

The Media Freedom Act and Public Service Media

A conference of the European Audiovisual Observatory

The paramount role of public service media in upholding the fundamental right to freedom of expression and information is widely recognised. The standard-setting work of the Council of Europe has been extensive in this field and paved the way for a variety of initiatives. More recently, the Commission's European Democracy Action Plan and the Action Plan for the Media, both adopted on 3 December 2020, and the public consultation for the adoption of a European Media Freedom Act (MFA) launched on 10 January 2022 are paving the way for different actions aiming to support the recovery and transformation of the media and audiovisual sector after the pandemic, protect and empower journalists across the European Union, and ensure media freedom and pluralism throughout the Union.

The MFA may take the Audiovisual Media Services Directive as a starting point and may seek to increase transparency, independence and accountability around actions affecting control and freedom of the press. In addition, it may strengthen the governance of public service media (PSM), including measures to prevent politisation and include measures relating to the funding of media to support pluralism and diversity. The European Audiovisual Observatory is preparing a publication on the topic.

This conference will discuss the present and future of PSM in the light of the future EMFA and will deal with the following questions: How to best ensure the editorial independence of PSM? How to achieve an adequate funding of PSM? What is the role of PSM in the online environment? What about its future?

Wednesday, 23 February 2022, 15.00 – 17.00 CET, online event

Opening	
15.00 – 15.05	Opening of the conference by Susanne Nikoltchev , Executive Director of the European Audiovisual Observatory
Introduction	
15.05 – 15.15	Keynote speech by Věra Jourová , European Commission Vice-President for Values and Transparency
Panel discussion	
Panelists	Patrick Penninckx , Head of Information society department, Council of Europe Karim Ibourki , Chair of ERGA and President of Belgian Regulator CSA Renate Schroeder , Director, European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) Richard Burnley , Director of Legal and Policy, European Broadcasting Union (EBU) Milen Mitev , Director General of the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) Olav A. Nyhus , Director Legal and Policy of the Norwegian public broadcaster (NRK)
Moderators	Gilles Fontaine , Head of the Department for Market Information, European Audiovisual Observatory Maja Cappello , Head of the Department for Legal Information, European Audiovisual Observatory
The market	
15.15 – 15.45	Public-service media in the European audiovisual landscape: <i>What is the weight of PSM in terms of audience, revenues, funding, original production?</i> Panel discussion moderated by Gilles Fontaine , EAO
The law	
15.45 – 15.50	The independence of public-service media in Europe: <i>How to best ensure the editorial independence of PSM?</i> Snapshot presentation by Francisco Cabrera , Senior Legal Analyst at the Department for Legal Information, EAO
15.50 – 16.10	Panel discussion moderated by Maja Cappello , EAO
The future	
16.10 – 16.15	The future of PSM in the online environment: <i>What is the impact of the online revolution on the role of PSMs in Europe?</i> Snapshot presentation by Sophie Valais , Senior Legal Analyst at the Department for Legal Information, EAO
16.15 – 16.35	Panel discussion moderated by Maja Cappello , EAO
Interaction with the audience	
16.35 – 16.50	Short Q & A session
Closing	
16.50 – 16.55	Main take-aways from the session by Giuseppe Abbamonte , Director of the Media and Data Directorate, European Commission
16.55 – 17.00	Closing remarks Susanne Nikoltchev , Executive Director of the European Audiovisual Observatory