

ICAS, EASA and CONARED Statement on the Importance of Responsible Advertising and COVID-19

Brussels, April 1, 2020 – This year we are facing an unprecedented international crisis due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Alongside the human tragedy, the global economy is severely impacted and consumers and businesses across many industries are suffering as a result of this latest outbreak.

Countless companies, including marketers, agencies and the media, have been extremely creative and supporting governments and people in these difficult times through public service ads, providing information, free resources, products and services as well as financial support. We applaud these efforts.

However, across the globe, we are also seeing advertisements that undermine public health advice or exploit people's anxieties. These advertisements harm their trust in information and advertising and undermine the principles of fair competition and, in some instances, endanger public health. Our respective members, which cover together advertising self-regulatory organizations in 44 countries around the globe as well as the advertising industry, condemn these advertising practices and are taking action against them.

In this context, **we would like to remind those who promote products and services to**

- **advertise responsibly;**
- **respect the existing advertising laws and standards;**
- **be sensitive of people's current increased susceptibility to health claims and not to exploit it through misleading claims or sales of ineffective or mislabelled products;**
- **make sure that all claims made are fully substantiated and especially any claims expressly or impliedly promising health benefits;**
- **and get advice when in doubt.**

Government regulators in many economies around the world have expressed their intent to deal harshly with misleading and unsubstantiated claims which are made in the context of the pandemic through civil and criminal penalties. ICAS, EASA and CONARED members, using their existing processes, are giving high priority to these claims and can refer non-compliant advertisers who refuse to amend or withdraw their advertisements, where appropriate, to the authorities for legal action.

For more information on global advertising standards and advertising self-regulation and where to get specific advice, please contact ICAS at info@icas.global.

For more specific information on European advertising standards and where to get advice, please contact EASA at info@easa-alliance.org.

For more information on advertising standards and advice in Latin America, please contact conar@conar.org.mx.



About ICAS

The **International Council for Advertising Self-Regulation (ICAS)** is a global platform which promotes effective advertising self-regulation. [ICAS members](#) include Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs) and other national, regional and international bodies working to ensure that advertising and marketing communications are legal, honest, truthful and decent.

ICAS' Mission is to exchange best practice around self-regulation and working on common solutions to the global challenges faced by the advertising industry. ICAS also facilitates the establishment of new SROs in emerging markets and promotes self-regulation and its benefits worldwide.

For more information please contact ICAS at info@icas.global.

About EASA

The European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA) is the authoritative voice on advertising self-regulation issues in Europe. [EASA members](#) include European Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs) and other industry bodies working to ensure that advertising and marketing communications are legal, honest, truthful and decent.

EASA's mission is to promote responsible advertising through effective self-regulation by providing detailed guidance regarding the development and establishment of advertising self-regulation for the benefit of consumers and businesses, to set out high operational standards for advertising self-regulatory systems and to provide a space for the advertising ecosystem to work together at European level to address common challenges and make sure advertising standards are futureproof.

For more information please contact EASA at info@easa-alliance.org.

About CONARED

CONARED is an informal network of self-regulatory bodies in Latin America. It includes [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Chile](#), Ecuador, [El Salvador](#), [Mexico](#), Paraguay, [Peru](#) and [Uruguay](#).

Its purpose is to unify criteria for the application of advertising codes and to foster a regional approach to commercial communication practices for advertisers, advertising agencies, and the media to ensure public safety and trust.

The network does not have a permanent Secretariat.