

# How the European Media Freedom Act will protect media? Does it complement the DSA?

**In collaboration with EuropeanNewsRoom - Brussels**

Tuesday 26 September 2023 - 10:15-11:15

Belga Agency - Brussels 1000 - Quai aux Pierres de Taille 29

## **10:15 Press briefing**

- Sabine VERHEYEN (EPP, DE), Chair of Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) and Rapporteur of the European Media Freedom Act
- Christel SCHALDEMOSE (S&D, DK), Member of Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) and Rapporteur on Digital Services Act

Q&A Session

## **11:15 End**

Registration for online participation from Hungary:

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## Background

The Commission presented the proposal for a regulation, the European Media Freedom Act, on 16 September 2022. Taking the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS) as a starting point, the proposed European Media Freedom Act seeks to set rules to protect media pluralism and independence in the EU, including safeguards against political interference in editorial decisions, in the context of the [European Democracy Action Plan](#). Its purpose is to control the attempts to undermine media freedom and public democratic participation, including the freedoms of expression and information, of assembly and of association, which threaten [the European Union's values](#).

### [What was in the Commission proposal?](#)

The regulation would require Member States to respect the effective editorial freedom of media service providers and improve the protection of journalistic sources. Media service providers would have to ensure the transparency of their ownership by publicly disclosing such information. Public authorities would have to publish information on their advertising expenditure on media, to ensure that the allocation of state advertising is transparent and non-discriminatory.

According to the proposal, the funding for public service media should be adequate and stable, preferably decided on a multi-year basis, in order to ensure editorial independence. The Act would also enhance the transparency and objectivity of audience measurement systems, which have an impact on media advertising revenues in particular online.

Building on the Digital Services Act, the EMFA would protect media content online, enlarging some of the duties of the Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs). Just one month after the limit date for VLOPs and VLOSEs (Very Large Online Search Engines) to compliance with the DSA, the briefing will give us the opportunity to evaluate what has been done and see how this can be improved to protect media.

Member States would be required to assess the impact of media market concentrations on media pluralism. EMFA also includes safeguards against the use of spyware against media and journalists. The Act would create a new European Board for Media Services, comprised of national media authorities and tasked with ensuring consistent application of EU media law framework by assisting the Commission in preparing guidelines on media regulation.

### [The EMFA in the Parliament](#)

In the European Parliament, the draft legislative report was presented in **the Culture and Education (CULT)** committee meeting on 26 April. Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) was designated as the associated committee with exclusive competence over articles that tackle protection of journalists against surveillance and other forms of pressure.

On 7 September, the CULT Committee voted and amended the draft bill to make sure it applies to all media content and strengthens transparency and independence of EU media. In their draft position on the [European Media Freedom Act](#), adopted by 24 votes in favour, 3 against and 4 abstentions, **MEPs want to ensure that the new rules oblige**

**member states to ensure plurality and protect media independence from governmental, political, economic or private interests.** They amended the draft law so that **transparency requirements apply to all media content**, not just to news and current affairs as proposed by the Commission.

The adopted text needs to be confirmed by the full Parliament, with a vote scheduled during the 2-5 October plenary, before MEPs can begin discussions with the Council on the final shape of the law.

The joint aim of the Commission, Council and Parliament is to conclude the negotiations on the EMFA regulation before the upcoming European Parliament elections.

## Links

- [CULT Committee Vote - Press release 7 Sept](#)
- [EPRS Briefing on EMFA](#)
- [EPRS Legislative Train on EMFA](#)
- [Legislative Observatory on EMFA](#)
- [Report on DSA](#)
- [Report on the implementation of the AVMS Directive](#)