

INFORMATION NOTE FOR WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

May 3rd 2023

WPFD 2023, on 3rd May, will mark the 30th year of this UN International Day. This year's theme as defined by UNESCO is "[Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights](#)". The European Union (EU) is a leading force in policy making and one of the world's bigger donors¹ in this domain. The WPFD provides an opportunity for European Union Delegations and Member States (MS) to convey key messages around the critical importance of press freedom and access to information.

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PART I – EU standards and initiatives in support of media pluralism and freedom of expression

European Union's core values of respect of human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law are the basis for a set of standards and initiatives that guide its internal and external actions in support of media pluralism, freedom of expression and digitalisation. The EU has a long history of promoting democracy and human rights in third countries through development aid and external action, notably through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) until 2020 and other funding instruments since the *EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline* were adopted (2014).

In the past decade the EU has increased its attention to the information ecosystem inside the EU and is building an innovative approach to ensure that freedom of expression, a cornerstone of democracy and an essential human right, is safeguarded. Measures and initiatives are meant to ensure that journalists can freely and safely do their work and that the media sector is pluralistic, independent, healthy and resilient to crises. The EU has also taken measures to counter disinformation, to facilitate access to quality information, to foster media literacy and to protect users from illegal hate speech.

Internal EU initiatives

- [The European Democracy Action Plan, adopted in 2020](#) is designed to empower citizens and build more resilient democracies across the EU by promoting free and fair elections, strengthening media freedom, and countering disinformation. Its implementation is meant to be reviewed in 2023. To address misinformation, disinformation and foreign interference, the EDAP set to improve the EU's existing toolbox for countering foreign interference in our information space, including new instruments that allow imposing costs on perpetrators. The implementation of the EDAP has led to the revision of the Code of Practice on Disinformation to make it fit to serve as a co-regulatory framework of obligations for ensuring the accountability of online platforms and to set up a more robust framework for monitoring its implementation.
- [The Media and Audio-visual Action plan \(2020\)](#) aims to strengthen competitiveness, diversity and pluralism of the media sector in the context of digital transformation for the entire European media and audiovisual ecosystem. The plan focuses on printed and online

¹ <https://www.cima.ned.org/donor-profiles/european-commission/>

press, radio, and audiovisual services - cinema, TV, video streaming, video games and innovative formats such as virtual reality experiences. It also provides measures to support the media sector in the post COVID-19 environment, such as: boosting investment for the European audio-visual production and distribution, help the EU media benefit from a European virtual and augmented reality industrial coalition, support climate neutrality of the industry by 2050, enhancing media literacy; and strengthening the cooperation framework among European media regulators.

- [**The Digital Markets and Digital Services Acts \(2020\)**](#) constitute a binding framework which aims, like the European Democracy Action Plan, to make democracies more resilient. Based on core European values, including respect of human rights and freedom, it rebalances the rights and responsibilities of users, intermediary platforms and public authorities and applies to all digital platforms that connect consumers to goods, services or content. Concretely, the Act introduces a series of harmonized obligations for digital platforms that protect users' fundamental rights online, such as: rules for removal of illegal content online; new powers to scrutinize how platforms work; safeguards for users whose content has been erroneously deleted by platforms; new obligations for very large platforms to prevent abuse of their systems; transparency measures on online advertising and on the algorithms used to recommend content to users.
- Despite EU being one of the safest places for journalists, the number of threats and attacks against them has increased in past years, with the most tragic cases being assassinations of journalists. Intimidation and pressure damage the environment in which journalists work. The EU adopted the [**Commission recommendations on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists and other media professionals in the EU**](#) (2021) to ensure safer working conditions for all media professionals, free from fear and intimidation, whether online or offline. It sets out concrete actions for Member States to take individually and in coordination, with a particular attention to female journalists who face specific risks. Actions include rapid response, early warning mechanisms, support services for victims, reinforced approach to prosecution of criminal acts.
- [**The Anti-SLAPP initiative \(2022\)**](#) is geared at pushing back against manifestly unfounded or abusive use of lawsuits against public participation, which are considered abusive since their aim is primarily to chill the speech of journalists and human rights defenders on issues of public interest. Part of the European Democracy Action Plan, the initiative protects them from abusive court proceedings in an environment of growing hostility. Concretely, the proposed directive, which is currently being negotiated by the EU co-legislators, include, for cross-border cases in civil matters, both punitive and preventive measures such as: early dismissal of manifestly unfounded court proceedings; award of costs, compensation to targets and dissuasive penalties for claimants; protection against third-country judgments. The Recommendation, which is already applicable, applies to civil, criminal and administrative matters, domestic and cross border cases. It is designed to build awareness and expertise, through training, among SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) targets, legal professionals and other groups. It will ensure that support is available for those facing SLAPP and promote a more systematic monitoring of SLAPP.
- The [**Media Freedom Act**](#) proposed in 2023 and under negotiation, aims to facilitate the establishment and operations of media services in the European Union. It is an effort to create a common framework for an internal media market which safeguards media freedom and pluralism in coherence with the European Democracy Action Plan, it is a promoter of democratic participation and fighting disinformation. The proposed regulation includes safeguards against political interference in editorial decisions and against surveillance. It focuses on the independence and stable funding of public service media and the transparency of media ownership and of the allocation of state advertising. It also sets out measures to protect independence of editors and disclose conflicts of interest. The Act will

