

World Press Freedom Day: Commission stands for free and independent media

On World Press Freedom Day the Commission reaffirmed its commitment to defend media freedom and pluralism in the EU and beyond. Media should be able to work freely and independently. This lies at heart of EU values and democracies.



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Vice-President for Values and Transparency, Vera **Jourova**, said:

"More than ever the pandemic has showed the key role of journalists to inform us, but also the need to protect them. I am concerned about increasing threats and attacks against journalists, targeting in particular women. We will present recommendations to Member States on the safety of journalists by the end of the year, as part of our overall approach to support media and democracy" (full video message).

Vice-President **Jourova** will also contribute to the "Women Breaking the News" event.

Commissioner for Internal Market, Thierry **Breton**, added:

"Today, we are once again reminded of the many challenges faced by the media, accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis. We are determined to strengthen and protect a resilient, free and independent media sector. It is my priority to ensure that journalists benefit from the highest level of protection when they carry out their indispensable work, whether online or offline".

Yesterday, High Representative/Vice-President Josep **Borrell** issued a declaration on behalf of the EU.

Last December the Commission presented for the first time a comprehensive European approach for the media building on the European Democracy Action Plan and the Media and Audiovisual Action Plan. As announced, the Commission will put forward a recommendation on safety of journalists later this year, feedback is still open here.

Additionally, the Commission is also working on an initiative to fight abusive litigation against journalists and rights defenders. The Media and Audiovisual Action Plan serves as a roadmap to support the recovery and transformation of the media and audiovisual sector throughout the current crisis and beyond. Media pluralism is one of the key elements of the annual Rule of Law Report and, in this context, the Commission continues to monitoring the situation in all EU Member States. For the first time, the Commission will have a dedicated funding of at least €75 million to support media pluralism, journalism and media literacy under the Creative Europe programme. Currently, the Commission is funding eighteen projects related to media freedom and pluralism, including safety of journalists and threats to media freedom, with close to €20 million.

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