanced voices

- To take stock and raise awareness of existing efforts to ensure responsible advertising online
- To facilitate a pragmatic conversation about the future of the ad industry's focus on responsibility
- To elaborate, undertake and promote concrete joint actions to enhance responsibility in advertising

In 2023, two Ad responsibility roundtables have taken place, with the first edition taking place in June 2023.

June Roundtable: This first edition, was divided into two sections, respectively moderated by Sue Eustace, AIG, and Anders Stenlund, ICC Marketing Code Revision Taskforce.

The first focused on the key challenges the advertising industry is currently facing, and the possible root causes. In the second section of the Roundtable, members tried to answer to question such as: what does responsible advertising look like, and what does it ideally entail? They then discussed concrete ways to achieve responsible advertising, and what more can be done. The sections also benefitted from insights from Stephan Loerke, CEO of the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), and Daniel Knapp, Chief Economist at IAB Europe.

October Roundtable: building on a successful first edition, EASA members took part in another Roundtable during the Autumn Biannual Meetings in Athens, this time moderated by Conor Murray, Head of Regulatory and Public Affairs at egta. After presenting the feedback of the previous edition, members delved into the topic of sustainability, exchanging ideas related to this field: priorities, key obstacles to overcome, and suggestions to make advertising more sustainable, such as find an accurate and fair way to attribute responsibility across the advertising ecosystem, or ensuring that products promoted in advertisements are sourced ethically – to name a few.

Exploring specific European guidance

Additionally, EASA acted in line with its Declaration by responding to the need expressed by the advertiser and brands for a better understanding and a more proactive approach in tackling the issues of HFSS (High in Fat, Salt, and Sugar) food marketing to children. At the October SR Committee it was decided to launch a working group with the goal of putting together a document regarding the SR approach to such matter across all the European markets where EASA SROs operate.

Conducting monitoring projects

Below, you will find an overview of the monitoring projects carried out by EASA, in collaboration with SROs, to make sure the advertising industry is leading by example, running responsible, decent and truthful campaigns.

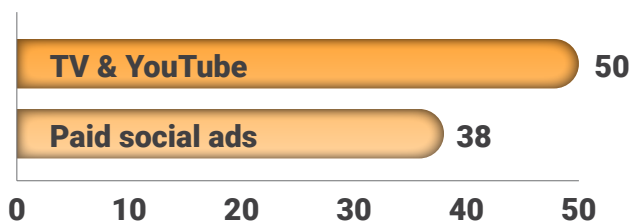
Monitoring projects for the alcohol industry

RMP Appeal Monitoring

In 2023, EASA, together with 6 European SROs, conducted a monitoring exercise of the Responsible Marketing Pact (RMP), an initiative launched by the leading producers of beer, wine and spirits in the European Union to reduce minors' exposure to alcohol marketing, limit the appeal of alcohol marketing to minors and to strive to ensure the online environment is free from alcohol marketing to minors.

EASA's monitoring aimed at providing an assessment of where the RMP signatories stand in terms of compliance with the RMP standards and SR codes, specifically regarding the appeal to minors of alcohol marketing. EASA ran this monitoring in 2014, 2016, 2019, and the 2023 project has been a continuation of these 4 waves.

Reviewed: 88 profiles



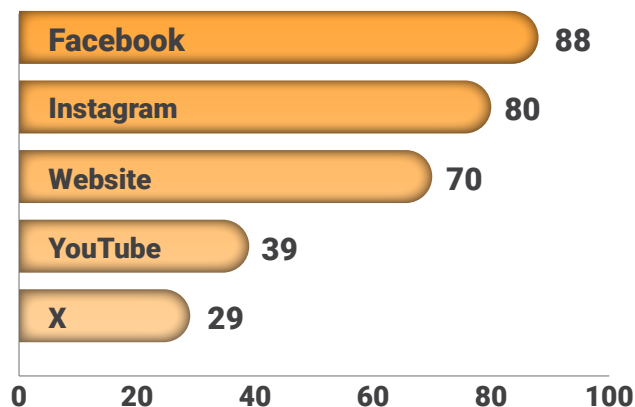
The monitoring exercise was conducted in February - March 2023, and the final reports on the results were sent to World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) in April 2023.

RMP-DGPs Monitoring



In 2023, EASA, together with 4 European SROs and 3 Non-European SROs, members of International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS), conducted a monitoring exercise of the Digital Guiding Principles (DGPs) and the Responsible Marketing Pact (RMP) digital controls, a checklist of five key elements designed to help ensure minors' social media experience is free from alcohol ads. The projects was commissioned by the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking (IARD) and the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA). EASA ran this monitoring from 2017 to 2019, in 2022, and in 2023.

Reviewed: 306 profiles



The monitoring exercise was conducted in October 2023, and the final reports on the results were sent to the WFA in December 2023.



“EASA’s self-regulatory network has proven time and again to be a very valuable support for advertisers, as it provides comprehensive and credible monitoring of their sectoral commitments. In 2023, the World Federation of Advertisers worked with EASA to assess the compliance of alcohol advertising with industry commitments not to appeal to minors on the one hand, and to have a number of digital controls in place when advertising on social media, on the other hand. Thanks to the EASA appeal monitoring we were provided with the assurance that our members are in line with their commitment to eliminate appeal of alcohol advertising to minors.”

Stephan Loerke, CEO, World Federation of Advertisers

Monitoring projects for the food industry

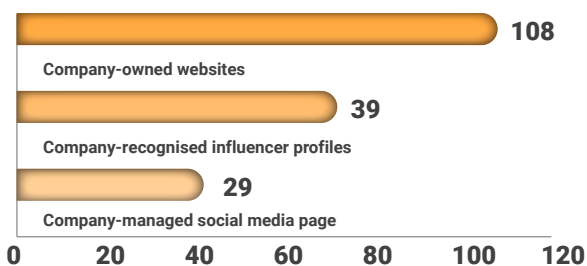
EU Pledge Monitoring

In the scope of its long-standing collaboration with the EU Pledge Secretariat, EASA ran in 2023 the 15th monitoring exercise to assess whether EU Pledge member companies respected their commitment to not advertise food and beverage products that do not meet the applicable nutritional criteria to children under the age of 13, and whether the adverts are in potential breach with the ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) Advertising and Marketing Communications Code and the ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communications.

During the exercise, 6 SROs of EASA’s network reviewed company-owned websites, social media pages, and influencer profiles that companies collaborated with for marketing purposes. As a new feature this year, given the increase of influencer marketing on TikTok and the increase in the presence of brands of the signatory companies on this social network, it was also decided to include TikTok profiles.