address the issue of media concentrations and create a new independent European Board for Media Services, comprised of national media authorities.

External Action

- **[The EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline \(2014\)](#)**

The EU Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline are an essential policy document which underlies EU and MS external action on Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression with 6 priorities:

Priority 1: Combating violence against journalists and impunity for such crimes

Priority 2: Promoting laws and practices that protect FoE

Priority 3: Promoting media freedom and pluralism

Priority 4: Promoting and respecting human rights in cyberspace and ICTs

Priority 5: Promoting best practices by companies

Priority 6: Promoting legal amendments and practices to strengthen data protection and privacy online/offline.

The guidelines also offer a summary of the key definitions and core principles of freedom of expression such as Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Essentially

1) Freedom of expression (FoE) is a universal but not absolute right; 2) States have the duty to protect FoE and access to information; 3) The media has a central, protected role in FoE; 4) FoE goes hand-in-hand with protection of right to privacy.

The Webinar '[Quick Guide](#) for EU Delegations provides summary information on the central policies and EU priorities that form the foundation of the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline.

- **[Protecting the Safety of Journalists, Protecting Freedom of Expression: A Handbook for EU Delegations](#)** (2020) offers practical information about threats to journalists, and examples of EU Delegation actions to respond to urgent threats to journalists, practical suggestions for longer-term efforts and programmes to enhance journalists' security to fight the chronic impunity for violations and crimes against journalists.

- **[The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024](#)** informs EU's external action in the field of democracy assistance to third countries.
 - a- **Support legislative initiatives** strengthening access to information, media freedom, the right to privacy and personal data protection in line with European and international standards, and their effective implementation.
 - b- Promote media freedom and pluralism online and offline by **supporting the capacity and sustainability of independent media outlets and promoting access to reliable information, in particular during elections**. Support investigative journalism and civil society in monitoring governments' performance on governance and compliance with human rights obligations. Counter attempts to influence and exert pressure on independent and pluralistic media.
 - c- Promote efforts to counter disinformation, hate speech, violent extremist and terrorist content, including by **fostering online media literacy and digital skills while safeguarding all fundamental freedoms**. Strengthen civil society organisations' and independent media's capacity to detect, expose and raise public awareness on disinformation and information manipulation. **Support independent and credible fact checking and research, investigative reporting and journalism**, including at local level. Support civil society initiatives promoting reliable information and a free media.

- d- **Promote the principle of open, safe, affordable, equally accessible and non-discriminatory internet access for all.** Combat internet shutdowns, especially in the context of elections and where human rights violations occur.
- **[First EEAS Report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference Threats.](#)**
The EEAS report on Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) threats is informed by the work of the European External Action Service's (EEAS) Stratcom division in 2022. Based on a first sample of specific FIMI cases, it outlines how building on shared taxonomies and standards can fuel our collective understanding of the threat and latest trends in the information manipulation and help inform appropriate countermeasures in the short to the long term.

