

Media pluralism and media freedom in the EU

Media freedom and pluralism are among the rights and principles enshrined in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and in the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as part of the Copenhagen criteria for membership of the EU, related to democracy and human rights. Despite that, there are currently concerns regarding threats to media freedom and pluralism in the EU. The own-initiative report on Media Pluralism and Media Freedom in the EU, due to be voted in plenary in May, aims at contributing towards free and pluralistic media systems across the EU that play a key role in any democratic society.

Background

According to its 2013 [resolution on the EU Charter: standard settings for media freedom across the EU](#), the European Parliament considers that the EU has the competence to take legislative measures to guarantee, protect and promote freedom of expression and information, media freedom and pluralism, even though these competences are shared with the Member States. The EU has responsibility to ensure proper and effective implementation of the rights and freedoms enshrined in the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as of the internal market rules in regard to media markets.

Impetus for increased EU action

In a [2013 resolution](#), the EP called on all stakeholders to take a wide range of concrete measures within their remit to safeguard and promote media pluralism. The resolution covered issues from media ownership concentration and transparency, to professional journalistic standards and self-regulation, monitoring media pluralism, and many others. Different measures in support of media freedom and pluralism have been implemented, for example the establishment of a High-level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism, which published its [report](#) in January 2013, the launch of an annual [Media Pluralism Monitor](#) (MPM) of the risks to media freedom and pluralism across the EU, the inclusion of media freedom and pluralism in the EP resolution on [EU mechanism on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights](#), the establishment of the [European Centre for Press and Media Freedom](#) assisting journalists in danger, and the [review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#). Despite all these, concerns about violations of media freedom and attacks against journalists are on the rise, confirmed by the 2017 World Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders, and the conclusions of the MPM report of the European University Institute.

European Parliament position

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) adopted an own-initiative [report](#) on Media pluralism and media freedom in the EU, on 27 March 2018. The report addresses media freedom and pluralism issues concerning the media industry, individual journalists as well as citizens – as media audiences. It encourages active support of media freedom and pluralism as a responsibility of all stakeholders, including governments and regulators. It calls for concrete action against various threats to media freedom and pluralism, including those related to the evolving digital media ecosystem such as unlawful and arbitrary surveillance, undue control of information by intermediaries, and the ever-growing problem of the spread of disinformation. The committee calls for measures to ensure strengthened media literacy; transparency of media ownership; non-discriminatory, objective and transparent criteria for allocation of public funding to media organisations; and monitoring of all public funding provided to media owners. It recommends the permanent extension of EU funding of the MPM and its use for drawing up the annual report on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, as well as for evaluation of progress in the accession negotiation process.

Own-initiative report: [2017/2209\(INI\)](#); Committee responsible: LIBE; Rapporteur: Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL, Italy).

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Author: Alina Dobreva, Members' Research Service
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eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact) <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)