The findings were then shared during a dedicated workshop where companies and SROs discussed the findings and exchanged information on factors that contributed to ads appealing to children and self-regulatory rules.

Reviewed: 222 profiles



In addition to the above, 44 company-managed social media pages from TikTok and 44 company-recognised influencers profiles from TikTok.

This monitoring ensures that companies receive an independent, impartial, knowledgeable, and experienced team of self-regulatory experts who review online content in a fair, consistent, and objective manner.

The exercise allows for companies to follow the development of their yearly compliance rate, to demonstrate the solidity of their commitments, and identify possible improvements.

The 15th iteration of the monitoring exercise persists with the category introduced in last year’s exercise, focusing on compliant profiles that may still pose potential issues regarding the appeal of creative content to individuals under 13, specifically categorised as ‘orange’. This category consisted solely of compliant advertisements regarding the EU Pledge commitment and was meant to provide context to marketers about how experts conduct the review of profiles. It also listed the specific aspects and elements contained in these compliant creatives that could appeal to children as much as to other demographics. The intent is to further strengthen the high-level compliance level of signatory companies and show in fact that the great majority of profiles did not contain any of these factors.

EU Pledge Accountability Mechanism

The EU Pledge Accountability Mechanism was initially designed and implemented by EASA in 2018. Its purpose is to allow the handling of complaints revolving around alleged EU Pledge commitment breaches and to further increase the Pledge’s accountability and transparency in line with DG SANTE’s request. The mechanism features a panel of 8 experts coming from EASA SRO members. For every case received, 3 SRO (Self-Regulatory Organisations) experts assess the case and adjudicate with the support of EASA and the EU Pledge’s secretariat. In 2023 one complaint was handled as not upheld.

What's Next for 2024?

Potentially 3 new monitoring exercises for 2 sectors.

ALCOHOL MONITORING – RMP/DGP

During 2023, EASA and WFA started discussions for a new wave of the RMP DGP monitoring for WFA and IARD, to verify compliance with the RMP social media and the DGP commitments for digital marketing communications related to alcoholic beverages worldwide. This project will be conducted in 2024 and will include the monitoring of approximately 300 profiles by 7 European SROs.

EU PLEDGE MONITORING

In the scope of its long-standing collaboration with the EU Pledge Secretariat, EASA should run in 2024 the 16th monitoring exercise to assess whether EU Pledge member companies respect their commitment to not advertise food and beverage products that do not meet the applicable nutritional criteria to children under the age of 13 and to be in line with the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code and the ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communications. During the exercise 6 SROs of EASA's network will review websites, social media, and influencers profiles.

UNESDA MONITORING

Coupled with the EU Pledge monitoring project, EASA may conduct a new wave of monitoring for UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe member companies, some also signatories of the EU Pledge, following the same criteria and methodology as the aforementioned project.



"We really value EASA's work in monitoring our EU Pledge commitments. By independently measuring our EU Pledge compliance, EASA adds credibility and transparency to our commitments, allowing us to further build trust with our consumers and stakeholders, and to improve our responsible marketing efforts."

Andrea Malfatti, Responsible Marketing Manager, Ferrero Group



DISSEMINATION

Collaborating with partners

EASA does not operate in a vacuum. Beyond fostering exchanges internally, within the Alliance, EASA values collaboration with external partners whether on a structural and ad hoc basis. As stated in the Declaration signed in Madrid, EASA shall act as a forum and focal point to exchange, develop, and collaborate with external partners.

In conversation with **David Barron**,
Director of Operations of EDAA



What are EDAA main achievements of 2023?



2023 has been a year filled with important milestones for EDAA. The year was characterised by setting in motion huge changes for the online advertising industry. From a regulatory perspective, the Digital

Services Act, which requires online platforms to disclose more granular information about the ads being displayed on their interfaces, represents a major shift in the transparency dimension. Since its establishment, EDAA has delivered heightened transparency to European consumers, providing them with the possibility to make meaningful choices concerning their online advertising experience. True to our mission, we have been working on the EDAA's new Advanced Advertising Transparency Programme (AATP), a solution that enables companies to meet the new DSA-evoked challenge with confidence rather than uncertainty, leveraging EDAA's longstanding experience and credibility in programme design and implementation. Our efforts along this path culminated in a public announcement of the new programme being made end-November at our 2023 EDAA Summit, setting the pace for delivery early-2024, in line with DSA enforcement timeframes.

EDAA's work in listening to consumers was also acknowledged in May 2023, being granted first place under the *Consumers Attitudes and Behaviour* category at the 2023

Research Awards at IAB Interact. The prize was awarded to the first-of-its-kind research *Your Online Voices: Your Voice, Your Choice*, which investigated the sentiments of European consumers in relation to a broad range of topics concerning online advertising. EDAA's Research itself provides a platform and evidence-base for the industry to actively listen, adapt, and prioritise the interests of consumers. This will enable us to collectively shape a brighter future for online advertising, built on the foundation of consumer empowerment and meaningful engagement, which is also at the centre of what EDAA can achieve with the AATP.

The year truly flew by, but it's been a rewarding one for our work and progress as an organisation – we're excited to launch the new AATP in early 2024 and see the immense efforts of all our partners come to fruition in a challenging yet exciting environment.

Insights into 2024: what are your key priorities?

Well, first and foremost, we're thrilled to be launching the new initiative ("AATP") already in Q1. EDAA will continue to deliver transparency, choice, control, and consumer education through its tools. These include the AdChoices Icon and youronlinechoices.eu, through which we reinforce real-time, contextual, and meaningful information to empower consumers and help them make informed decisions.

2024 will naturally be a year of both impact and dialogue. Our program will hit some ground-breaking milestones as we pivot activities to be more regulation-focused in relation to Article 26 of the DSA, yet retaining a distinct self-regulatory flavor – merging the benefits of both worlds in supporting companies, empowering consumers, facilitating the efforts of regulators, and ultimately fostering a vibrant and sustainable, digital advertising ecosystem. Our key priority in this rapidly changing paradigm is, therefore, to ensure that we bring regulators, industry, self-regulatory partners, and consumers along with us. Throughout 2024, we aim to deliver on our goals through action, inspiration, and an unnering focus on dialogue and awareness raising.

"EDAA's work in listening to consumers was also acknowledged in May 2023, being granted first place under the Consumers Attitudes and Behaviour category at the 2023 Research Awards at IAB Interact. The prize was awarded to the first-of-its-kind research Your Online Voices: Your Voice, Your Choice, which investigated the sentiments of European consumers in relation to a broad range of topics concerning online advertising."