PART II – Suggested activities on and beyond WPFD using EU initiatives to foster dialogue and possibly reform in the partner countries

This section proposes activities that EUDs and MS Embassies can implement on WPFD in the absence of a dedicated programme on media pluralism and freedom of expression. WPFD is also an opportunity to initiate coordinated strategic thinking about EU and MS engaging in FoE support activities in the longer term such as:

- **Coordination processes** led by international CSOs may already exist and those could be invited jointly by EU Delegations and Embassies for an initial conversation. If not existent, initial needs assessment may be done by inviting local CSOs - media associations, investigative journalism groups, human rights organisations or academics to share their perspective on the main issues and gaps in support. [The GFMD report on coordinating media assistance and journalism efforts \(November 2022\)](#) provides good methodological learnings.
- Organise an internal seminar for embassy staff: WPFD is also an opportunity to plan **staff capacity building** on the topic. Training material exists for the EU and MS staff in the EU International Partnerships Academy with a dedicated [Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression](#) section. Local or EU experts can be brought in at the occasion for a half day seminar.

Internal EU policies and initiatives can support initial **dialogues with counterparts, as part of Human Rights or trade dialogues** in third countries for example:

- **Anti-SLAPP initiative:** EU Delegations and Member States Embassies may use the EU initiative to feed into an exchange with journalism associations and the media industry. Challenges could be compared and the proposed EU reforms could be examined.
- **Safety of journalists:** where the situation has deteriorated, use the EU handbook on Journalism safety and the European Commission Recommendation to host a consultative meeting with CSOs and rights defenders, media managers and reporters, media associations, UNESCO to discuss and assess the situation. Possible follow-up: convening a-closed door donor coordination strategic meeting with the input of national stakeholders who are active on the topic or European CSOs traditionally active in this domain ([International Media Support](#), [Free Press Unlimited](#) for example). The focus can also be on justice and impunity if the issue is a recurring one.
- **Healthy information ecosystems in the digital era:** EU Delegations and Member States' Embassies can propose a technical exchange to the Ministry of Information on safeguards against political interference in editorial decisions with a reference to the European Media Freedom Act. A public discussion with the industry, public actors, digital platforms and regulatory bodies could also be organised on the Digital markets and services act or the Media Action Plan as the base for EU's policy approach around

removal of illegal content online; the discussion could focus on safeguards for users, transparency measures on online advertising and the role of algorithms. As these topics require a high level of technical knowledge, it is recommended to plan early with the support of academics, legal advisors, specialised networks such as [Global Network Initiative](#), digital rights groups such as [Access Now](#) local chapters, EU experts and in coordination with the relevant services within DG CONNECT or DG JUST.

Events on or around WPDF

In general, WPDF events should convey the message that **press freedom and reliable information is everyone's concern and has impact on all the other human rights**. However, they should always be tailored to the situation in the country. They can be led by Delegations/Embassies or **support stakeholders organising their own events**. Possible formats include: debates, panel discussions, roundtables, on-the record discussions, journalists competitions, public interventions in a journalism faculty of a university. Possible stakeholders: Ministry of Information, media regulatory authorities, law enforcement agencies, media associations, journalists, investigative journalism groups, fact checkers, media bloggers, social media platforms, technology companies, civil society and academics, human rights defenders, youth associations, journalism schools, or CSOs with an attention to media, right to information and disinformation from a human rights perspective.

The EU Delegations are also encouraged to join and amplify the WPDF dedicated campaign developed by the HQ, more information will be shared closer to the event.

Other possible angles for WPDF events (examples)

All proposed angles can be guided by the Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan and the EU Guidelines on Freedom of expression online and offline in addition to the intra-EU initiatives.

- **Access to reliable information for all in relation to SDG16.10² - where do we stand?** Are certain groups or regions underserved? Is the legal environment evolving in the right direction? This angle covers: freedom of expression and development and access to information is a universal right. Possible setting: sharing data about the country situation, then debate on what can be done. Specific stakeholders: academics, access to information groups, ombudsmen, UNESCO.
- **Are media playing their role adequately and what impedes them to do so?** This angle covers: political, economic, legal enabling environments, capacities of media, steps towards healthy, professional and pluralistic media sector which serves the public. It can also touch upon SLAPP (legal harassment) and journalism safety. Specific stakeholders: media lawyers, anticorruption and investigative journalism groups, parliamentarians.
- **Impacts of disinformation on human rights and democracy:** current situation and what can be done by whom. Stories of impact provided by academics or human rights defenders will support exchanges and advocacy messages, for example : how a rumour incited to violence against a certain group, how manipulation of information and hate speech impact electoral processes, how youth mental health is influenced by viral videos, or inaccurate health information competes with health education at school (right to education). Stakeholders: media, telco regulators, electoral management bodies, domestic observers.
- **Women in media: a 360° perspective.** How women are represented in mainstream media, how their voices are being heard, what is the situation for women in the newsroom and in management positions in the media sector. Stakeholders: women and journalism associations, journalism schools, regulatory bodies. A similar approach can be applied with LGBTIQ+ communities and minorities.

