

European Media Freedom Act – Position Paper

Boost media pluralism through a level playing field online

Media pluralism is one of the cornerstones of European democracy and as such must be safeguarded and promoted. The European Independent Media Publishers (EIMP) association welcomes the ambition of the proposed EMFA to protect media pluralism and independence by introducing a new set of rules, and calls on the co-legislators to **ensure the new Act truly boosts media pluralism by ensuring a level playing field between publishers, regardless of size, in the digital environment.**

Adequately define ‘media service provider’

It is of the utmost importance that the final text of the EMFA includes a clear and balanced definition of ‘media service provider’ (MSP), which ensures that **content produced by independent, digital publishers and distributed online receives the same treatment as content produced by incumbent, legacy media publishers active online.** The EMFA must not further the disparity between large, established, incumbent media, and new, independent, innovative media.

At the same time, the EMFA must guarantee that rules governing the provision of media services in a digital environment (Chapter III, Section 4) do not leave loopholes allowing for malign actors to disguise as media service providers and spread misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. Specifically on this point, we call on the co-legislators to carefully take into account the differences and nuances between Member States regarding what constitutes a media outlet or a journalist. The EMFA should set clear criteria to qualify as a MSP, guaranteeing a high standard of quality journalism, with the proposed ‘European Board for Media Services’ responsible for ensuring standards are met.

Ensure economic resources are allocated considering latest developments

On the allocation of economic resources, EIMP welcomes the initiative to update audience measurement systems and methodologies for allocating state advertising. We call on the co-legislators to **fully take into consideration the most recent developments in the news media landscape, understanding what the current (and future) models for producing, distributing, and consuming media are.** The EMFA must not regulate past models, but foster new and innovative ones.

Limit state interference

EIMP is aware of the very negative developments regarding state interference in certain Member States in recent years. Some of our members have been established as independent news outlets following state interference at large media outlets. We therefore strongly support the EMFA’s goal of protecting editorial freedom and limiting state interference (direct or indirect).

Concentrations in media markets must not harm media pluralism

Mergers in the media space must not lead to less media pluralism and reduce competitiveness in the media sector. EIMP is in favour of the initiative to ensure Member States take into account possible negative consequences on media pluralism and editorial independence when reviewing a concentration in the media market, and welcomes any measure that facilitates market entry for new and small players.

About EIMP

EIMP brings together national associations of media publishers and companies that are active in the sector of (news) media publishing in the European Union and Europe. EIMP represents innovative, independent, local and regional outlets that rely on online channels to grow and reach audiences. Our members have extensive experience operating in the media sector, in different member states, and face various obstacles in their day to day activities. The goal of EIMP is promoting media pluralism and an ecosystem that fosters growth for small, independent and innovative (digital-native) media publishers in Europe. Contact: secretariat@eimp.eu