Another immediate priority for 2024 is mapping out the enforcement component of the AATP, in collaboration with EASA and its national member SROs. Effective handling of consumer queries and complaints remains a central focus of our efforts as we look to ensure, together with our partners, that the necessary tools and resources are put in place to facilitate this.

How would you describe the collaboration with EASA in 2023?

EDAA's collaboration with EASA is truly unique. Such a long-standing and productive partnership has only been possible with an exceptional working relationship and a drive towards common goals – and this is where I believe we -together- stand out. It can clearly be said that our organisations share a certain common philosophy – put simply: improving responsibility in advertising. With greater responsibility, the advertising industry can continue to engage in meaningful work and in building trusted relationships.

2023 has continued in this spirit. In building our new AATP, we have worked to secure that a central component remains: credible enforcement of the Principles. To this end, we've been working constructively with EASA to ensure the building blocks are in place for a meaningful collaboration going forward. As organisations active in advertising standards and best practice, it is important for us to have a cohesive network of organisations that can rely on each other. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with EASA and all SROs – watch this space!

About EDAA

EDAA was founded in 2012 by a European industry coalition representing advertisers, the advertising agency sector, the interactive and direct marketing sector, the advertising technology sector and the media sector. EDAA is governed by EU-level organisations, which make up the value chain of data-driven advertising within Europe, and acts to ensure consistency in the European self-regulatory approach.

The European Interactive Digital Advertising Alliance (EDAA)'s principal purpose is to provide the 'AdChoices Icon' to companies involved in data-driven advertising (or OBA) across Europe. The AdChoices Icon is a consumer-facing, interactive symbol that links consumers to an online portal (www.youronlinechoices.eu), where consumers can, in a very user-friendly way, find out more about their online ad choices, how online advertising is used to support the sites and services they use, and how they can safeguard their privacy.

In conversation with **Sibylle Stanciu-Loeckx**,
Director of ICAS

icas  International Council
for Ad Self-Regulation



What are ICAS main achievements of 2023?

In 2023, ICAS successfully strengthened relationships with key external stakeholders, including intergovernmental organisations like the OECD, the UN (notably the Unstereotype Alliance, convened by UN Women) but also the FTC, and ICPEN.

The OECD, the FTC and the Unstereotype Alliance actively participated in ICAS-led events and ICAS also had the chance to present at their forums. Such collaborative efforts have expanded our outreach and advocacy.

Furthermore, our collaborations within the global advertising industry have also deepened, such as our partnership with WFA. Together, we have organised joint webinars and had for the first time back-to-back meetings in Istanbul, Turkey, together with EASA. The meetings were a great success. When considering our SRO membership and ICAS' role in supporting the growth and capabilities of SROs, we can highlight the initiatives undertaken at regional levels in Latin America, Africa, and in APAC. For example, in 2023, our members endorsed the Bogotá Declaration and established the Latin American ICAS Chapter, marking a significant milestone in supporting our membership within the region and fostering their development.

"While EASA plays an outstanding role in Europe, ICAS is the contact point for global stakeholders and advocates for effective self-regulation at a global scale. Throughout 2023, our collaboration with EASA remained strong, marked by joint initiatives such as the highly successful joint meetings held in Istanbul in April 2023"

In APAC, collaborative training sessions were organized in partnership with Google APAC, while in Africa, we seized the opportunity to deliver a presentation at the IAA Africa Rising Conference. These efforts further underscore our commitment to promote the value of self-regulation and support SROs in diverse regions additionally to our global outreach.

Finally, we are proud that we could further grow our membership in 2023, and welcomed the Turkish SRO, RÖK, as associate member in January 2023. Later that year, the Australian Alcohol Beverages Advertising Scheme (ABAC) applied for membership in our network bringing the number of ICAS members to 34.

Insights into 2024: what are your key priorities/goals?

In 2024 our goal is to expand our membership structure and our operations, all while remaining steadfast in our core mission. Through this effort, we want to transform ICAS into a resilient, robust, and innovative organisation, which can better meet the evolving needs of our members, stakeholders and the global advertising industry at large.

In addition, we are happy to announce that we are organizing our annual meetings for the first time in the United States of America. Previous plans to convene in the USA had to be cancelled because of the pandemic. However, we are excited to confirm that in 2024, we will finally be able to gather in New York City, bringing together relevant stakeholders and partners in person. We hope to welcome many EASA members at these meetings.

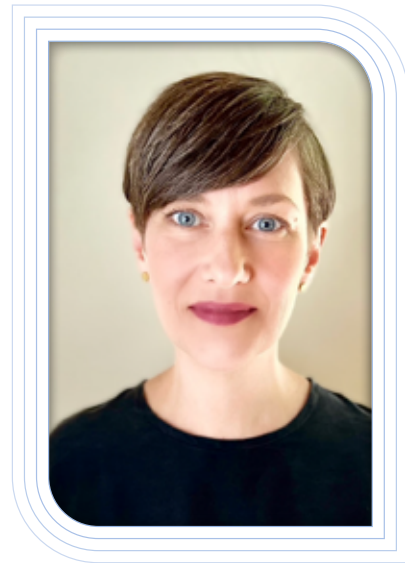
How would you describe the collaboration with EASA in 2023?

EASA's role within ICAS is very important. EASA is not only an active member but also a partner and sister organisation of ICAS, supporting our mission to advancing advertising standards and promoting responsible marketing practices. While EASA plays an outstanding role in Europe, ICAS is the contact point for global stakeholders and advocates for effective self-regulation at a global scale. Throughout 2023, our collaboration with EASA remained strong, marked by joint initiatives such as the highly successful joint meetings held in Istanbul in April 2023. I look very much forward to working with EASA and its excellent team in 2024.

About ICAS

The International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS), of which EASA is a founding member, promotes advertising standards and responsible marketing practices at the global level. The objectives pursued by ICAS include exchanging best practices around ad self-regulation, working on common solutions to the global challenges faced by the advertising industry, such as the digitalisation of the economy and new attitudes towards the use of personal data, facilitating the establishment of new SROs in emerging markets and empowering them to grow, and promoting self-regulation worldwide while highlighting its benefits for consumers, businesses, regulators, and society as a whole.

In conversation with **Kristin Green**, Chair of the ICC Global Marketing & Advertising Commission



What is a key achievement of the Commission you'd like to highlight?



While it may be too soon to count it as an achievement, ICC's Commission on Advertising & Marketing has been diligently working throughout the last year on the

11th revision of the Advertising and Marketing Communications Code to ensure that it is current, relevant and continues to be universally recognised as the global gold standard of advertising ethics. The Code revision will add and update provisions related to emerging and evolving issues, such as the use of AI and algorithms in marketing, environmental marketing claims, marketing to children, and endorsements and influencer marketing.

