

The 'News Initiative'

A free, viable and pluralistic media environment is key to keeping citizens informed, holding power to account, and strengthening open, democratic societies.



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In its Media and Audiovisual Plan, the Commission decided to launch a 'news initiative', bundling existing and new actions and support to the news media sector. This initiative looks holistically at the challenges facing the news media industry and provides a coherent response, bringing together different policy and funding instruments under a common banner.

Media and professionals interested in funding opportunities can find open calls in our dedicated page to calls for the news media sector. Where relevant, the Commission includes an independence clause in the contracts signed under this initiative so that beneficiaries operate with full editorial independence

The Commission plans to support news media through:

- a structured dialogue
- enhancing competitiveness
- unleashing innovation
- nurturing democracy

A structured dialogue

The Commission engages in regular exchanges with the industry to work towards a news media innovation agenda that can help the sector thrive in the digital economy and society. To this end, the Commission set up the **European News Media Forum** (ENMF) to maintain a regular dialogue with news media organisations, professionals, representatives of the civil society and international organisations.

The first edition took place on 23-25 March 2021 and explored the safety of journalists. The sessions aimed at gathering input from the industry for the preparation of the Commission Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists adopted in September 2021. The recorded dialogues are available in the event report.

The second edition took place on 29 November 2021. Top European and global representatives from press, TV, radio, online media and magazine media exchanged views on the ongoing industrial transformation of the sector – from business models to content and formats.

Enhancing competitiveness

The Commission aims to facilitate **better access to finance** to support the transformation and competitiveness of the sector. It will do so by facilitating access to debt (with the backing of InvestEU guarantees, building on the success of the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCSGF) which makes an access to finance easier for news media), and by enhancing investment through equity instruments. The Commission explores ways to establish an equity-based pilot through InvestEU, which will co-invest into funds together with philanthropists, foundations and other private partners to support the news media sector. These actions will be complemented by capacity-building services, such as trainings to increase the knowledge of the media sector among investors and to support investment readiness among media outlets.

The Commission provides support to foster collaboration across news media through **'Journalism partnerships' grants**, under Creative Europe programme. These grants aim at stimulating the testing of viable business models, developing business and editorial standards, promoting collaborative and cross-border journalism, training and mobility of professionals, and sharing of best practices.

These support measures complement other legal initiatives that could strengthen the sector's competitiveness and financial footing, such as the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market, the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Furthermore, the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility offers an opportunity to Member States to invest in the twin digital and green transitions of the industry and to strengthen the resilience of the industry. Each national Recovery and Resilience Plan earmarks a minimum level of 20% of expenditure for digital, including measures to boost the production and distribution of digital content, which may include digital media.

Unleashing innovation

In order to become more innovative and competitive, European news media companies will need to find new ways to increase revenues and build attractive business models. This will require advanced data strategies, new tools and knowledge sharing.

The Commission proposes to address this by fostering a **European ‘media data space’ initiative**. This can include data applications, data infrastructures, data interoperability strategies and state-of-the-art tools for the management and processing of the data. The initiative builds on the European Data Strategy and will be financed through Digital Europe Programme.

In addition, the Horizon Europe programme will support **innovative applications and technologies** in the media domain. Investments in modular and open-source infrastructure media components could facilitate the emergence of new business models and their uptake by traditional and new media, thereby improving citizens’ access to widely sourced information.

In order to explore and anticipate media trends, the European Commission will also procure a report, the **‘Media Industry Outlook’**, every two years.

Nurturing democracy

Media freedom and pluralism are two principles enshrined by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights without which media cannot operate properly

The Commission has a role in ensuring that these principles are upheld. It is providing support to actions such as monitoring media pluralism and ownership, providing legal advice to journalists, and stimulating media quality standards and self-regulation. Under the European Democracy Action Plan, the Commission published a Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media workers.

To complement these actions and the current media rules, the Commission is working on a new European Media Freedom Act, which will increase transparency, independence and accountability of actions affecting control and freedom of the press and help strengthen the governance of public media.

The Commission wants to stimulate a lively and diverse public sphere, in which citizens have access to reliable information about the EU. Support for independent production and dissemination of news content on EU affairs is available through the Multimedia Actions. In addition, the Commission supports the development of innovative and attractive news projects for young Europeans.

Finally, a healthy democracy needs strong media literacy. The Commission will support the development of a toolbox in cooperation with the European Group of Audiovisual Regulators (ERGA), continue the European Media Literacy week and increase funding to media literacy, to help citizens of all ages navigate the modern news environment, take informed decisions and be better equipped to face the threats of disinformation.

Find EU open calls for proposals on the news media sector [here](#). More information on the logic of EU programmes and funding opportunities can be found in this [interactive tool](#).

Media and Audiovisual Action Plan

European Democracy Action Plan

Follow the latest progress and learn more about getting involved.

Follow the Commission's work on media @MediaEU

Related Content

Big Picture

Media sector calls — EU support to the news media sector

The Commission aims to support projects that address structural challenges of media sectors and/or that promote a free, diverse and pluralistic environment.

See Also

Media sector calls - Citizen engagement and public sphere

The Commission wants to stimulate a lively and diverse public sphere, in which citizens have access to reliable information about the EU.

Media sector calls - Collaboration and innovation

The Commission aims to support the transformation and competitiveness of the news media sector.

Media sector calls — EU support to Media Freedom and Pluralism

The Commission has been providing support to the principles of media freedom and media pluralism through a wide range of pilots and preparatory actions.

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