



**European  
Federation  
of Journalists**

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**EFJ Submission to the Issue Paper for the Audiovisual Conference in Liverpool:  
Media Pluralism**

**Objective:**

The European Union is committed to protecting media pluralism and freedom of expression, following Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It is also committed to the defence of public broadcasting, following the Additional Protocol n°8 of the Treaty. The objective is respect and further develop these commitments.

**Comments of the European Federation of Journalists:**

- the EFJ **welcomes** some of the recommendations contained in the issue paper, such as the development of an “Up-to-date collection and public access” for circulation, audience and ownership figures, the establishment of an Observatory focusing on media markets and concentration, the analysis of local media consolidation and the studies on pluralism.
- The EFJ is **opposed** to any deregulation of media ownership rules, as suggested in paragraph 7 of the Issue Paper. The lifting of “too restrictive rules in Europe” in order to “compete globally” with non-European media giants is dangerous for media pluralism and is a threat to the European model of mixed broadcasting systems (public and private).

**Motivation:**

Media concentration and cross-ownership mean that few companies take control of media market, but also of other entertainment markets such as book publishing, music, theatre, theme parks and sports. As defenders of media pluralism, the European institutions cannot and should not put on their agenda a loosening of media ownership rules under the pretext of creating a level playing field for European companies to compete with US conglomerates. The trend towards ever-larger media groups is presented as an inevitable part of the media’s development, under the

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pretext that the increase in the number of channels, the arrival of digital media, and convergence between broadcasting, computing and telecommunications, makes media concentration and cross-media ownership rules obsolete. However the experience in the USA, since the 1996 Telecommunications Act and more recently with the debates around the FCC regulations, has been that a small number of media corporations have moved into dominant positions by acquiring chunks of the US media. Deregulation has boosted both the commercial power of media/entertainment companies, but it also gives them political power. Moreover, the same companies are demanding even greater relaxation of rules on media ownership, spending enormous sums on political donations while lobbying key politicians.

Finally, increased media concentration, together with relaxing of rules on commercial communication (see the comments on Issue Paper for commercial communications) would lead to an increased and unacceptable level of commercial pressure on the content and on the workforce in the broadcasting sector.

**For further information please contact +32 2 235 22 00**

*The EFJ represents over 260,000 journalists in 34 countries*