Coalition calls for effective implementation as the Parliament adopts the European Media Freedom Act

The European Parliament today adopted with an overwhelming majority (464 in favour, 92 against, 65 abstentions) the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA).

Media freedom and pluralism along with the rule of law have been in decline in the EU (and beyond) for many years. Where the rule of law is undermined, independent journalism is often the first to suffer. Against this background, our coalition of organisations[1] representing journalists, media freedom and civil society groups, and public service media, congratulate the EU institutions and welcome the EMFA as an important step towards protecting and promoting media freedom and pluralism in the EU.

The EMFA establishes common principles for all Member States so that they can effectively address the threats to a free, independent and vibrant journalism in Europe including, among others, media capture, intrusive surveillance, political interference, declining media pluralism and the unchecked power of social media platforms.

However, we also take this opportunity to remind media stakeholders and public authorities that in certain areas, the EMFA only lays down the very minimum of standards. Member States can, and should, go much further in establishing stronger safeguards to protect media freedom and pluralism and journalists' rights, in particular from the use of intrusive surveillance and spyware.

We now call on the European Commission, national governments, and independent regulatory authorities to work closely with media stakeholders for the EMFA's full and effective implementation to help strengthen media freedom and pluralism across the European Union.

To aid this process, some of the undersigned organisations will be preparing, where necessary, assessments and recommendations to help Member States, media and civil society stakeholders with this crucial task.

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[1]As part of the EU Media Advocacy Working Group, the EMFA Advocacy Group is an informal coalition of organisations that support media development, digital rights, media freedom, and wider democracy support communities conducting advocacy work within the European Union on media-related issues. Depending on their background, organisations may have different priorities and diverging views on certain issues. The coalition started convening in May 2022, targeting the proposed European Media Freedom Act and advocating for a strong regulation to strengthen media freedom and sustainable public interest journalism in the European Union. For more information or to join the group please contact advocacy@gfmd.info

Signed:

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Civil Liberties Union for Europe (Liberties)
International Press Institute (IPI)
Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)
Media Diversity Institute (MDI)
European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)
Association of European Journalists (AEJ Belgium)
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)
Free Press Unlimited (FPU)
European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
Society of Journalists, Warsaw
OBC Transeuropa (OBCT)
Public Media Alliance (PMA)
Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)
Independent Journalism Center, Moldova
Institute for Regional Media and Information (IRMI, Ukraine)
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Eurocadres
Transparency International EU (TI EU)
Committee to Protect Journalists
European Broadcasting Union (EBU)