

PRESS RELEASE

Press freedom and media pluralism under threat in European Parliament vote on the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive

Last compromises undermine the stated objective of the Directive to uphold media freedom and pluralism in Europe

Brussels, 20 April 2017 – Publishers of newspapers and magazines in Europe today sounded the alarm ahead of a vote in the European Parliament on the proposal for an updated AVMS Directive that could seriously undermine media pluralism and press freedom in Europe.

The European Parliament has finalized a package of compromise amendments on the AVMS proposal which will be voted in the Culture committee on 25 April. Despite repeated calls from press publishers to avoid an unprecedented deregulation of the audiovisual advertising market in Europe, the proposed compromise texts would have significant impacts on the press sector.

Amongst other things, the Culture Committee compromises include a suggestion to make isolated ad spots as admissible as any other advertisements, including during TV prime time where these spots can be very expensive. Such a proposal – yet absent from the European Commission's initial text - would create a strong incentive for advertisers to shift lots of their investments from the press to TV market, therefore making the financing of press editorial content more difficult. In the interest of preserving healthy economic conditions supporting a viable and pluralistic media landscape, EMMA and ENPA therefore call on MEPs in the Culture committee to reject the proposal on Article 19(2).

The Culture Committee compromises also surprisingly ignore the many amendments which support an hourly-based quantitative limitation of TV advertising (Article 23). This is not consistent with past positions of the European Parliament that had recognized the importance of such a rule in order to ensure that advertising revenue is distributed fairly across mass media. Finally, EMMA and ENPA regret that the concerns expressed in relation to quotas and the possibly broader inclusion of press websites under the scope of the Directive were not sufficiently taken into account.

ENPA is an international non-profit organisation representing publishers of newspaper and news media on all platforms. ENPA is working on a number of areas of European policy and legislation which are essential for the effective day-to-day running of operations of local, regional and national newspapers. In a rapidly changing media environment, ENPA supports publishers with the aim of achieving a successful and sustainable future for independent news media in Europe. For more information: www.enpa.eu

EMMA, the European Magazine Media Association, is the unique and complete representation of Europe's magazine media, which is today enjoyed by millions of consumers on various platforms, encompassing both paper and digital formats. EMMA represents 15.000 publishing houses, publishing 50.000 magazine titles across Europe in print and digital. For more information, visit www.magazinemedi.eu

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