

#MEDIA4EU: EU STRATEGY FOR INDEPENDENT & SUSTAINABLE MEDIA

EU (& gov'ts) from control to strategy toward healthy press, not spending more

	6 POLICY PRINCIPLES: SCISQI	<i>Status:</i>	6 PRACTICAL EU ACTIONS (in addition to national)	<i>Status:</i>
1	Provide an EU STRATEGY for a healthy media sector, to overcome technology and economic crises.	1. Growing support among media & policy circles	High Level Group incl. publishers & journalists. Assess viability of sub-sectors, eg cross-border media, media syndication, media translation.	to do, building on past groups and this recent working group. DG Connect to lead?
2	Let COMMERCIAL revenues grow, not adding unnecessary regulation	2. Supported in principle... but in practice? Over full mandate?	Assess cost of restrictive regulations. Balance consumers' interest with readers' needs and public interest in 'fourth pillar'.	to do, using truly independent experts and open debates; SG and DG Budget to contribute
3	Facilitate press INDEPENDENCE by separating EU communication from EU media strategy.	3. Media strategy now in DG CONNECT, also needs High-Level Group to ensure stakeholder input	Rather than creating EU-controlled ones, use existing media and events. Shift EU comms budgets from consultancies to normal media campaigns	to do, workshop media / policymakers / communicators, then tool-box for better procurement
4	Respect SUBSIDIARITY , encouraging media initiatives, and national actions including independent regulators	4. Underpins need for diversity and accountability of national media	European debate to trigger decentralised actions. Direct EU intervention limited. Media regulation, notably broadcasting, to be independent from governments.	to do, from 2015 budgets of various DGs (and EP / Council)
5	Support QUALITY journalism & scrutiny, and challenge myths & populism	5. Still controversial at EU level. Can be tackled at national level.	Encourage training & expense support for national fact-checking & Brussels press correspondents (limited, by EU / governments / foundations, only via independent bodies) **	NATO does, foundations welcome, API acts as independent assessor for EP travel grants to journalists
6	Develop Media INNOVATION STRATEGY within Horizon 2020	6. Minds & instruments are ready to be used	R&D strategy for media value-added social media era. Innovation projects in creative industries, eg translation & localisation encouraged via networks & curation platforms.	Horizon 2020: reflect in priorities & promote usage Communicate better about R&D opportunities that will attract SME media

* Transfers to DG CONNECT, creating a full Media directorate: MEDIA (from DG EAC), dpt media networks and contracts (DG COMM), copyright (from DG MARKT). Joining there dpt media convergence regulations and part of Horizon 2020. See also EurActiv OpEd: <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/infosociety/mr-juncker-pick-one-commissioner-communications-another-media-sector-303375>

** while its journalists are mostly accredited, the EU specialized press does not as such fall under 'correspondents', but central editorial teams. This is not a call for direct subsidies.

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ORIGINS & PROCESS: BY MEDIA PROFESSIONALS OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS

The media are facing dual crises: economic and digital.

A working group¹ of journalists, publishers and other media experts have studied the European media landscape, including many past failures at EU level. The Association of European Journalists, present in many countries, asked Christophe Leclercq to chair this group.

A Draft paper was prepared and circulated in advance of the European Parliament Hearings for Commissioners Designate in September 2014. Then it was discussed at the annual AEJ Congress in October, 20 pages, copy online¹. Fondation EurActiv hosted the working group and decided to speed up the debate, with the #Media4EU event and "Yellow Overview" (overleaf).

Typically, each EU mandate takes at least one policy initiative regarding press freedom or pluralism: good. Charlie Hebdo reminded us that it is not a given. How about tackling the economic challenges? Just like any other key EU sector, the Juncker Commission could trigger strategic thinking, not necessarily direct intervention.

ISSUES: HOW CAN EUROPE HELP THE MEDIA SECTOR RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES?

- Revenues are in freefall, budgets, jobs and titles are being cut across Europe. In Brussels, for example, the number of EU accredited journalists has declined significantly since 2004.
- Technology: sector in transformation, but expensive IT & continuous re-training. Many readers rely on social media & searches. While vibrant, these often do not provide context and balance. Some of it feeds off media coverage anyway, and "sucks" most advertising.
- EU media policy since 2009 has been inconsistent: big subsidies for film, TV & radio, much communication & consultancy spending, but very little for independent media. Some perceive overregulation, state interference.
- A Single Digital Market is necessary as an overall horizontal policy. But it is insufficient to support the diversity of sustainable media. We also need a vertical policy: a strategy for the media sector. A democratic institution such as the EU requires and deserves this.

RECOMMENDATION: DEVELOP AN EU STRATEGY, IMPLEMENTED DURING 2014-2019

We recommend that the EU and stakeholders urgently review the following 6 Policy Principles along with 6 matching Practical EU Actions (overleaf). These could be facilitated by establishing a High-Level Group now to advise on EU media policy during the current mandate.

NEXT STEPS: DEBATE, THEN AGREE & ACT !

Further comments welcome via #MEDIA4EU on Twitter, or directly to :

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¹ Representation included individuals from AEJ, API, EBP, EMMA, EJC and Fondation EurActiv (acting as chair and convener) + experts from EU institutions, academia and other media groupings: most listed in the Sept Draft AEJ Report : <http://euroman.blogactiv.eu/files/2015/01/EU-Strategy-for-Independent-and-Sustainable-Media-Final-Draft-report-09.10.2014.pdf>