European Commission: Towards a European Media Freedom Act

IRIS 2021-6:1/15

Francisco Javier Cabrera Blázquez
European Audiovisual Observatory

On a speech delivered to the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education on 19 April 2021, Commissioner Thierry Breton expressed his belief that the EU should “prepare a European Media Freedom Act to complement our legislative arsenal in order to ensure that media freedom and pluralism are the pillars of our democracies.”

While the pandemic has accentuated the vulnerabilities and structural challenges of this sector which is facing increased competition with large platforms in a fragmented market, Mr Breton also sees a multitude of opportunities, particularly with digital transformation. After describing EU support measures for the sector and the state of the art with regard to the adoption process of the Digital Services Act package, he addressed “the central issue” of media freedom and pluralism in Europe and the Commission’s "Democracy" and "Media" action plans adopted last December. He declared himself “very vigilant” about respecting EU rules on the independence of media regulators, and expressed the need for a complementary tool to intervene in the area of media freedom, as the Commission’s current toolbox is limited.

Mr Breton’s proposal for a European Media Freedom Act aims at complementing the EU’s legislative arsenal “in order to ensure that media freedom and pluralism are the pillars of our democracies”. In his view, the EU would need a mechanism to increase transparency, independence and accountability around actions affecting control and freedom of the press. This would also be an opportunity to look at the resilience of small actors, and their innovative funding models. Furthermore, he proposed to reflect on how best to strengthen the governance of public media, around a common framework to better prevent the risks of politicisation and to better ensure diversity and pluralism. And finally, he suggested reflecting on the funding supporting pluralism and media freedom, and on the structures that carry this funding.

"For a « European Media Freedom Act »", speech delivered to the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education on 19 April 2021 by Commissioner Thierry Breton

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024/breton/announcements/european-media-freedom-act_en

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026