In addition to focusing on the Code revision, the Commission created and published guidance on automatically renewing subscriptions and diversity and inclusion in advertising. The automatic renewal guidance interprets how the fundamental global standards of the Code apply to subscriptions, setting forth five best practices around disclosure, consent, written confirmation, cancellation, and notice. The diversity and inclusion paper gives clear and authoritative guidance to advertisers and self-regulators by providing an overview of relevant Code provisions and self-regulatory rules, as well as recommended industry best practices and initiatives applying to diversity and inclusion in advertising and marketing communications.

"The Commission's top priority is to complete, adopt and launch the 11th revision of the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code, and run a global promotional and awareness campaign"

Finally, responding to increasing regulation on greenwashing and misinformation, Commission members worked with ICC's Global Learning team to create a course on responsible green marketing. The interactive 3-hour course incorporates case studies and practical guidance for industry, leading to a Certificate in Responsible Green Marketing Communications.

Insights into 2024: what are the key priorities of the Commission?

The Commission's top priority is to complete, adopt and launch the 11th revision of the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code, and run a global promotional and awareness campaign. As that work wraps up, the Commission will begin focusing on revising the joint ICC/ESOMAR International Code on Market Opinion and Social Research, as well as updating the ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communications and the ICC Framework for Responsible Alcohol Marketing Communications.

Any words about the collaboration with EASA in 2023?

EASA shares a commitment with ICC to ensuring that advertising is legal, decent, honest, truthful and prepared with a sense of social responsibility and due respect for fair competition. EASA is a key member and contributor to ICC's Commission on Advertising & Marketing, bringing broad expertise and insight across advertisers, agencies, media and standards bodies.

About the ICC Global Commission on Marketing and Advertising

The Global Commission on Marketing and Advertising examines major marketing and advertising related policy issues of interest to world business, and brings together top experts on self-regulation and ethical best practices in advertising and marketing communications. ICC has been the major rule-setter in international advertising self-regulation since 1937, when the Commission issued the first ICC code on Advertising Practice – one of the most successful examples of business self-regulation ever developed. The ICC's commission mandate is to promote high ethical standards in marketing by business self-regulation through the ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communications Practice. The Commission also advances world business positions and initiatives to address government actions that affect marketing and consumer protection.

11th revision of the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code

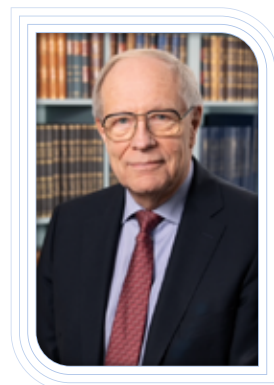
Since its first iteration in 1937 the ICC Advertising and Marketing Communications Code has been the global gold standard of ad self-regulation.

It is the ethical foundation upon which most SR systems in the world are built. The Code has gained this position by providing everlasting principles combined with rules reflecting experience and modern thinking. Several revisions over the years have kept the Code up-to-date and relevant.

Initiated the year prior, the 11th revision has been ongoing throughout 2023. The work has been organised in parallel streams, looking at the different parts of the Code: General Provisions, and specialized chapters on Sales Promotion, Sponsorship, Direct and Data driven Marketing, and Environmental claims as well as a proposed new chapter on Children and Teens breaking out the more detailed rules from the General Provisions. A dedicated Task Force was set up for the purpose of the revision, but the various drafts have also been widely circulated for consultation with industry key players, ICC members, EASA and SROs and other stakeholders.

This revision will be the most comprehensive and thorough ever, with a view to streamline the structure, modernise substance and reduce the level of detail. The approach has sparked unprecedented engagement from stakeholders, not least the SR community. It is hoped this will maintain and strengthen the support and recognition of the Code from the industry and the marketing ecosystem at large. The new Code is planned to be adopted by ICC before the summer 2024.

"This revision will be the most comprehensive and thorough ever, with a view to streamline the structure, modernize substance and reduce the level of detail. The approach has sparked unprecedented engagement from stakeholders, not least the SR community. It is hoped this will maintain and strengthen the support and recognition of the Code from the industry and the marketing ecosystem at large. The new Code is planned to be adopted by ICC before the summer 2024."



Anders Stenlund, Co-Chair, ICC Code Revision Task Force

Ad hoc collaboration

In addition to the structural collaboration with partners, in 2023 EASA also collaborated on ad hoc initiatives:

Lucas Boudet served as a member of the jury for The Responsible Marketing Challenge, an initiative organised by Ferrero and JA Europe. For The Responsible Marketing Challenge, university students in Belgium and the Netherlands worked on developing a responsible marketing campaign, to be assessed by judges.

FERRERO



In occasion of the Effie Awards, organised by the European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA), Lucas Boudet was also part of the jury of the panel for the “Best of Europe” award, to recognise the most effective marketing efforts in the region. The successful cooperation for the Effie Awards may lead to a further collaboration with EACA in 2024.



EASA, together with its SRO members JEP (Belgium), ÖRT (Hungary) and SEE (Greece) and its partner ICAS, supported the IARD Global Standards Coalition, composed of over 80 organisations united in further accelerating reductions in the harmful use of alcohol and promote moderation among those who choose to drink. Signatories also include IARD member companies and other private sector organisations across the retail, e-commerce, marketing and advertising, and hospitality sectors, plus sports bodies and digital platforms.



Promoting advertising self-regulation



Policy and advocacy

Throughout 2023, EASA has consistently focused on increasing policymakers' understanding of advertising self-regulation, emphasising its effectiveness, benefits, and complementarity with EU law. This advocacy with European institutions relies on close coordination with all EASA members, who have contributed valuable insights on various issues. Below, you'll find a summary of the policy initiatives in which EASA participated in 2023, including responding to consultations, proactively engaging with lawmakers, and initiating new self-regulatory projects to enhance the visibility of advertising self-regulation.

Flurry of AVMSD-related reports recognising ad SR

The Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AVMSD), whose scope was expanded in 2018 to include video-sharing platforms, mandates that Member States promote self-regulation in areas such as advertising to minors for HFSS or alcohol products. This Directive has garnered renewed interest from observers and policymakers since its transposition in all Member States was completed in February 2023, coinciding with the introduction of the Digital Services Act. In 2023, several studies and reports were published acknowledging the role of advertising self-regulation in implementing the AVMSD. EASA maintained close communication with the Council of Europe's Audiovisual Observatory, ensuring that SROs' codes and rules were accurately reflected in the Observatory's updated *Mapping report on the rules applicable to video-sharing platforms – Focus on Commercial Communications*, as mandated by the European Commission.

