

Declaration/Statement

1. On Romania

Proposed by the Romanian Journalists' Union (FAIR-MediaSind)

The Annual Meeting of the EFJ supports the efforts of its affiliated member in Romania, the Culture and Mass-Media Federation FAIR-Media Sind for:

Unlocking social dialogue in the media, maintaining the current Culture and Mass Media sector, negotiating a collective labor agreement for all employees and for freelancers in this sector.

Urgent changing of the Law on the organizing and functioning of the Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation and the Romanian Television Corporation in order to return to the status of public institutions, not state companies, as well as for depoliticizing the management of these institutions.

Providing fiscal facilities to the media industry identical to those in the European Union and taking measures to protect freelancers.

2. IFJ and EFJ are facing the new global economic landscape

Proposed by SNJ-CGT, FNSI, FeSP, SDRP, Sinjor, FAPE, SNJ, Journalistes-CFDT, NUJ UK, NUJ Irlande, RUJ, Syndicom, UBG.

Journalism should offer an understanding of the world. Today, can we say that journalism still fulfills its mission?

The landscape of journalism today is no longer what it was yesterday. With the digital technologies, the tools have changed and the information circulates faster and faster. On the other hand, what has not changed is the core role of journalists to search for information, check it and put into context. There are multiple media platforms which require to be fed more and more quickly, but the function of the journalist cannot be mainly dependent on the tools, nor on the speed of transmission of information to the public.

Moreover, it is very fashionable to consider that journalists are no longer the only ones to inform. It is true that they are subject to the competition from the "all

journalists" movement, but this does not change their mission. It is up to each individual, regardless of their media and country, to uphold their professional principles, dignity, independence and finally to justify their *raison d'être*. The individual approach has to reinforce the necessary collective approach. The journalist has the responsibility to differentiate himself from the alleged information circulating on the Web, for the benefit of certain social networks.

Digital technologies are not the likely biggest factor for change in the profession. Indeed, journalism entered a new global economic phase since the 1970s in the United States and the 1980s and 1990s in Europe. This change was characterised by two movements: financialisation, especially transnational, and concentration.

Financialisation is characterised by the development of financial shareholding. Communication, culture and media received all the attention of investment funds draining huge sums of money.

Today, Black Rock (which manages more than \$ 5 trillion and has a stake in the capital of 14,000 companies worldwide), The Vanguard Group, Capital Research & Management, Citigroup, Bain Capital, Carlyle, but also sovereign wealth funds of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Norway (Norges Bank Investment Management) are present in all industrial sectors, including the media sector.

Beginning in the 1990s, the liberalisation of the telecommunications and of the audiovisual sector caused a wave of concentration, in the name of the growing interconnection between culture, telecommunications and equipment industries. The groups view themselves as multimedia and implement the convergence of contents and networks.

The most symbolic examples are the takeover of Time Warner by AT & T in the United States (for more than \$ 100 billion) or the purchase of daily newspapers, magazines, radio stations and television channels by Patrick Drahi's Altice group in France, the United States and Israel. Spain's largest shareholders in the Prisa-El País group include HSBC, Santander and La Caixa banks, several vulture funds in the United States, Spanish multinational Telefónica and a powerful financial group from Qatar.

Banks and other financial players enable these mega-concentrations by granting huge lines of credit. The cost of these transactions is significant, particularly in relation to the financial expenses of groups that have used debt. The lines of credit have drastic management clauses, covenants, guaranteeing a rapid return on investment for shareholders and assurance of the repayment of debts.

The situation thus created is the result of the search for greater profitability of the capital invested by shareholders, favouring the creation of more and more gigantic groups with prospect of higher dividends, requiring profits of the order of 15 to 20 %,

which are only achievable through the reduction of all costs: salaries, jobs, editorial budgets, etc.

The authorities and politicians do not seem to take seriously the extreme danger created by the grave impoverishment of pluralism and the quality of information in the democratic life. The same "liberal" policy encourages them to consider the press as just another "commodity" and to leave regulation to the sole law of the market.

The consequences on the management of companies, the organisation of the media and the editorial contents are various and numerous. They can be measured every day in our information processing work, by, for example, an increased importance of advertising; we can observe the decline of group journalism through outsourcing, standardised norms and working methods, but above all infotainment, etc.

In a globalized context, the tasks of the IFJ and the EFJ, which is its regional group, must be increasingly complementary and coordinated to impose quality journalism - critical journalism - everywhere. They have a common responsibility to maintain a database, to support editorial staff affected by concentration and violations of labour standards and investigations, and to impose on publishers International Framework Agreements to avoid dumping between the parent company and subsidiaries in international groups.

It would be futile to believe it is possible to oppose the strategies of the media groups individually, in an editorial office or a country or even at the level of a continent, while their shareholders are globalized. Or to believe it is possible to oppose concentrations, which reduce pluralism, at the national level.

What power can we rely to exert any control over media companies or their countless subsidiaries when their headquarters are sometimes located in tax havens?

Journalists' trade unionism needs more international solidarity; it is still to be developed without any objectives other than those necessary for improving the quality of the work needed to provide the whole profession with a public space for information through policies which aim at organising a media landscape in the interests of citizens.