

JOURNALISTS' MANIFESTO

PROMOTING A FREE AND PLURALISTIC MEDIA IN EUROPE

A free and pluralistic media is crucial for European democracy¹. But media freedom, pluralism and independent journalism in Europe are facing increasing threats from political influence, economic pressures and the changing media landscape.

Journalists have become the first casualty of these threats. In recent years, journalists are witnessing their labour rights diminished, working conditions deteriorated, quality in journalism dropped and the loss of public confidence in the media. Various forms of (self-) censorship as a result of political and economic pressures on journalists and media have also grown across Europe.

As the largest organisation of journalists in Europe, representing over 320.000 journalists in 39 countries, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), defends the professional rights of journalists and **promote journalism as a public good**.

We therefore call on all candidates MEPs to commit to the Journalists' Manifesto for the revival of a free and pluralistic media in Europe.

1. **Democracy needs independent journalism**
2. **Europe needs media pluralism**
3. **Rights to association and collective bargaining for all**
4. **Authors' rights - Fair contracts for all**
5. **Working conditions affect quality in journalism**
6. **Journalism as a public good**
7. **Investigative journalism needs free access to information**
8. **Investing in the future of journalism**
9. **Safety at work**
10. **Building trust and accountability through ethical journalism**

¹ Report of the High Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism

1. **DEMOCRACY NEEDS INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM.** The use of all European and national laws, particularly in the areas of privacy, security/anti-terrorism and data protection, should always take into account the EU Charter on (Art 11.) fundamental rights to freedom of expression and information including the protection of journalistic sources.

Recommended policy priorities:

- Maintain a **clear journalistic exemption for processing data** in EU Data Protection law (*Directive 95/46/EC*);
- Domestic law and practice in member states should provide for **explicit and clear protection of the right of journalists to protect confidential sources** (in accordance with Article 10 of the Convention);
- **Media freedom, pluralism and independent journalism** is a pre-condition for EU membership; and measures must be taken to **monitor violations** of EU laws regulating these issues;
- State officials shall not be protected against criticism and insult. Journalists should not be imprisoned, or media outlets closed, for critical reports on state officials.

2. **EUROPE NEEDS MEDIA PLURALISM.** Favourable environment and legislation should be created to allow independent media to flourish and the concentration of media ownership should be regulated.

Recommended policy priorities:

- **Media ownership** and economic influence over media must be made **transparent**. Legislation must be enforced **against media monopolies** and dominant market positions among the media;
- Media outlets should have **editorial independence** from media owners, for instance by agreeing with media owners on codes of conduct for editorial independence, to ensure that media owners do not interfere in daily editorial work or compromise **impartial journalism**;
- State officials should not be allowed to pursue professional media activities while in office;
- Support the [European Initiative for Media Pluralism](#)

3. **RIGHTS TO ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR ALL.** Rights of journalists, particularly freelancers, to join a union and be represented in collective bargaining and agreement, should be reinforced as guaranteed by the EU Charter (Art 12).

Recommended policy priorities:

- Establish/reinforce **social dialogue** in the media sector both at national and European levels; especially in the new Member States where social dialogue in the print and online sector rarely exists;
- **Equal rights and equal treatments** for all forms of employment including freelances;
- **Promote best practices** (such as the [EFJ Freelance Charter](#)) led by the unions negotiate on behalf of all workers irrespective of their employment status including freelances;
- **Ensure competition law do not undermine the right to collective bargaining**. Application of competition law should take into account of the imbalance of negotiating power facing the weaker party who are often individual freelances.

4. **FAIR CONTRACTS FOR ALL.** The authors' rights of journalists (including freelances and photojournalists) should be reinforced in EU authors' rights/copyright laws ensuring that their rights to fair remunerations are guaranteed and that fair contracts negotiated at an equal footing between journalists and employers are the standard practices in the industry.

Recommended policy priorities:

- Ensure full **recognition of journalists as authors** and **fair remuneration** for each use of their works;
- **Ban buy-out contracts** that contain unfair terms and conditions asking journalists to transfer all exclusive rights to employers;
- **Ban the use of abusive clauses** in employment/copyright contracts that demand journalists to sign away their rights for unlimited uses of their work at a lump-sum fee;
- Review employment/copyright contractual terms and conditions when the remuneration received by the author is unequitable.

5. **WORKING CONDITIONS AFFECT QUALITY IN JOURNALISM.** The EU should facilitate the creation of good working conditions for journalists through the strengthening of their social and labour rights in European laws. Precarious working conditions² of journalists have put quality in journalism at risk.

² Council of Europe Resolution 1920 (2013) on the state of media freedom in Europe.

Recommended policy priorities:

- Journalists should have adequate working contracts with **sufficient social protection**, so as not to compromise their impartiality and independence¹;
- Member States should ensure that journalists' working conditions comply with the provision of the **European Social Charter**¹;
- Advocate the use of **collective agreement as the best practice** to enforce social and labour rights of journalists;
- **Regulate the use of individual contracts** that undermines the social and labour rights of journalists;
- **Improve gender equality** in journalism particularly the **gender pay gap**.

6. **JOURNALISM AS A PUBLIC GOOD.** The public interest mission in journalism is best served by independent journalism. Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) should remain well-funded and independent from political influence. The preservation of a strong and independent PSB across member states is key to forming a pluralistic media landscape in Europe.

Recommended policy priorities:

- Support a **sustainable funding model** for an independent PSB that serves the public interest;
- Avoid closure, downsizing and restructuring measures that affect the quality of content and staffing in PSB;
- Public service broadcasters must be protected against **political interference** in their daily management and their editorial work. Senior management positions should be refused to people with clear party political affiliations;
- **Regulatory authorities** for the broadcasting media must function in an unbiased and effective manner, for instance when granting licences.

7. **INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM NEEDS FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION.** The EU should be fully open and transparent in its decision-making process by strengthening the rules on Access to Documents.

Recommended policy priorities:

- **Open access** to EU documents for citizens and journalists;
- Member States should facilitate journalists' access to public data;
- Make **EU Transparency Register** mandatory for all lobbying activities.

8. **INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF JOURNALISM.** Quality and diversity in journalism can only sustain with long-term, independent funding that investing in both content and training of journalists.

Recommended policy priorities:

- Support initiatives to explore **new ways of funding** the future of journalism;
- The EU and employers' organisations should **invest in skills and jobs. Journalists, including freelances**, should be entitled to training schemes;
- Promote **media literacy**, especially among the new generations, to sustain the future of journalism;
- Support lifelong learning of journalists (including freelances) throughout their careers.

9. **SAFETY AT WORK.** Journalists have the right to work freely without the fear of physical violence or imprisonment.

Recommended policy priorities:

- A **zero tolerance** policy should be adopted to penalise violations of journalists' rights to safety at work, in particular when working in dangerous zones;
- **Safety training** should be provided for journalists, including freelances, by employers' organisations;
- National laws that prevent journalists from covering demonstrations should be prohibited; and the safety of journalists who covers these events should be guaranteed.

10. **BUILDING TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH ETHICAL JOURNALISM.**

The public is best served by an accountable media that provide accurate and unbiased information to Europe's citizens.

Recommended policy priorities:

- **Promote self-regulatory measures** or bodies such as ethical codes and press councils to reinforce high standards in journalism; and decisions by such bodies should be implemented and enforced;
- Encourage **editors and management to enforce codes of ethics** and ensure quality and accountability in journalism;
- Support initiatives that enforce **diversity in media content** through inclusion of voices from all sections of the community.