In May 2023, as a result of EASA's advocacy efforts, the Parliament's Resolution on AVMSD implementation highlighted the potential of the AVMSD Article on self- and co-regulation and emphasised the "significant role" played by codes of conduct. EASA also conducted awareness-raising activities aimed at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and participated in an EESC panel on influencer marketing. Following this, the EESC's July 2023 Opinion on advertising through influencers referenced EASA's Best Practice Recommendation on Influencer Marketing and mentioned advertising self-regulatory organizations. Furthermore, EASA met with Giacomo Lasorella, Chair of the European Audiovisual Media Regulators Group, and maintained regular contacts at a technical level. Based on ERGA's December 2023 Report on the practical experiences of NRAs in regulating vloggers, achieving a coherent and comprehensive approach to vloggers is "a joint responsibility of NRAs and self-regulatory organizations such as the advertising standards associations."

These reports emerged amidst growing expectations of a revision to the AVMSD under the next EU legislature.

AVMSD pilot project

As part of its AVMSD pilot project involving 6 SROs, and in direct continuity of its discussions in 2022 with Ireland's audiovisual regulator, EASA signed a Statement of Common Intent (SoI) on July 25, 2023, with the newly established Irish Media Commission. As a reminder, the objective of this exploratory process is to open a space for potential collaboration between the Media Commission and EASA toward the handling of cross-border complaints about ads on video-sharing platforms, which are covered by the AVMSD and complemented by SROs' rules and codes.

EASA delivered its first annual report to the Irish Media Commission in December 2023, containing trends and statistics of complaints about ads on Video-sharing Platforms in the 6 markets involved. The project covers – but is not limited to – advertising practices of vloggers. EASA intends to continue its cooperation with the Irish Media Commission as per the signed Statement of Intent.


Political advertising: a sensible final scope

2023 marked the agreement reached at the EU level on the Regulation on the transparency and targeting of political advertising. This Regulation, which will directly apply in all Member States, lays down extensive transparency obligations on political ads and imposes limits on the use of targeting and ad delivery techniques. EASA had persistently advocated for narrowing the definition of political advertising, as it risked encroaching on purely commercial issue-based advertising. Throughout the law-making process, EASA met with European Commission officials, the parliament's rapporteur Sandro Gozi, and representatives from Member States. The wording "liable and designed to influence" was eventually included in the definition of political advertising, aligning with the longstanding key message conveyed by EASA. Furthermore, the "objective of the message" was included in the list of criteria to be considered when determining whether an ad is political or not. This criterion provides further assurance that purely commercial advertisements, such as commercial issue-based ads, will not be subject to the Regulation.

Is EU consumer law fit for the digital world?

The in-depth evaluation process (fitness check) of EU consumer law by the European Commission, launched on May 17, 2022, has progressed significantly in 2023. The objective of the fitness check is to assess the adequacy of the existing EU legal framework to address consumer protection issues in light of the ever-increasing importance of online practices. The fitness check may lead to a new legislative proposal revising the UCPD or to other measures for enhanced implementation and enforcement.

EASA contributed to the public consultation organized in early 2023 and later to the targeted survey circulated by DG Just. At each consultation round, EASA explained how self-regulation contributes to consumer protection offline and online by complementing EU consumer law, illustrating it with statistics, figures, and examples revealing tangible benefits of ad SR for consumers. EASA underlined that there was no need to revise the UCPD, which is sufficient to protect consumers in the digital era, complemented by ad self-regulatory systems. Since its inception, EASA remains regularly in touch with Commission officials in charge of the fitness check.

 **Focus on green claims**

A deal between lawmakers on the proposal for a Directive to empower consumers for the green transition was reached in December 2023, amending the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive. The initiative mainly aims to ensure that consumers obtain reliable and useful information on products and to prevent greenwashing, setting minimum requirements for sustainability labels. The Directive's national transposition will take place by March 2026, and the implementation by September 2026.

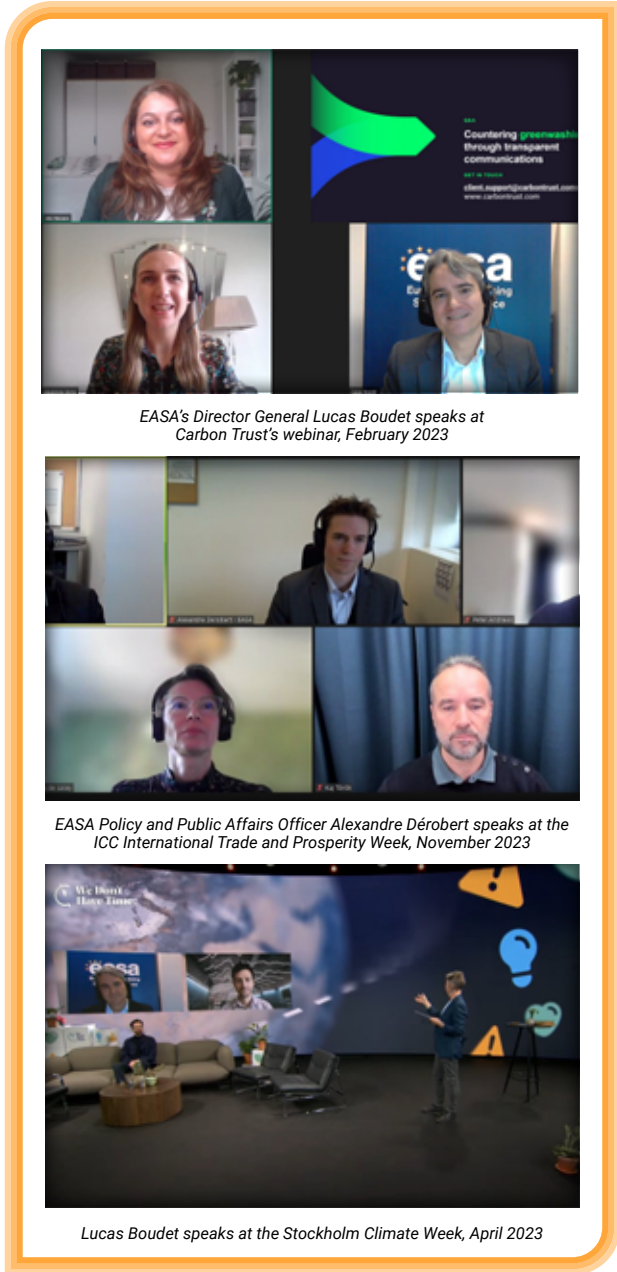
The more recent EU legislative initiative on Green Claims, the "Green Claims Directive", was tabled by the European Commission in March 2023. This Directive seeks to lay down rules for the substantiation, communication and verification of business-to-consumer environmental claims and labels. The proposal would rely on an ex-ante verification of claims – raising several concerns identified and voiced by EASA – supplemented by ex-post enforcement measures. EASA held discussions with its members very early in the process, established its position accordingly and conveyed proactively its recommendations to policymakers. EASA met with the relevant European Commission officials, the two Parliaments' co-rapporteurs and other Members of the European Parliament. When speaking at stakeholders' events about this topic, EASA showcased how the ad self-regulatory network comprehensively tackles misleading green claims.

