

Joint Statement on the Proposal for the European Media Freedom Act

The undersigned journalists', media freedom, and human rights organisations welcome the European Commission's initiative to strengthen the free and pluralistic media system and the commitment to protect journalists and editorial independence within the European Union. These values directly link to fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression, the right to access to information, the formation of opinion, and making informed choices in elections, as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Matters relating to the media have traditionally been the competence of member states, however such is the threat posed to media freedom that an EU-wide action has become necessary to protect Europe's democratic values.

Therefore we support the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA), which breaks significant new ground in our efforts to protect media freedom in Europe. The EMFA has identified many of the key issues where the EU and member states must urgently act in order to protect media freedoms. This statement of intent, alone, is very welcome.

However, if the EMFA is to become effective in the struggle to guarantee media pluralism, to protect journalists' rights and ensure editorial independence from the impact of vested commercial and political interests, it should strengthen efforts to increase the transparency in media ownership with clear rules instead of soft-law Recommendations; introduce rules governing all financial relations between the state and media *and removing the limit on state advertising transparency for over one million inhabitants*; guarantee the independence of national regulators as well as the independence of the European Board for Media Services; and should expand measures against surveillance of journalists and ensure a general guarantee for the protection of sources.

The undersigned organisations look forward to continuing to engage with the institutions of the European Union to ensure that the text of the European Media Freedom Act is as robust and effective as possible and helps provide a foundation for generations of journalists to come.

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Association of European Journalists (AEJ)
Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
Coalition for Creativity (C4C)
Committee to Protect Journalists
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
Free Press Unlimited (FPU)
Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
Index on Censorship
International Press Institute (IPI)
Media Diversity Institute, Belgium (MDI)
OBC Transeuropa (OBCT)
Ossigeno.info
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Society of Journalists, Warsaw
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)
The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation
Transparency International EU
World Association Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC Europe)