

TAX ON ADVERTISING WASTE

A proposal to introduce a compensatory mechanism for regressive and invasive communication

“The happiest man is the one with the fewest desires.”

(Traditional Eastern proverb)

Yet advertising promises happiness but, *subtly*, trains us in dissatisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

This document offers a structured reflection on the impacts of commercial communication and proposes a compensatory economic mechanism to address its negative effects.

It is not a draft law, but a conceptual, operational and value-based foundation for a future regulatory framework.

WHAT IS "ADVERTISING WASTE"?

An average connected person may be exposed to over 500 advertising messages per day. These messages don't just promote products: they shape desires, behaviors, and redefine what is perceived as “normal.”

“Advertising waste” refers to formally legal content that, by leveraging implicit persuasive pressure, generates negative impacts on public health, social cohesion, and collective perception.

It is not the individual ad that causes harm, but the cumulative effect over time.

We've become so accustomed to advertising that we no longer notice how deeply it conditions us. But what we no longer see still acts upon us.

HIDDEN COSTS FOR SOCIETY

The effects of advertising waste weigh heavily on society:

- **Public health:** obesity, psychological disorders → up to €9 billion/year
- **Inequality and stereotypes:** insecurity and toxic models → up to €20 billion/year
- **Compulsive consumption:** debt, addiction → up to €10 billion/year
- **Environment:** waste, overproduction → over €5 billion/year

Even attributing only a fraction of these costs to advertising, the systemic impact is undeniable.

THE PROPOSAL

Introducing a tax on advertising waste

Campaigns will be taxed proportionally based on the severity and intrusiveness of the message.

This is not a fine. It's a compensatory tax: like environmental pollution — it's measured, taxed, and made accountable.

Objective evaluation

Each campaign is assessed using public criteria: content, style, target audience, and exposure methods.

Incentives for responsible communication

Campaigns promoting health, inclusion, and sustainability are exempt from the tax and may receive public visibility and an ethical label (IMPACT-).

SENSICOM

The Observatory for Sensitive Communication

SensiCom is the public body responsible for evaluating and classifying advertising campaigns based on their social and cultural impact.

Main functions:

- Evaluation before and after broadcast
- Certification of responsible campaigns
- Monitoring promotional content (TV, digital, gaming, immersive media)
- Collaboration with schools, universities, and institutions
- Producing guidelines, reports, and educational materials

Technology and method

A hybrid platform (AI + human reviewers) analyzes text, audio, and video.

Artificial intelligence identifies problematic patterns; but the final decision is made by people:

“An algorithm flags. But people decide.”

Strategic vision

SensiCom is not just a watchdog.

It is a public infrastructure designed to become a European center of excellence for communication quality.

HOW THE EVALUATION WORKS

Two main categories of waste:

- **Invasive:** sensory overload (volume, acting, color effects) → medium-low severity
- **Regressive:** content reinforcing stereotypes, consumerism, egoism → medium-high severity

Aggravating factors: repetition, vulnerable targets, imposed exposure (e.g., unskippable pre-rolls).

A technical score determines whether the campaign is subject to the tax.

USE OF FUNDS

Funds collected directly support education, culture, inclusion, and responsible campaigns: a dedicated fund to return value to the community.

Note: SensiCom is publicly funded and financially independent from the tax revenue, ensuring impartiality.

CONCLUSIONS

Advertising can continue to use the models it has always used.

But with one key difference: it will have to give something back to the society it impacts.

Or it can choose to evolve — toward more sustainable, more conscious... and perhaps even more creative communication.

For more details, technical materials, and updates, visit:

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