In parallel, EASA contacted the Consumer Protection and Cooperation (CPC) network via the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG Just) to set up a joint taskforce of SROs and national consumer protection authorities interested in exchanging on how to review environmental and sustainability claims in advertising. Titled the "Green Claims Taskforce", its first session that took place in June focused more generally on the quality of substantiation of environmental claims and ways to inform consumers clearly and without complex language about scientific evidence to back the claims. By analysing case examples that both SROs and CPC authorities have reviewed in the past, Taskforce members were able to exchange about best practices in advertising but also in ways to review swiftly whether a claim can potentially mislead consumers. The second session focused largely on claims that mislead by omission. Through their overly generic wording or by willingly

or unwittingly withholding valuable information, or even by boasting about certain environmental attributes that are either commonplace or a legal requirement, such claims can mislead consumers by, for example, focusing attention away from certain aspects of the product and thereby promoting an image that is untruthful and dishonest.

The Green Claims Taskforce is a closed group that brings together only SROs and CPC authorities for them to exchange on the latest marketing practices in this area in a free and honest manner. After two sessions, the Taskforce will likely convene again in 2024 to analyse in more detail certain specific green claim types and exchange on ways to keep advertising standards high.

- Throughout 2023, EASA joined as a speaker at several third-party events on green claims and related topics, providing the advertising self-regulation perspective and illustrating how self-regulation represents a reliable and complementary tool to help avoid misleading environmental claims and greenwashing.



EASA's Director General Lucas Boudet speaks at Carbon Trust's webinar, February 2023

EASA Policy and Public Affairs Officer Alexandre Dérobert speaks at the ICC International Trade and Prosperity Week, November 2023

Lucas Boudet speaks at the Stockholm Climate Week, April 2023

- February 2023: EASA's Director General Lucas Boudet spoke at Carbon Trust's webinar "Countering greenwashing through transparent communications"
- April 2023: Lucas Boudet spoke at the Stockholm Climate Week organised by We Don't Have Time
- October 2023: Lucas Boudet spoke at the IAP 2023 Annual Meeting, presenting EASA's work and recommendations on the Green Claims & Empowering Consumers Directives
- November 2023: EASA's Policy and Public Affairs Officer Alexandre Dérobert spoke at the ICC International Trade and Prosperity Week, in a session moderated by Lucas Boudet
- December 2023: Lucas Boudet spoke at the ICC's webinar "Greenvertising 2.0: navigating sustainable advertising with integrity"



Further collaboration with authorities



As an example of good cooperation with authorities, in February 2023, EASA welcomed in its offices the new Chair of ERGA, the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services, Mr Giacomo Lasorella (ERGA Chair – AGCOM) along with his predecessor, Mr Karim Ibourki (ERGA Board member, President, CSA) and their colleagues from

the Belgian and Italian Audiovisual regulators (previous picture). It was a great opportunity to showcase the advertising regulation system and the work done by EASA's SR network, expand on EASA's collaboration with the Irish Media Commission, and touch upon topics such as ERGA's recent Report on vloggers and AVMD implementation.



Communications

Effective communications plays a pivotal role in ensuring the visibility of EASA's work and reaching new audiences. In 2023, EASA maintained an active presence through various channels. This included producing a monthly newsletter, publishing reports and Best Practice Recommendations, and ensuring the website and other communication materials remained up-to-date. Additionally, EASA launched a communications campaign to promote the tool DiscloseMe (more details in the following chapter) and initiated ad-hoc projects such as the 'Best Practice Awards spotlight,' available on our website.

As evident below, social media serves as a central platform to showcase our achievements, with 2023 witnessing further growth across our channels. However, EASA's communication efforts extend beyond external audiences to include internal stakeholders. Following a market study, we transitioned to a new platform for communications and events, Cvent, aiming to enhance both our external outreach and internal communications.

In 2023, EASA gained 467 followers on LinkedIn, 135 followers on Twitter. LinkedIn performed particularly well, with 45,300 impressions, 10% engagement rate, 914 reactions, 3,368 page views.



Publications

You can find all EASA's publications (statistical reports, Best Practice Recommendations, Bluebook...) on our website via the QR code below.





DIGITAL

Technological developments: supporting Data-Driven SR

Given the unprecedented scale and fragmentation of online advertising, SROs have invested in data-driven self-regulation (DDSR) technology, including artificial intelligence, to enhance their monitoring capabilities. Innovative solutions have emerged thanks to the collaboration with innovative tech firms or with the setting up of dedicated internal data-science resources. Whether via the Data-Driven Self-Regulation working group established within EASA in 2020 or through dedicated webinars, EASA has consistently fostered knowledge exchange and disseminated best practices among its members.

Additionally, EASA has provided financial support for SROs investing in such technologies to monitor online ads at scale with the aim of helping their adoption across more geographies. In 2023, EASA significantly increased its budget dedicated to such financial assistance (+58% compared to the previous year).

In the wake of the three SROs, which paved the way – France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands – many more SROs have engaged in DDSR monitoring since 2020.

In addition to bolstering DDSR monitoring activities, EASA also decided to support SROs in digitising internal processes.



Müge Tanil, Coordinator, RÖK (Türkiye)

State of play (as of 31 December 2023)

13 SROs have been involved in Data-Driven Self-Regulation projects since 2020

5 SROs are monitoring influencer on a permanent basis

8 SROs launched an ad hoc monitoring project

“In 2022, we initiated the “AI Project to Monitor Influencer Ads” in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade. The aim was to ensure compliance with guidelines and raise awareness among influencers and other industry players regarding the provisions outlined in the guidelines. Despite being a very small SRO with only 2 staff members, we successfully carried out this project with support from our local tech provider. By 2023, we had achieved a dramatic increase in compliance with the guideline’s provisions. We believe that digital-driven projects can serve as essential tools for small SROs, increasing efficiency and alleviating the workload in situations where human resources are limited.”



