



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND
TECHNOLOGY

Media Policy

Audiovisual and Media Services Policy

Brussels,
CNECT.I.1/

Mr Hubert Smeets
Mr Ingo Petz
Email: smeets@platformraam.nl;
ip@dekoder.org

Dear Messrs Smeets and Petz,

Many thanks for your email of 27 May 2025 to Executive Vice-President Virkkunen with an appeal to strengthen support to independent journalists in Eastern Europe.

It is indeed an issue of pressing importance and resonates with the European Union's commitment to media freedom and pluralism. We acknowledge the significant challenges faced by independent media and journalists operating under difficult circumstances, many of them in exile. These individuals and organisations are vital champions of democracy and freedom, providing unbiased information that strengthens the democratic fabric not only in their countries but across the continent.

The European Commission supports several initiatives that bolster media freedom and security for media in exile. This includes the Media Hub EAST, which actively supports the survival and operation of independent Russian and Belarusian media and journalists exiled in the EU. With an allocation of over EUR 2.2 million in grants, this initiative includes psychological support and investment in technological solutions, strengthening cooperation between local hubs mainly in Czechia, Germany, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Additionally, the Svoboda satellite package is another strategic initiative. The European Commission has supported this project with a EUR 2.6 million grant. It broadcasts 12 independent television channels in Russian, targeting Russian citizens and Russophones worldwide, and thereby expanding the sphere of reliable media.

Finally, through its Foreign Policy Instrument, the European Commission supports several initiatives worldwide. This includes the “Safety Net” (EUR 5.5 million) which was set up recently to sustain critical independent reporting outside Europe in the short term, in response also to the struggles of Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty (RFE/RL).

In the EU, grants for the European news media sector cover three main categories of projects: “media freedom and pluralism”, “collaboration and innovation”, and “citizen engagement and public sphere”. Whenever editorial production is part of the grant, the Commission includes an independence clause in the grants signed so that beneficiaries operate with full editorial independence.

More information on these grants is available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/funding-news-media-sector>

The Commission is currently preparing plans for the next multiannual budget (2028-2034) to be discussed with the co-legislators as of this summer. We take good note of your suggestions, as well as many other suggestions received. The budget negotiations will be challenging. If you wish, you can also make the case for support to journalism with Members of the European Parliament.

I hope you will find this information useful.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Herold
Head of Unit,

[e-signed]