² Target SDG 16.10 aims "to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements".

- **Improving the resilience to disinformation.** Disinformation is one of the key challenges of our times. Sometimes it may seem that it is everywhere around us. From the family gatherings where heated discussions on politics, society and even personal health choices take place, to internet, social media and even international politics. What is disinformation exactly? How can we avoid falling for it, if at all? How can we respond to it? To learn more, please see here: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/learn/> Stakeholders: youth, teachers, media

Possible general messages for speeches, social media or press releases

- Resilient democracies need a free and pluralistic press;
- Access to reliable information is a condition for all human rights and accomplished democracy;
- Legal threats and abusive litigation against media are a serious threat to human rights and democracy;
- Protecting press freedom is everyone's concern;
- Press freedom means media can reveal injustice at the highest levels, hold the powerful into account and fight corruption;
- Media and journalists play an essential role: they help verify and disseminate facts, they create spaces for ideas to be debated and for the voiceless to be heard;
- The right to freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is a prerequisite and a driver to the enjoyment of all other human rights
- The EU supports pluralism, freedom of expression and quality information in the EU and globally;
- Freedom of expression is a core value of the European Union, enshrined in its founding treaties and in the cooperation agreements with all its partners.

Most used global hashtags

- On Instagram: #pressfreedom #worldpressfreedomday #righttoknow
- On Twitter: #worldpressfreedomday #pressfreedom #freedomofexpression #WPFD2023
- Other options: #Freespeech #journosafe #freeexpression, #journalismnotacrime, #mediafreedom, #medialiteracy #media #journalism #mediadev
- General EU hashtags: #EU4humanrights #EU4democracy

How to localize a message on press freedom

- Coordination with the UNESCO social media campaign and with local partners is highly recommended to avoid redundancies in the messages.
- Quote figures about press freedom with the source associated: UNESCO, Reporters without Borders (Reporters sans Frontières, RSF, Council of Europe), local reliable organisations – see part IV.
- Highlight a specific case of legal harassment of a media outlet or journalist (anti-SLAPP approach). When relevant, name a success story about how the EU and MS support a free press and access to information, drawn from Part II, or how EU internal policy protects its democratic space with measures relative to the media sector and protection of journalists.
- Highlight a reliable global figure or national figure from sources such as RSF, Committee to Project Journalists (CPJ), or UNESCO, or local reliable organisations (see Part IV). For example: the general ranking of the country on the [RSF press freedom Index](#) or ranking in the domain of safety, enabling environment.
- When possible, quote a reliable local media, trusted journalist, human rights defender or human rights lawyer about a recent story in which press freedom supported girls' access to information, participation of underserved groups and minorities in public life, or how it

helped tackle grand corruption, empowered rights holders, and why it is everyone's concern.

- Use local hashtags, tag journalism associations, civil society organisations (CSOs) and advocacy groups using simple terms which speak to audiences' segments on the dedicated platforms.

Participative online activities

- A story or post with a question asking audiences to add a comment, for example, "Why is a free press important for your rights?" or "What does press freedom mean to you?". Or announce a small competition on or around May 3rd for the best journalist story or short poem or answer to the question – the best one will be relayed with a dedicated post. Other incentives can be a small exhibit of the poems or collected answers on the day around an event. Answers can be collected in comments, direct messages to an email address, or be posted on peoples' accounts with a reference to WPF and the competition for a viral effect. Test the question first with a small group, reformulate it if needed to match the context.
- Invite a well-known media anchor or famous human rights defender, or influencer for a Facebook, or Instagram live May 3rd for a dialogue on press freedom. The live will require moderation of comments. An alternative to reach a different audience is for the live discussion to be hosted on the influencer's channel.
- Create an Instagram poll: "Did you know that xxx" - using a key figure. Example 1: "Did you know that disinformation about COVID-19 resulted in X people misusing vaccines"?; Example 2: "Did you know that + fact about correlation between access to reliable information about clean water/environmental issue/maternal health and decrease/ increase of xxx?" (possible answers on the poll: yes/no), then post the results and add information in a post. Use the results for an event, debate, or to engage with stakeholders.