"There is a need for (self-)regulators to ensure that advertising in the digital environment is as compliant with advertising codes as offline advertising is. On social media, everything happens very quickly, and influencers, in particular, have a significant impact on young consumers. Checking social media content without tools that use artificial intelligence is very time-consuming. Projects that utilise artificial intelligence to sort influencer content have helped us to focus better and faster on the content we really want to examine. To ensure that our codes are observed in the digital world, we follow up on any breaches of our code and resolve issues as quickly as possible."

Katja Heintschel von Heinegg, Director, Deutsche Werberat (Germany)

Webinar: Influencer Marketing Exchange Forum: complaints handling and GDPR-related issues, June 2023



In conversation with **Otto van der Harst**, Chair of Data-Driven Self-Regulation Working Group and Director of Stichting Reclame Code (The Netherlands)



What we discovered is that in modern advertising practice we need to gear up for the AI revolution in, for instance, AI generated content, reaching specific targeted groups of consumers, automated and evaluated in a closed system where marketers no longer steer actively but just measure and adjust

What has the DDSR working group been focusing on mostly in this past year?

In 2023, the DDSR working group continued to encourage exchanges of information and experiences on monitoring online advertising within EASA's network of Self-Regulatory Organisations, and to provide financial support to SROs that have carried out a data-driven monitoring project, according to the criteria defined by this working group.

The second part of 2023 was largely devoted to the project for online training for influencers on a European scale to give them the means to know the rules so that they can better respect them. Two tools have been put in place: the 'discloseme' tool, which enables influencers to find out quickly and easily which words to use in their country to disclose their marketing communications, and the Influencer Marketing Standards Training to train them in all the rules governing advertising, whether online or offline.

What are the main priorities, in your opinion, for the group in the short-term?

The first priority will be to complete the online training project for influencers by encouraging as many SROs as possible to join the platform set up by EASA and to communicate this new opportunity for influencers to receive training in all the countries concerned. The other priority will continue to be to encourage SROs to equip themselves with artificial intelligence tools so that they can effectively monitor online advertising in all its forms, thereby reinforcing EASA's expertise in this area for all stakeholders in the sector.

Have there been any takeaways for you, or your SRO in chairing this group so far?

What we discovered is that in modern advertising practice we need to gear up for the AI revolution in, for instance, AI-generated content, reaching specific targeted groups of consumers, automated and evaluated in a closed system where marketers no longer steer actively but just measure and adjust. These automated choices harbour the risk of exposing messages to target groups that we rather not reach. Accidental mistakes might hold bigger risks for trust in online advertising. From influencers to scam ads we need to provide an answer as serious player in the sector. All stakeholders will benefit from a strong and technically up-to-speed SRO.

Connecting with digital players

EASA, inspired by the crucial and first-of-its-kind pan-European partnership it has with Google, is actively pursuing commitments from other digital platforms in the realm of advertising self-regulation, building on the first steps moved towards Meta and TikTok in 2022. Discussions with Meta and TikTok have centred on exploring potential collaborations, encompassing financial support for the network and membership in EASA. These discussions underscore the significant value that advertising self-regulation offers to digital entities and the broader industry landscape in helping ensure responsible advertising online.

In conversation with **Guy Parker**, *Chair of Working Group on collaboration with digital players and Chief Executive of Advertising Standards Authority (UK)*

What was the focus of the WG during the past year, and what are the main priorities for the group for the short-term?

Google was an active EASA member throughout the year, having renewed its membership of EASA at the end of 2022, including continuing its contributions to funding all SROs in EASA membership.

We continued to make progress securing sustainable commitment to ad self-regulation from other global digital players, building on Google's membership.

We made particular progress with TikTok, which signalled its keenness to join EASA, including funding EASA SROs with whom it does not already have direct funding arrangements in place. We also discussed shared policy areas, including influencer advertising.

We continued to meet regularly with Meta, which now instructs its advertisers to abide by SRO Codes, with those Codes listed on a dedicated webpage. We regularly discussed shared policy areas, including influencer advertising.

In terms of priorities for 2024, we will continue to discuss with TikTok when and how it might join EASA and fund EASA SROs. And we are keen for Meta to join EASA and also deliver more sustainable investment in EASA SROs with whom it does not already have direct funding arrangements in place.



In terms of priorities for 2024, we will continue to discuss with TikTok when and how it might join EASA and fund EASA SROs. And we are keen for Meta to join EASA and also deliver more sustainable investment in EASA SROs with whom it does not already have direct funding arrangements in place.

In conversation with **Michael Todd**,
Google Global Industry Relations Director

It's Google's 4th year since joining the Alliance as a responsible player of the ecosystem: what are the main takeaways for Google thus far?

As we head rapidly into 2024, we are still very proud of the decision we took at the end of 2020 when Google became the first digital pure play company to join EASA. Our partnership goal remains to ensure Google is an active player of European digital advertising self-regulation and to support individual European SROs to future-proof their work in maintaining responsible advertising online. As we said in the past, we believe the EASA network is a vital, and still somewhat an undervalued resource, for the European advertising industry. EASA and the national industry ad regulators do great work in administering ad standards and ensuring consumers can seek redress when needed. Their work also shows policymakers and users that the advertising industry is responsible and takes consumer protection seriously. These first four years of our trailblazing partnership enabled us to sit around the table with all the other representatives of the ad ecosystems invested in ad responsibility and transparency, to share knowledge about the latest ad practices and to collaborate with local SROs to ensure the online ad space remains safe in light of the latest tech developments.

What are Google's expectations and hopes as it looks into the future of responsible advertising? And what are perhaps the two key features that Google sees for the future of ad SR?

Whether talking about transparency, children, brand safety, sustainability, and now AI, there has never been more scrutiny on the responsibility credentials of advertising players in Europe. With this in mind we are really impressed by the desire of the EASA network to evolve and become more effective in administering ad standards in the digital era and we are committed to do our due diligence to help this transition.



We have come a long way, but I still think that collectively we can and should move even faster to ensure we're keeping pace with rapidly evolving technologies, advertising trends, consumer norms and political conversations. We think there is so much potential in the work the network does and we are at the beginning of the journey.

But ensuring a safe online ecosystem for users and for responsible businesses, requires a broader effort and more players seated around the EASA leadership tables. We would like to see other digital pure players joining the broad EASA network to further strengthen the support to advertising self-regulation. I know it is already the case in a few EU member states and I praise the good work done locally in securing such a large digital membership. Now we'd like to see a similar, stronger engagement at the EMEA level. Looking at all the great things we have achieved so far, it is exciting to think about what else we could do with more digital players onboard!

At Google we are always concerned with velocity. We have come a long way, but I still think that collectively we can and should move even faster to ensure we're keeping pace with rapidly evolving technologies, advertising trends, consumer norms and political conversations.

