

## **R3 Media freedom and independence under attack**

Proposer: Young Greens South Tyrol, Joves  
Ecosocialistes, Swiss Young Greens  
Agenda item: 8. Resolutions

### **Motion text**

1 The Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG) recognises threats to media  
2 freedom and independence.

3 The organisation “Reporters without borders” (RSF) classifies media freedom  
4 around the world and has detected an increase of dangers for journalists in  
5 European countries. The worst situation is faced in many eastern European  
6 countries.

7 A report by RSF also finds that there is pressure on public broadcasters in half  
8 of the member states. This pressure has mostly a political nature, as  
9 governments try to interfere in political reporting. An example of this  
10 situation is the Italian broadcaster *Rai*. The members of the supervisory board  
11 change with every new legislature and reflect the majority ratios in the  
12 parliament. This has created a public broadcaster that often serves as a  
13 mouthpiece for the government. An even worse situation is faced in Hungary,  
14 where *Duna Média* has become a propaganda machine under the Orbán government.

15 As it is clear that European institutions cannot and should not interfere with  
16 reporting in the single member states, the EU should guarantee the independence  
17 of public broadcasters, which should be reporting neutrally and not for the  
18 single governments.

19 The EU should impose on public broadcasters of all member states to fulfill  
20 certain criteria to guarantee independent and balanced reporting. Governments  
21 should guarantee editorial independence from the Supervisory board and establish  
22 transparent and objective access mechanisms for journalists who work in public  
23 broadcasters.

24 As public service media belongs to every citizen, it must be given prominence on  
25 all digital interfaces. Quality journalism is often buried behind advertisements  
26 and bot-driven trends in search engines. Public service media must have the  
27 right to findability to be shown under the top search results. In addition,

28 search engines and social media platforms should be obligated to ensure  
29 algorithmic neutrality towards democratic content to prevent preferential  
30 treatment towards certain media.

31 Furthermore, the EU should work to build and maintain independent European  
32 digital infrastructures to reduce reliance on US companies. TV-networks like  
33 "arte" should be expanded to other European countries and be supported to reach  
34 a bigger audience and contribute to European integration through common media  
35 platforms.

36 It is important to not just look at the public media but also to media plurality  
37 in the private sector. In some territories, the media landscape is dominated  
38 almost exclusively by large media groups. In South Tyrol, for instance, *Athesia*  
39 covers more than 80% of the media landscape and is the media outlet receiving  
40 most public funds in Italy. These conditions make it very hard for independent  
41 media to work properly and reach an audience. In addition, public discussions  
42 are primarily conducted by these large media groups, influencing the political  
43 climate in the region.

44 In the last few years, the quantity of misinformation and fake news has seen a  
45 considerable increase. A major deterioration happened during the COVID-19  
46 pandemic, fuelled by the spreading of conspiracy "theories". Russia's war of  
47 aggression against Ukraine is another area that has given rise to disinformation  
48 in Europe. It has also been proven that the Kremlin has used bot-farms and  
49 corruption to influence European elections, such as in Moldova or Hungary. FYEG  
50 acknowledges the European Digital Media Observatory's critical work, as it shows  
51 that the EU has started to fight misinformation. Nevertheless, disinformation  
52 campaigns continue to evade accountability, particularly on social media  
53 platforms that fail to act on EDMO's findings.

54 Another problem is that many media outlets have lost trust as they are accused  
55 of pro-government reporting, especially those receiving public financing. These  
56 critics can be justified, as public financing guided by the government may  
57 impair independent journalism. It is fundamental that everyone has accessible  
58 information about public financing to media outlets.

59 In countries like Italy, so-called SLAPP suits are used to censor, intimidate  
60 and silence critics. Even if the plaintiff does not expect to win the lawsuit,  
61 this burdens journalists with time and costs for a legal defence. This is a  
62 serious limitation of press freedom, as these lawsuits lead to intimidation,  
63 exhaustion and often to self-censorship.

