

International Federation of Journalists Professional Guidelines for News Organisations in Brussels (see below)

The expansion of news outlets in Brussels is recognition of the importance of the city as a hub for information on political, corporate and civil society affairs and further enhances the role of Brussels as one of the world's main news centres. This expansion, including new electronic media, provides flexible and versatile ways of offering information services in the public interest.

The growth of new media services also provides a welcome opportunity to restate and reaffirm the values of independent journalism in a city where lobbying interests and political policymakers compete for influence.

All groups of journalists and media working from and based in Brussels should declare:

- Their commitment to maintaining the highest standards of journalism, freedom of the press and pluralism;
- That all issues relating to the ethics of journalism should be a matter for journalists and media professionals alone;
- That the credibility of news and information depends on the highest ethical standards in the gathering, presentation and circulation of news material.

With these principles in mind, journalists' groups and news media organisations working in Brussels may consider adopting the following guidelines to promote editorial quality and internal and external transparency over media activity.

Media should:

- Define and publish, where appropriate, an editorial mission statement;
- Establish an internal editorial charter, in line with international standards, that secures the editorial independence of journalists and respects the norms of ethical practice (concerning, for example, right to act according to conscience, policy on receipt of inducements, gifts and facilities provided by public and private interests, dealing with complaints, etc);
- Develop and publish a code of editorial conduct regarding content quality (concerning, for example, respect for the truth, the need for clearly attributed sources, respect for non-discrimination and tolerance, the objective of doing no harm, protection of sources, etc);
- Ensure clear separation of advertising material and paid for space from editorial content in all publications, whatever the mode of dissemination;
- Implement internal standards for monitoring the personal interests of employees and owners that may compromise editorial independence and which must be made known to the Editor in Chief;
- Make available information on the external interests and ownership profile of the organisation;

- Make available information regarding any benefits providing a pecuniary advantage provided by public authorities, including information on engagement in projects or activities funded by international organisations;
- Provide employment conditions and/or working relations that reflect adherence to national and international labour standards;
- Set up and publish details of a mechanism for dealing with complaints and making corrections where errors of fact have been made;
- Appoint or designate a member of the staff to act as an ombudsman or contact person to whom concerns and problems of an ethical and professional nature can be addressed.

Related:

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[IFJ press release 'Online Media Networks to Challenge Public Ignorance over European Affairs'](#)

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