

Press release

PRINT MEDIA DISTRIBUTION

Arcep listens to print media distribution stakeholders during the first meeting held under its new mandate

Monday, 25 November 2019

Last month, the Law on the modernisation of print media distribution, which reforms the “Bichet Act”, gave Arcep the responsibility of regulating the print media bulk distribution sector – which had previously been assigned to the Regulatory authority for press distribution (ARDP) and the High Council of press distribution (CSMP).

Priority issues, negotiations over assortment, consulting with the regulator... Arcep is listening closely to the sector's players

Being keen to meet with and establish a dialogue with sector's various stakeholders, Arcep hosted a first meeting with them at its offices on 21 November. Twenty eight players from the different links along the print media distribution chain were in attendance: publishers, sector unions, courier services, distributors and retailers (newsagents), etc.

This first meeting provided an opportunity to listen to stakeholders' needs and concerns by holding a wide-reaching discussion, during which participants were invited to answer three questions:

- What problems should be the regulator's top priorities?
- What system of consultation could the regulator set up with the sector?
- What are your views on how inter-professional negotiations over assortment have been organised?

Players agree on a first proposal: negotiations over assortment will be monitored, under the aegis of Arcep

Among the those issues that are top priorities for the sector, participants cited defining assortment rules for print publications. By law, these rules must be established through an inter-professional agreement within six months. Print media distribution players agreed on the creation of a monitoring committee for these negotiations, operating under the aegis of Arcep. The sector has already done a great deal of work on this matter, and progress should be very swift.

Creation of a Coordination Committee was also agreed upon

One of the first actions to achieve is a smooth transition from the old system and regulation by Arcep.

To enable the sector to share its initiatives with the regulator, and enable the regulator to sustain an ongoing dialogue on its actions, participants also agreed on a system of coordination with the regulator: in addition to consultations with all of the sector's stakeholders, e.g. through public consultations, periodic meetings should be held between the regulator and the sector's main representatives. It was thus agreed to create a Print media distribution coordination committee, whose rules will be set out in detail in the coming weeks.

Arcep will establish a medium-term vision for the sector's regulation

Arcep was able to share its commitment to making readers' interests a core tenet, to ensure that they have nationwide access to a diverse and high quality print media, at an affordable price. This is the compass that will guide Arcep in its decisions.

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Arcep also announced its desire to establish a medium-term vision, something akin to the Strategic Roadmap it adopted in January 2016 on telecoms and postal affairs. This medium-term vision includes two main objectives:

- Properly coordinate the regulator's different courses of action, with one another and with the sector's initiatives;
- Respond to the many priorities that stakeholders listed during the meeting.

To lay the groundwork, additional information will be published in the coming weeks and months. At the 21 November meeting, Arcep already invited stakeholders to contribute. The Authority will also be holding a series of interviews with a wide array of players, including reader representatives and courier employee representative organisations, in addition to specific work on digital tech issues.

Reminder (Arcep press release of 22/10/2019)

Reform of the "Bichet Act": adapting to the print media sector's new issues and challenges, while maintaining its founding principles

At a time when digital distribution is becoming increasingly prevalent, of steadily decreasing circulation figures and the attrition of point of sale networks, the report from the mission assigned to Mr Marc Schwartz, which the Government made public in July 2018, recommended revising certain aspects of the way print media are organised, and that its regulation be strengthened by assigning that responsibility to a single regulator that would be given increased powers in this area. To this end, it recommended that the responsibility for regulating the print media distribution sector be assigned to an independent authority with sufficient legal, economic and technical expertise, and which has the means to perform efficient oversight, while endowing it with proven powers and instruments.

Arcep thus becomes the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution. For the sake of simplicity, it will continue to be called "Arcep", with the final "p" now encompassing both postal affairs and print media distribution.

The sector's players can already make contact with the Arcep department in charge of print media distribution, by sending an e-mail to: distribution-presse@arcep.fr. To keep up with the latest news from Arcep regarding print media distribution, stakeholders can also sign up for [the dedicated mailing list](#) in the News section on Arcep's website.

Associated documents:

- [Interview with Arcep Chair, Sébastien Soriano, with La Correspondance de la presse: "Distribution de la presse : le président de l'Arcep, Sébastien Soriano, invite les acteurs de la filière à se réunir le 21 November"](#)
- [Act No. 2019-1063 of 18 October 2019 on the modernisation of print media distribution](#)
- [The print media distribution mailing list](#)

Arcep at a glance

The Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications, Postal Affairs and Print Media Distribution (Arcep), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority (IAA), is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile telecoms and postal networks in France.

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