64 Journalists working in war zones and conflict areas face unprecedented risks,  
65 including targeted killings, arbitrary detention, digital surveillance, and  
66 psychological warfare. The Russian invasion of Ukraine, conflicts in Southwest

67 Asia, and authoritarian crackdowns in regions like Belarus and Turkey have made  
68 journalism one of the most dangerous professions in the world. Beyond physical  
69 threats, journalists are increasingly targeted by spyware (e.g., Pegasus), legal  
70 persecution, and economic precarity, and the prohibition of access to war zones,  
71 forcing many into self-censorship or exile. The impunity for crimes against  
72 journalists - around 85% of murders remaining unpunished according to UNESCO -  
73 further emboldens perpetrators. While many examples arise, Israel is one of the  
74 worst, having killed 86 journalists in 2025 from a total of 129 globally  
75 according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Without robust  
76 protections, independent reporting from conflict zones will disappear, leaving  
77 war crimes and human rights abuses uncovered and unchallenged.

78 FYEG also acknowledges the importance of media literacy for a functioning  
79 democratic society. Education is the best way to help young people grow into  
80 well-informed citizens that can distinguish fake news from good information and  
81 populism from well-researched social-media content. Digital and media literacy  
82 also includes the identification of bots, the verification of sources and the  
83 understanding of algorithmic bias.

84 With all this in mind, we, the Federation of Young European Greens demand that:

- 85 • The EU should obligate member states to guarantee an independent financing  
86 of public broadcasters through licence fees.
  
- 87 • Public broadcasters are owned by an independent foundation, which is  
88 overseen by a supervisory board. The number of politically nominated  
89 representatives should not exceed a third and should represent both the  
90 voted-in majority and the opposition as equally as possible. To fully  
91 represent the diversity of the country, the rest should be filled with  
92 representatives of civil society, such as trade unions, religious  
93 communities, universities, young people, minorities such as migrants and  
94 representatives of economic and cultural groups. The foundation's  
95 supervisory board should not interfere in editorial decisions.
  
- 96 • The Supervisory boards of the public broadcasters themselves should not  
97 have any politically nominated members but should be elected among the  
98 broadcasters' staff and civil society representatives.
  
- 99 • Public service media create independent ombudspople with binding powers  
100 to investigate censorship, block political interference, and enforce  
101 editorial independence.

- 102 • Public broadcasters should build and maintain independent European digital  
103 infrastructures such as a European streaming platform to reduce dependence  
104 from US tech-companies.
  
- 105 • A 'Right to Findability' for Public Service Media is established on all  
106 digital interfaces and that Algorithmic Neutrality is ensured for  
107 democratic content.
  
- 108 • Social media companies must be legally required to label AI-generated  
109 content and prioritize verified public service media in algorithms during  
110 elections and crises.
  
- 111 • Social media platforms should be obligated to rigorously delete messages  
112 spreading hate and racism through content moderators.
  
- 113 • The EU and member states establish mandatory transparency rules for online  
114 platforms to expose and dismantle bot farms and disinformation networks,  
115 particularly those linked to foreign interference in elections.
  
- 116 • The EU should empower the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) with  
117 enforcement tools, including mandatory platform cooperation and fines for  
118 non-compliance. Funding for EDMO's local hubs must be increased and social  
119 media companies must be legally required to act on its findings.
  
- 120 • European funding that supports independent journalism should be allocated.  
121 The size of the funding should be in proportion to media quality ranking  
122 assessments, guaranteeing a stronger support for media in countries with a  
123 more critical situation.
  
- 124 • Journalists should be protected from SLAPP suits through the full  
125 implementation of the EU Anti-SLAPP Directive by 2027. The EU should put  
126 pressure on countries like Italy and Hungary, which are delaying  
127 transposition into national law.
  
- 128 • The protection for journalists who work in warzones or critical situations  
129 should be strengthened. The EU Magnitsky Act should be used to sanction

130 states and actors that target journalists. Governments should push for ICC  
131 investigations into attacks on media workers as war crimes.

132 • Governments should allow digital and media literacy to become a core  
133 component of public education from primary school level through  
134 university.

135 • The European Commission should launch a sector inquiry into regional media  
136 markets, similar to the EU Digital Markets Act inquiry into tech  
137 monopolies.

138 • The EU and national governments should develop criteria for “media  
139 diversity”. Companies holding more than a certain percentage of regional  
140 media control in terms of audience and advertising revenue should be  
141 required to sell off parts of its business.

142 Media freedom is under pressure. Journalists face bullets in Gaza, censorship in  
143 Russia, SLAPP suits in Italy. FYEG refuses to accept this as the new normal. We  
144 demand a Europe where public broadcasters serve the public, where truth  
145 outweighs propaganda, and where no journalist risks their life for doing their  
146 job. Our fight for media freedom is a fight for democracy.