



Grondrechten  
Derechos fundamentales  
Direitos fundamentais  
Pamattiesības  
Pagrindinēs teisēs  
Drepturile  
Temeljne pravice  
Základné práva  
Prawa podstawowe  
Drittije  
Основни права  
Fundamental rights  
Temeljna prava  
Perusoikeudet  
Droit fondamentaux  
Colloquium  
Θεμελι  
Alapvető jogok  
Grundlæggende rettigheder  
Põhioigused  
Základní práva  
Grundlæggende rättigheter

BRUSSELS, 17 - 18 November 2016

## Session IIa: Protecting media freedom and independence from political pressures

Political pressure was already identified as one of the main threats to media freedom and pluralism in the 2013 report of the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism. Among other things, the group highlighted the influence of politics on public service broadcasting through the appointment system.

Earlier this year, the European University Institute published the results of the second phase of the Media Pluralism Monitoring showing that political independence of national media system and its media outlets is at medium risk in the majority of the Member States analysed (in terms of existence and effectiveness of implementation of regulatory safeguards against biased representation of political viewpoints in media; politicisation over media outlets, media distribution networks and news agencies; and influence of the state on the functioning of the media market).

This situation is also felt by several of the respondents to the public consultation. A large number of respondents indicated significant concerns as regards the lack of independence of media regulatory authorities, mentioning recent specific challenges in several Member States.

In addition, many contributions highlighted the role of independent, transparent and well-funded public service media in ensuring media pluralism. Several respondents argued that the provision of factual, unbiased and objective information should be the main role of public service media. The replies to the public consultation also supported the idea that public service media should provide for a diversity of programmes and media needs that would not be necessarily attractive for commercial media. In order to fulfil the above role and ensure media pluralism, the organization of public service media should be independent from political pressures, should reflect the diversity in the society and be accountable for the public.

Discussions in the session will look at how to address the detrimental effects of political pressure on an open and informed debate. An aspect to be explored is the need to ensure that measures to constrain propaganda and media services legislation are not misused for unwarranted restrictions to freedom of expression and cross border broadcasting. The independence of audiovisual regulators for limiting the risks of undue political interferences in the media sector will be central to the discussions. In its proposal for the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) of May 2016, the Commission has proposed measures to strengthen the independence of national audiovisual media regulators.

The session will also touch upon the challenges related to governments financing one-sided media reporting and the best practices to address them as well as the dangers of such challenges for the formation of public opinion.

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**Indicative questions to steer the discussions:**

1 – What are the main threats to the independence of media regulators? What are the risks of such threats for media freedom and pluralism? How can independence of media regulators be ensured?

2 – What are the main threats to political independence of public service media? What are the dangers of such threats for the formation of public opinion? How to ensure a diverse politically and economically independent public service media?

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