

10 Action Points

For a free, independent and sustainable press sector in Europe

The newspaper and news media sector 2014-2019





Freedom of expression is at the heart of European democracy and at the core of the newspaper and news media sector. Publishers, editors and journalists defend this freedom in sometimes difficult and dangerous circumstances across Europe and around the world. Independent news reporting acts as a vital safeguard of democratic society, holding to account those in positions of power.

Professional information, analysis and opinion provided by newspapers and news media on a 24 hour basis encourages social inclusion and growing understanding between different cultures, communities and interest groups. Reading newspapers promotes the development of a literate and engaged citizenship, while at the same time stimulating open debate in society.

Every day, some 100 million national, regional and local newspapers are sold or distributed in Europe. European publishing houses include some global success stories and many thousands of small and medium-sized enterprises. It is a sector characterised by a high level of expertise and innovation, which provides employment at local level.

The newspaper sector today is a key digital actor. Newspaper websites are among the most visited and influential portals in many countries. Publishers provide professional news content via interactive websites allowing for greater reader engagement, dedicated apps for tablets, special services for smart phones and social media platforms.

The active presence of newspapers on digital platforms has helped to drive the development of the digital content market in Europe and contributed greatly to the level of public discourse on the Internet. Today, the combination of print and digital readership means that professional news content is reaching and enriching the lives of more citizens than ever in its history.

100 million
newspapers per day
distributed in Europe



European Union 2014 - 2019

In the course of the next five years, European legislators will have the opportunity to take many decisions which could help to ensure a vibrant and sustainable newspaper and news media sector to the benefit of Europe's citizens.

Policy issues on the agenda during this mandate will have a profound effect on the freedom of the press to publish, as well as the ability of publishing houses to operate in Europe without any restrictive conditions.

Below, ENPA outlines some of the priority issues affecting the newspaper and news media sector.





Upholding Freedom of the Press

Freedom of the press is the essential pillar for the newspaper and news media business. However, on-going challenges to press freedom in some parts of Europe have provoked calls for EU legislation to govern press freedom and media pluralism.

In this context, it is necessary for publishers to underline that an independent press sector whose task is to hold powers to account, should never be subject to national governmental or European control, or surveillance. Publishing houses should be free to decide voluntarily about their future activities and business structures and be limited solely by national legal frameworks.

1

Member States have sole competence for preserving media pluralism. **The European institutions should support voluntary industry self-regulation systems at national level, including press councils, best practice and codes of conduct which are aimed at preserving media freedom and pluralism and at the same time promoting the truthfulness of information.**

2

Several issues going through the decision-making process at European level will have an enormous impact on the press sector: **in the new EU Regulation on Data Protection, it is of fundamental importance that the press has a directly applicable and legally binding exemption for journalistic data processing and that sources are protected;** and consultations are underway regarding the EU Directive on Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS), which explicitly excludes electronic versions of newspapers and magazines from its scope. **In any review of the AVMS Directive, it is essential that the exception for the press is maintained.**



Promoting Value of Content

Newspapers were one of the first creative sectors to offer its content in digital formats and the business has rapidly transformed to become a leading digital content player.

Publishers of newspapers and news media have made substantial investments to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by new technology to serve their readers with professional content in both print and digital formats. In this context, effective copyright protection and enforcement are more important than ever.

3

The current EU legislative framework provides an appropriate balance between rights holders and users in terms of rights and exceptions to copyright. **Introducing new exceptions, such as for text and data mining, would seriously jeopardise the primary market for professional press content and undermine the investment of publishers in a wide range of editorial content.** Licensing provides more efficient and business-friendly solutions to tackling any obstacles in the market.

4

In the digital environment, respect for copyright by all market players, including search engines and news aggregators, is a necessary precondition to ensure a sustainable press sector in Europe. Effective IPR enforcement mechanisms and procedures are essential to combat both piracy and parasitism, as well as to ensure that society at large can fully enjoy the benefits of the IP system.



Operating Conditions

Policy and competition issues currently under debate in Brussels and Strasbourg will help to define the operating conditions for publishing houses all across Europe.

Decisions taken during the next five years will shape the working environment for the independent press sector for decades to come.

5

Advertising is an essential source of revenue for news media, making a vital contribution to the independence and pluralism of the press sector. **EU institutions should avoid the introduction of any bans, restrictions or mandatory information requirements on the advertising of legally available products, which would make advertising in newspapers less attractive, resulting in a real threat to the financing of quality press content.**

6

Newspapers and public service broadcasters (PSBs) can both thrive and contribute to promoting democracy and media diversity, but only if there is effective enforcement of the state aid and competition rules. In recent years, PSBs have greatly expanded their online activities, resulting in serious distortions of the digital market. **The public service remit of PSBs must be clearly defined and their online activities should be subject to a public value test and a sectoral impact assessment through independent bodies.**

7

A majority of Member States apply reduced rates to printed press and this makes a sustainable contribution to an independent press sector and wider public policy objectives. However, the current VAT regime penalises digital press and constitutes a serious barrier to the creation of jobs and growth for the future. **The EU should come forward urgently with a proposal to provide Member States with the possibility of applying zero, super-reduced and reduced VAT rates for digital press, while maintaining the existing rates for printed press.**

8

Technology platforms and search engines have an enormous impact on which press content is visible and accessible to citizens on the Internet. **Fair competition and equal search are indispensable conditions for the proper functioning of the digital ecosystem, to the benefit of all users and consumers.** Furthermore, the news media sector strongly advocates net neutrality. Net neutrality guarantees the same quality of service and the same possibility to reach digital users for all content, applications and service providers, regardless of a company's financial capacity.



Role in Society

Newspapers and news media are the ultimate sources for media literate citizens. Reading news media opens a window on to other worlds and other viewpoints, also confronting us with our own pre-conceived ideas and challenging our views.

Publishers greatly value the wider role that they play in society. In the field of environmental policy, the publishing sector is focused on maximising paper recycling and resource efficiency, as well as effective use of energy and raw materials to help fight against climate change.

9

Newspapers and news media have a fundamental role to play in promoting the development of media literate and socially engaged citizens who have an understanding of local, national and global events. **Newspaper content, both in print and digital formats, should be included in media education programmes managed by the European Union.** “Digital literacy” initiatives should be linked to the promotion of “media literacy” so that citizens can better assess critically the content they access online.

10

The print media value chain is an essential contributor to a knowledge-based society and the cultural economy. Moreover, paper is sustainable; it is based on wood, a natural and renewable resource. **Industry self-regulation is an effective, flexible and cost-efficient means of achieving overall sustainability objectives and targets by all stakeholders in the print value chain.**



ENPA - European Newspaper Publishers' Association

ENPA is an international non-profit association, advocating the interests of publishers of newspapers and news media in Europe. ENPA has 30 member associations from the EU Member States, as well as Norway, Switzerland and Serbia. Together its membership represents some 5,200 national, regional and local newspaper titles throughout Europe, published in both print and digital platforms.



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