

Coalition for Media Freedom and Integrity

Declaration on Media and Democracy in Europe

We, the undersigned, a coalition of concerned professional media organisations and civil society groups, believe that in order to

- reinforce the values and practice of democracy in Europe,
- protect and enhance freedom of expression and the pluralism of opinions,
- counter a resurgence of intolerance and political extremism, and
- overcome a widespread crisis of confidence in national and European democratic institutions,

it is of critical importance to strengthen the liberty, quality, variety and integrity of mass media and journalism in Europe.

We call on lawmakers, public authorities, media owners, media professionals' organisations, civil society groups and all other interested parties to act urgently to achieve these goals. In particular, we seek the adoption of strategies and the implementation of actions which will:

1. **Promote media freedom and pluralism** by combating harmful media concentration and by supporting more and diverse media voices;
2. **Strengthen editorial independence** in the mass media by supporting the efforts of journalists and media professionals to work freely and to resist all forms of internal and external pressure that undermine the quality and ethical standing of media;
3. **Stimulate public engagement** with media and policymakers in order to develop a more balanced, accessible and democratic media system, including consultation of the public by regulators and public service media organisations (which may involve the creation of advisory structures reflecting the public's diverse nature).
4. **Strengthen public service values in the media** by adopting policies and actions that will reverse the reduction of public service content in European media and ensure the possibility of free access to public service content.
5. **Provide appropriate regulatory and economic frameworks for other media**, in particular non-commercial media, capable of contributing to pluralism and diversity and providing a space for dialogue. These media could take the form of associative, community, local, minority or social media.
6. **Adopt a comprehensive strategy for diversity** to help media meet the challenge of improving levels of diversity, both in content and within media institutions, and among broadcasters.
7. **Reinforce inter-cultural dialogue**, and challenge increasing cultural division, through new initiatives to raise awareness of minority concerns

- and cultural identity among media professionals, and to promote dialogue between media and representatives of different communities;
8. **Make equality between women and men a reality** in European media; and renew efforts to end all forms of discrimination;
 9. **Act to combat the digital divide** in European communities and to improve access to new information technologies for women and men of all ages and of any economic status across communities;
 10. **Recognise the need for media literacy** and develop programmes that will increase the understanding of people, as citizens and consumers, of how media content, and especially information, can shape and influence their lives.
 11. **Support scientific research on and monitoring of media issues**, such as media concentration and pluralism, and expand the public debate on these matters, including on the contribution of the media to the promotion of human rights, freedom, tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

We believe that states should ratify and implement without delay the UNESCO *Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions* adopted on 20 October 2005, which calls on them to adopt measures aimed both at enhancing gender and vulnerable groups' equality and at supporting diversity in the mass media, including through public service broadcasting.

We will expand our monitoring of media policy both at the national and the European levels, including closely observing and critically analysing the on-going efforts of the European Commission to define indicators for assessing media pluralism.

We will work towards these objectives with other civil society groups and media organisations, national parliaments and governments, as well as with intergovernmental organisations such as the European Union and the Council of Europe.

February 2007

This declaration was finalised in February 2007.

Since then the following organisations have signed up to it:

1. **European Federation of Journalists:** www.ifj-europe.org
2. **Open Society Institute – Network Media Program:** www.soros.org/initiatives/media
3. **Miramedia:** www.miramedia.nl
4. **Signis:** www.signis.org
5. **European Women's Lobby:** www.womenlobby.org
6. **Online / More Colour in the Media (OL/MCM):** www.olmcm.org
7. **Article 19: Global Campaign for free expression:** www.Article19.org

