The Commission recognises the special importance of public service media for our societies and democracies. The Commission monitors closely the developments concerning media freedom and pluralism in all Member States, including Belgium, as part of its annual Rule of Law Report. This year, the report will assess for the first time the situation of public service media and include recommendations to Member States.

The Protocol no. 29 on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States attached to the Treaties recognises the Member States' freedom to define, organise and finance public service broadcasting.

While the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive emphasises the importance of the independence of editorial decisions of audiovisual media services (including public service media), it does not regulate governance of public service media or require balanced reporting or representation.

The Commission is now working on a new legislative initiative - a ‘European Media Freedom Act’ - to complement the existing toolbox fostering media freedom and pluralism. This initiative aims at increasing transparency, independence and accountability around actions affecting the pluralism and freedom of media. Safeguards for the independent governance of and balanced reporting by public service media are among issues explored in this context, building on existing Council of Europe’s standards.

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1 COM (2021) 700 final.
4 https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805cb4b4