

# IT BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE.

Protect public service media,
protect independent journalism.

## A MANIFESTO FOR EUROPE'S PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

We, the signatories, stand together to declare that independent, viable, and innovative public service media (PSM) are an indispensable cornerstone of democratic society. PSM are crucial spaces where journalism matters, especially in times of crisis.

In a media landscape fractured by polarisation and political interference, and weakened by BigTech's commercial exploitation of our data, the right of citizens to access trustworthy information is under systemic threat. When the public sphere is reduced to algorithmic echo chambers, democracy suffers. Journalism must be safeguarded not as a mere market commodity, but as an essential public good.

We need to preserve a space where journalism can reach citizens, including those who may not actively seek out independent and quality news sources themselves. In this sense, defending public service media also means defending journalists' and journalism's ability to reach the public.

The actual decisions by many governments to cut public media's funding are an attack on its independence and on citizens' right to know.

**We therefore call upon European governments, parliaments and media authorities to urgently commit to the following core pillars that empower PSM to ensure a free, pluralistic, and shared European public space:**

## 01 Institutional & Editorial Independence

**Shielding from Political Capture:** We demand strict, legally enforceable barriers that isolate PSM from state and partisan interference. Political actors must have no power over editorial decisions, governance structures, or the appointment of executive leadership.

**Compliance with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA):** European institutions must use all available tools to enforce compliance mechanism rules against any Member State attempting to dismantle or weaponise PSM into a government mouthpiece.

## 02 Guaranteed Financial Viability

**Sustainable, Non-Partisan Funding:** PSM cannot remain independent if its budget is used as a tool for leverage, political blackmail or targeted cuts. We call for stable, multi-year, and inflation-indexed funding frameworks protected from fluctuating legislative majorities in line with Article 5 of the EMFA.

**Equitable Resourcing for the Digital Age:** Funding must be structurally sufficient to allow PSM to transition seamlessly into modern, digital spaces capable of competing with global Big Tech platforms.

## 03 Cultivating a "Common Reality" and Shared Public Space

**An Infrastructure for Trustworthy Information:** Democracy relies on a foundation of verified facts. Public service media must be a primary trusted space where citizens across diverse backgrounds can gather to discuss facts rather than disinformation and falsehoods. PSM today are crucial to bridge the divides of national and digital filter bubbles by offering fact-based news, investigations, talk shows and new formats on all communication channels that allow dialogue, tolerance and communication based on strong ethical and editorial principles.

**Unity in Diversity:** PSM shall project a pluralistic society, reflecting a wide tapestry of cultural, regional, and marginalised voices to build social cohesion throughout EU Member States and beyond.

**Open and Inclusive Ecosystems:** Independent PSM must be given fair prominence, universal access, and equitable funding support across the digital ecosystem to ensure high-quality reporting remains accessible to all.

**Empowering the Next Generation:** A robust public media ecosystem must serve as an educational pillar, fostering media literacy and critical thinking for citizens while preserving Europe's rich cultural heritage.

**Without independent information, citizens cannot make informed choices. Without a shared foundation of facts, the European community will suffer.** Without investment in national production, staff and freelancers, we risk losing our creative culture and jobs in this vital sector, to the benefit of a few large digital platforms.

We call to action all defenders of democracy to protect public service media and ensure the full implementation of the European Media Freedom Act, which was adopted by all 27 Member States two years ago.