

STAND UP FOR JOURNALISM AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Europe's information ecosystem is at a crossroads. Misinformation and filter bubbles, oligarchic media capture and attacks on public-service media, indeed unprecedented attacks on journalists amid their subjection to precarious working conditions—all are leading to a brain drain from the industry. This could have a devastating impact on the quality of journalism and media pluralism, already threatened by 'click-bait' profit-seeking and local news 'deserts' deemed unprofitable. And generative artificial intelligence cannot fill the gap: it has much potential but carries many risks.

The 2024 European Parliament elections will set the direction for the EU in the next term. We need a parliament and a commission committed to a fair Europe, respecting trade-union and human rights, the rule of law, media freedom and pluralism, and overseeing implementation of the crucial regulatory mechanisms accomplished in the last five years: the copyright directive, Digital Services Act, the Artificial Intelligence Act, the anti-SLAPP directive and the European Media Freedom Act. For facts to thrive we need to join forces to build a healthy information ecosystem.

In the run-up to the June European Parliament elections, the EFJ has set out an agenda with three action points to make journalism viable and safe and to regulate AI.

Foster viable journalism

- Invest massively: public transparent funding at arms' length, philanthropic funding etc;
- Guarantee independence and sustainable funding for public service media;
- Tax Big Tech: guarantee platform remuneration (fair share) for journalistic content;
- Ensure fair remuneration and authors rights for (freelance) journalists;
- Allocate a permanent EU budget to independent journalism projects, media literacy, monitoring of violations and other assistance.

Promote safety of journalists

- Enable a safe environment for journalists to protect them from physical and online violence, in particular women and groups that are marginalised;
- Stop impunity;
- Recognise and prevent abusive legal proceedings intended to silence journalists;
- Prevent the unlawful deployment of spyware against journalists.

Regulate Generative Artificial Intelligence

- Prioritise maximum transparency on training data and artificially generated content;
- Enforce mandatory remuneration of authors for AI-generated content using journalistic work;
- Encourage development of guidelines for responsible use and development of journalistic AI;
- Ensure that AI is an integral part of journalists' and media workers' training also in light of preventing any misuse of generative AI to create mis- and disinformation.



The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) representing 73 journalists' trade unions and professional associations in 45 countries is calling upon EU policy makers to stand up for journalism and journalists in Europe.

We all witness an increase of mis- and disinformation, we see a withering business model for independent journalism and increased political control on journalists and the media. The new information gatekeepers, the large online platforms - Big Tech - and its attention driven business model erode the quality of content and the foundations of a healthy information ecosystem. All this has a potentially devastating impact on trust in journalism, the most important currency for the future of the profession. This obliges all of us, who defend democracy, to stand with journalists and support through a holistic approach journalism as a public good. There has never been a time when accurate and ethical reporting was more important, and more important to support and defend. We need all of you, a broad alliance, to improve the information system, not least to get the facts right.

The EU has done more than ever before to create a more safe and sustainable space for journalism, not least by pursuing the European Media Freedom Act. It has supported many projects linked to press freedom and journalistic self-regulation, media deserts, the safety of journalists, cross-border investigative journalism and freelancers, as well as social dialogue, skills and training. Altogether, around €50 million per year has gone to media organisations under these rubrics.

This is not enough! *Independent professional journalism, the best antidote to disinformation, is expensive. Audience engagement, new journalistic formats, support for media literacy and the right use of AI are crucial to make journalism a tool for citizens to connect, debate, learn and engage in public discourse in today's polarised societies. But that requires sustainable business models, which guarantee decent working conditions and fair remuneration.*

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