EBU
OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

EU POLICIES FOR MEDIA & DEMOCRACY
PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA PRIORITIES

This document provides an overview of key policies affecting media across Europe and where the EBU is committed to playing a key role in discussions at EU level. We invite EU policy makers to support policies which promote democratic values and contribute to a thriving European media landscape.

DEFENDING MEDIA FREEDOM AND PLURALISM

Media freedom and pluralism are declining dramatically in parts of the EU. Journalists are increasingly exposed to serious threats and intimidation, which act as a deterrent to investigative reporting. Ensuring that citizens have access to well-researched and trustworthy journalism is central to the functioning of democratic societies. Professional media can only live up to this expectation if their editorial independence is respected and if journalists can keep their sources of information confidential. Any new EU legislation must be consistent with the principles of media freedom and pluralism.

SECURING A FAIR ONLINE PLATFORM ENVIRONMENT

Citizens increasingly access content online via global platforms such as social media, video sharing sites, search engines and voice assistants. These platforms have evolved into gatekeepers between content providers (including PSM) and their audiences, often exercising powerful bargaining power to take unilateral decisions on the organization, display and removal of third party content, sometimes to favour their own. Building on regulatory initiatives taken during the 2014-2019 EU mandate, more work is needed to ensure a fair and transparent online platform environment.

DELIVERING THE INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY OF ONLINE PLATFORMS

Media have editorial responsibility and liability for the content they publish. By contrast, platform operators only have a very limited responsibility for the content which they distribute or make available - despite the impact they can have on opinion forming. Platform providers' responsibilities should be in line with their ability to influence public opinion and their potential to harm citizens. The behaviour of these companies should be more transparent. They should be held accountable, with effective rules to protect public interest, including free expression and quality content. Platforms should not exercise additional control over content from media service providers which is already subject to regulation.

ENSURING ACCESS TO USER DATA TO SUPPORT INNOVATION

EBU members need access to the data that gatekeeper platforms generate from the use of PSM content and services, in line with data protection and privacy rules. Without such access, PSM are restricted in their ability to innovate further and enhance what they can offer to their audiences. Meanwhile, online platforms are not prevented from using others' data to develop new services and products to their competitive advantage.

MAKING COMPETITION POLICY FIT FOR PURPOSE IN THE GLOBAL DIGITAL MARKETPLACE

Global digital players benefit from economies of scope and scale which give them a strong competitive advantage. With their multi-layered and cross-sector service offering they wield considerable economic power, can control the gateways to digital services and are not subject to specific regulation. They are able to grant preferential treatment to their own content and services, force users to use their services as a bundle and are often unwilling to share data. At the same time, innovative partnerships between European content providers have been blocked, whilst global players have been allowed to consolidate under the EU merger rules. As a result, citizens' choice in European content services is limited. Competition law needs to be applied in a way that allows innovation, plurality and choice for European citizens.

SUPPORTING EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE DISTRIBUTION OF PSM CONTENT

Universal access to PSM content requires a mix of distribution channels. When many people watch on television or listen to the same radio programme at the same time, broadcast distribution (terrestrial, satellite, cable) remains a very efficient medium. UHF radio spectrum is necessary for digital terrestrial broadcasting. In the future, it will also be key to facilitate innovative solutions combining broadcast and broadband which integrate 5G solutions for broadcasters. At the same time, the roll-out of superfast and reliable broadband networks across Europe is essential to ensure access to broadcasters' online and interactive on-demand offerings, which help drive consumer demand and demonstrate the business case for infrastructure investment.

ENSURING PUBLIC VALUE CONTENT IS EASY TO ACCESS AND FIND

To be universally available, PSM provide not only conventional linear radio and TV broadcasting, but also a wide range of their own online services. They also offer their programmes via telecom services, radio and TV distributors and online video platforms. Easy access to and prominent display of public value content must be guaranteed on all relevant platforms.

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH CLEAR BRAND VISIBILITY

Digital intermediaries, online platforms and radio and TV distributors do not always attribute the source of the information and the programmes they offer. When, for example, a voice assistant answers a question, users often do not know where the information originates from. Citizens must be able to identify the source of the content. Clear brand attribution helps create trust in news content and programmes.

PRESERVING THE OPEN INTERNET

For many citizens the internet is now the principal means of accessing content, and PSM online and on-demand services are valued by citizens, especially young audiences. To ensure that content of public value is equally accessible by all citizens an open internet (net neutrality) is essential. This is a key driver of democracy and freedom of speech as well as innovation. Effective enforcement of existing EU rules which prevent online traffic from being unduly blocked, slowed down, altered, degraded or discriminated against remain key. These principles are not an obstacle to introducing innovative 5G solutions.

ENCOURAGING EFFICIENT RIGHTS CLEARANCE FOR MULTI-PLATFORM OFFERS

Modern and efficient copyright clearance licensing mechanisms are crucial to enable audiences to benefit from PSM's multi-platform and multi-device offer while ensuring fair remuneration for rightsholders. Since broadcasters deal with a huge number and diverse categories of rightsholders, transparent collective licensing solutions and other efficient rights clearance systems should be encouraged and facilitated, along with effective enforcement solutions. In addition, the principles of territoriality and contractual freedom are vital to European production.

ACCELERATING EUROPEAN MEDIA INNOVATION

Innovation is central to ensuring the sustainability and development of Europe's media and creative industries in an increasingly global and competitive marketplace. The Horizon Europe and Digital Europe programmes should give more prominence to media innovation and research, fostering partnerships between technology experts, creators, media organizations and start-ups.