

Media & Press Audiovisual - Film, TV & Radio News

Audiovisual organizations raise concerns over the European Media Freedom Act

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While cultural groups generally support the goals of the European Media Freedom Act, many want to see improvements and stronger provisions to protect media freedom, editorial independence, and pluralism across the EU.

An initiative of 65 cultural and Media organizations raise concerns about the proposed Media Freedom Act, in a letter they published a few days ago. The key issues that organizations highlight include transparency of media ownership and measures on media market regulation.

"Article 20 in the EMFA proposal states that Member States may not take measures that affect the “internal market for media services” unless they are proportionate and justified. It adds that such measures should be “reasoned, adequate, transparent, and objective and non-discriminatory”. If adopted, the broad wording of the Article 20 provision would create significant legal uncertainty at the national level: the implementation of a number of cultural policies stemming from national legislations adopted in procedural fairness and fully consistent with Article 167 TFEU could potentially be disputed by media service providers’ unilateral interpretation of their disproportionality or unjustifiability" stresses the letter. “The press has always operated based on the principle of freedom of a publisher to set up their business and work jointly with their journalists to deliver news and information to citizens in Europe and across the world," said Ilias Konteas, executive director of the European Magazine Media Association and the European Newspaper Publishers Association.

Journalists stand by the Commission

EU officials argue that regulation is the key to Media freedom: “For some who say the EU should not regulate their media landscape in Europe, we have a message; we believe the

opposite: We need to have good rules," Vera Jourová said in a statement.

While publishers oppose the new directive, 19 Journalist organizations have issued a statement that back the EU's initiative. The International Press Institute says the Act "breaks significant new ground" but could be strengthened. The European Broadcasting Union calls for stronger safeguards to protect editorial independence.

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