

The European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) is an umbrella organisation bringing together the 25 existing self-regulatory organisations (SROs) in Europe today with the pan-European bodies representing advertisers, agencies and the media. Established in 1992 EASA is committed to promoting and supporting self-regulation in the advertising industry. EPC's Executive Director Angela Mills Wade is currently Vice-Chairman of EASA and working closely with them to extend the remit of SROs to digital media to ensure high standards for consumers as they enjoy new forms of advertising online as well as in traditional media.

The EPC strongly supports the use of self-regulation in advertising as a complement to statutory legislation according to the principles of EASA's Self-Regulatory Charter. These principles were validated by the European Commission as a tried and tested means of providing effective, accountable self-regulation and high standards of consumer protection in advertising.

Data Privacy and Online Behavioural Advertising

In addition to updating the codes covering the content of advertising online, in response to concerns about the way in which citizens' data is processed for the purpose of delivery interest-based advertising online, EPC's Executive Director is chairing a **cross-industry Steering Group to develop a package of self-regulation for Online Behavioural Advertising**. This group is working with IAB Europe to integrate their signatory-based Framework Code on OBA with the wider advertising self-regulatory system. The industry Best Practice Recommendation can be viewed at <http://www.easa-alliance.org/page.aspx/386> (due for adoption 7 April 2011).

The BPR will introduce a uniform pictogram ('icon') across the European countries (EU & EEA). Once clicked on, the icon would show more information about the companies involved in providing this advert in *simple layman's language*. In addition, consumers will be given easy access to the 'OBA User Choice Site' (www.youonlinechoices.com) that provides information about OBA and the possibility for users to turn off OBA if they desire to do so. In this case, consumers will still receive adverts but not ones that have taken into account their potential interests based on previous web surfing behaviour.

Main arguments for self-regulation:

- No cost to consumers but provides fast and efficient consumer complaints mechanism
- Complements existing statutory legislation
- Rules can adapt quickly to societal, industry or consumer behaviour changes
- S-R bodies make quick decisions and act immediately on judgements providing realistic and

- practical solutions, free to consumers
- Consumer protection is often over and above legal requirements
- Run by independents, beyond influence of any particular company or sector and under the scrutiny of public authorities, consumer organisation and NGOs.

Self-regulation of the advertising industry has worked effectively for over 40 years in many countries and is spreading across Europe and beyond which is why the European Commission has made specific references to self-regulation as a useful and preferred means of transposing such Directives as the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive.

Yet new EU legislation on advertising remains a constant threat in areas such as alcohol, food, energy labelling, cars, gender stereotyping and advertising to children.

EASA Digital Marketing Communications Best Practice

Explanation of the Framework for self-regulation of Online Behavioural Advertising

EPC contributed to a pan-European industry submission at the start of this process which can be found here. Joint response to DG SANCO on the Non-Paper on Data Collection, Targeting and Profiling of Consumers For Commercial Purposes in Online Environments (13 July 2009).

For more information about EASA:

<http://www.easa-alliance.org>

talk to use

For further information, please go to:
<http://www.easa-alliance.org>

Or Contact:
Angela Mills Wade
EPC Executive Director

Tel: +44 1865 310 732;
angela.mills@wade.uk.net

or Heidi Lambert

Tel: +44 1245 476 265;
heidilambert@hlcltd.demon.co.uk

Alternatively visit
www.epceurope.org