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Main image:

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Media freedom and pluralism pic

The importance of transparency, freedom and diversity in Europe's media landscape.

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Freedom of expression is one of the essential foundations of the European Union. But freedom of expression can only be exercised in a free and pluralistic media environment, including through independent media governance.

The European Union's commitment to respect freedom and pluralism of the media, as well as the right to information and freedom of expression is enshrined in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights [2], similar to the provision of Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms [3].

Defending Media Freedom and Pluralism

- Addressing violations of media freedom and pluralism: "European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF2013). The Commission selected in early 2014 four projects [4], run by NGOs and academic institutions, with the object to address violations of media freedom and pluralism in the EU and Candidate Countries.

- Independent monitoring of media pluralism: Pilot implementation of the Media pluralism Monitor [5] (MPM). The European Commission awarded a grant for the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF [6]) to conduct a Pilot implementation of the “Media pluralism Monitor” (MPM). Nine countries have been selected [7]for the pilot test (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy and the UK).

Council Conclusions on Media Freedom and Pluralism

On 26 November 2013, the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, adopted conclusions on media freedom and pluralism [8] in the digital environment.
In those conclusions, the Council invites the Commission to:

- continue to support projects that aim at enhancing the protection of journalists and media practitioners
- continue to support the independent monitoring tool for assessing risks to media pluralism in the EU (MPM)
- strengthen cooperation between Member States' audiovisual regulatory authorities and promote best practice as regards the transparency of media ownership
- assess the effectiveness of these measures in order to consider any further steps.

Documents and Studies

- Two public consultations [9] on the independence of the audiovisual regulatory bodies (report [10]) and on the Independent Report from the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism [11](report [12]) were conducted in 2013.
- An independent study on indicators for media pluralism in the EU Member States [13] was commissioned to define and test concrete and objective indicators for assessing media pluralism in the EU Member States. The results [5], including the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM), were published in 2009.
- The Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom [14], initiated within the European University Institute of Florence, published a policy report [15] on "European Union competencies in respect of media pluralism and media freedom" in February 2013.

- The European Commission services published a working paper outlining efforts to promote pluralism by third parties and organisations, notably the essential work undertaken by the Council of Europe. This contains a concise first survey of Member States' audiovisual and print media markets - Staff Working Paper on Media Pluralism [16].

- European Commission Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries [17], 2014-2020

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