We think there is so much potential in the work the network does and we are at the beginning of the journey. We need to be more vocal with policy makers, the wider digital industry and consumers about the amazing work this network does. And we need to continue collaborating to make use of the best-in-class technology to police the ecosystem and to align cross-borders. Ideas like the influencer marketing certificate or leveraging artificial intelligence to monitor digital ads more efficiently and at scale will be key to continue the journey towards a joint and more responsible digital ads ecosystem.

Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is steadily growing in popularity and ad spend. The inherent fragmentation and volume of the influencer landscape, coupled with potentially any citizen becoming a content creator promoting products or services, makes it particularly difficult to capture and keep the new marketing practice within the fold of the current regulatory and self-regulatory frameworks.

This two-fold issue, the important growth and lack of nascent structuring of influencer marketing, leads to possible issues of irresponsible practices. For instance, the network of European Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) has been handling a growing number of complaints related to influencer marketing. Out of the 50,000 or so complaints handled by the SR network in 2022, 50% were related to online content and 32% of those related to influencer marketing.

The ad industry has a collective interest in ensuring that the entire advertising value chain and all marketing practices are responsible. This is why EASA has been stepping up its efforts to develop best practices, provide information and training for influencers. In this chapter, you will find an overview of EASA's key initiatives to help ensure responsible influencer marketing.

EASA Best Practice Recommendation on Influencer Marketing

EASA's Best Practice Recommendations (BPRs) are designed to provide support and advice to EASA's SROs and industry members on the practice of advertising self-regulation. They are a valuable resource when SROs are creating their own national guidance.

As early as 2018, EASA developed a BPR on Influencer Marketing to provide guidance on the remit and application of self-regulatory rules when addressing this growing marketing practice. The BPR has been recently updated in 2023 to take into account regulatory guidance and actual practices flagged by SROs. The BPR contains guidance about when user-generated content constitutes a marketing communication and is therefore subject to principles of responsible advertising. It covers rules for transparency and disclosure focusing on the prominence, location, and moment such disclosure is needed. It also provides information about the potential of training content creators and monitoring influencer marketing content. To find out more about the BPR on Influencer Marketing, you can scan the QR code below.



DiscloseMe

In July 2023, building on the information which was annexed to the Best Practice Recommendation in Influencer Marketing, EASA launched DiscloseMe, a new tool aimed at enhancing transparency in the influencer marketing industry. DiscloseMe provides users with information on recommended transparency disclosures in different European countries. The tool, which currently includes guidelines for 25 European countries, is designed to assist influencers, content creators, and marketers in meeting requirements when sharing sponsored content, affiliate links, or engaging in brand partnerships.

By regularly updating its database, the tool ensures that users have access to accurate and up-to-date recommendations, enabling them to ensure compliance with transparency SR standards. With its user-friendly interface, DiscloseMe simplifies the process of finding the necessary information. By answering a few questions, users can navigate the tool and receive tailored recommendations based on the language and on the country where the product will be promoted, making it accessible for both experienced influencers and newcomers.



Training and monitoring

Various monitoring exercises have enabled EASA to conduct an objective assessment of the state of influencer marketing in several European countries. They have highlighted a general lack of compliance with the rules and principles governing advertising, particularly regarding the disclosure of commercial communications.

Inspired by the example of the "Observatoire de l'influence" created in France by the ARPP in 2020, EASA has defined a two-phase influencer certification strategy. The first phase involves training influencers in the rules and principles of advertising, while the second phase focuses on ensuring their compliance through monitoring.

The prerequisite for certifying responsible influencers is that they are aware of the rules and principles governing online advertising and that the content they publish complies with them.

This is why the Certificate for Responsible Influence has two components: a training component to make the rules and principles known, and a monitoring component to check compliance with these rules.

The Influencer Marketing Standards Training (IMST)

The Influencer Marketing Standards Training (IMST), funded by EASA, is the first step. The IMST is a fast, accessible, and affordable training for influencers and content creators all across Europe. It provides them with the relevant know-how about advertising standards that they need, raising awareness about responsible marketing practices and therefore helping them communicate responsibly.

The IMST is an online course, created and managed by the local Self-Regulatory Organisations and/or in partnership with their stakeholders. The IMST is divided into modules that explain the main principles and rules applicable in each local market. The content goes through all the relevant fundamental principles of responsible advertising, such as transparency disclosure, non-misleading claims, legal and ethical advertising, as well as social responsibility, and covers other important elements such as children and teens, safety, and sustainability. A test at the end of the course leads to a successful training completion document. In 2023, EASA has thus created a training model online, based on the ICC code and EASA Best Practice Recommendations, intended to be duplicated, adapted and complemented by SROs according to their own code. Twelve SROs have confirmed their participation in this project by adapting it to their own code, 10 of which should launch it by the end of 2024, probably as early as September (in blue, in the map below).

Certificate for Responsible Influence

The Certificate for Responsible Influence is the second step. It is based on an initiative undertaken by the French SRO, ARPP which has certified more than 1,500 influencers since 2020 when it set up its Responsible Influence Observatory. The aim is to extend this type of certification to as many countries as possible. The release of the Certificate implies that a regular monitoring of publications made by “certified influencers” (those that will have successfully passed the IMST training and agree to subject their online content to the scrutiny of SROs) has been carried out, using data-driven solutions and artificial intelligence.

Since 2020, 13 SROs have already launched at least one ad hoc data-driven monitoring of online advertising and such technologies could be geared towards the monitoring of certified influencers.

Promoting EASA's and ad SR networks initiatives on responsible influencer marketing

EASA members collectively through the initiatives mentioned above, but also individually in their own market, have taken proactive steps to address the multiple facets of influencer marketing with the aim of helping ensure responsible practice. EASA spared no efforts promoting this good work before national SROs stakeholders and European policy makers, as it is a living proof of the effectiveness and proactiveness of advertising self-regulation. In April 2023, Lucas Boudet joined EASA's Spanish SRO member AUTOCONTROL & the Spanish Association of Advertisers' (AEA) seminar “Regulation and self-regulation on influencer marketing” in Madrid, to discuss self-regulation of influencer marketing in Europe, while in May, Lucas Boudet joined the European Economic and Social Committee hearing on advertising through influencers and its impact on consumers.



Countries that confirmed their participation in the IMST project (as of 31 December 2023)



EASA Best Practice Recommendations on Digital Marketing Communications 2023 (left) and on Influencer Marketing Guidance 2023 (right)



Lucas Boudet at the European Economic and Social Committee hearing on advertising through influencers and its impact on consumers



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