Other International Days offer opportunities to advocate for freedom of expression and media pluralism: 28 September – International Day on Universal Access to Information, 2 November: International Day to End Impunity of Crimes Against Journalism.

PART III - Examples of good practices³ by EU and MS to support Media pluralism and freedom of expression in third countries

In line with global EU policies and systemic intervention on media freedom in partner countries (with particular attention for enlargement and neighbourhood countries) the EU and MS actively support media pluralism, freedom of expression and digital for democracy in third countries with a variety of programmatic approaches: building capacities of media outlets, regulatory bodies, supporting digitalisation to increase democratic participation, reinforcing girls access to information and voices in media, tackling disinformation and promoting peace by enhancing the offer of trusted sources of information, media literacy, reinforcing digital and physical safety of journalists, etc.

Moreover, EU and MS coordinate to support CSOs, regional and international institutions like the AU and the UN active in this domain, and national government institutions towards reforms, when possible.

³ The criteria to select the projects presented are: a selection of EU and MS donors, variety of angles, region, coordinated, long term or rapid-response when required, systemic understanding of the information ecosystem and information needs, media as multi-layered actor (CSO and business), integration of other rights associated with FoE and FoE as a rights enabler (gender equity, rights of minorities, etc).

For information about how EUDs can initiate programming in this domain, see the EU International Partnerships Academy [Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression](#) section.

NEIGHBORHOOD SOUTH : Core Support for Independent Media in the Southern Neighbourhood (2021 to 2026)

Themes: Gender equity, media sustainability, journalism safety and digital security, access to reliable information for underserved audiences

Partners and donors: EU, implemented by Free Press Unlimited (NL) and International Media Support (DK)

Objectives: Provides comprehensive tailored core support to media outlets and journalists to ensure pluralism, independence, and resilience of the media sector in the Southern Neighbourhood.

Activities: Investment in newsrooms and start up grants for young journalists, strengthening regional networks, digital safety capacity-building.

Why it is a good practice: Coordinated regional action by two major EU actors of media development with a long term viability strategy for the media sector and an integrated approach on gender diversity, safety of journalists and institutional viability of media.

Further information: <https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/projects/support-media-most-difficult-region-journalists>

NEIGHBORHOOD SOUTH : MediaSahelProject - Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger – (2019-2023)

Themes: Tackling disinformation, gender equality, youth participation, peace

Partners and donors: Agence Française de Développement & Agence Française de Coopération Médias (CFI) in partnership with Radio France International (RFI), Fondation Hirondelle, the Association of Private Media in Burkina Faso and the Senegalese NGO, RAES.

Objectives: To promote the inclusion of youth in public debate in the region's countries.

Activities: Hosting shows featuring young people, creating new online formats and fact-checking programmes to limit the spread of fake news.

Why it is a good practice: It tackles instability community conflicts and terrorism through inclusion and participation and promoting better access to reliable information

Further information : <https://tinyurl.com/AFDdataicipation>

LATIN AMERICA : Improving Access to Diverse, Independent and Trusted Sources of Information in Venezuela (2020-2022)

Themes: Journalism safety, access to reliable information during COVID-19 and human rights crisis, gender coverage, legal support to independent media (Anti SLAPP approach).

Partners and donors: EU, implemented by Free Press Unlimited (NL) with local partners which are undisclosed for security reasons.

Objectives: To contribute to improved access to diverse, independent and accessible sources of information for Venezuelan citizens, improve the capacity of independent media and journalists in Venezuela to safely exercise their role and provide their diverse audiences with quality information.

Activities: Capacity building in open-source investigation, gender coverage, investigative journalism, new formats, psycho-social support to journalists, supporting viability of outlets out of the capital, creation of a network of specialized media lawyers.

Why it is a good practice: Emergency support to media under threat in a country where the government and state do little to protect journalists if not harass them (for example: distribution of mouth masks and COVID-19 protection materials for journalists during the pandemic). An example of Anti SLAPP strategy applied to a third country.

Further information & impact stories:

<https://www.freepressunlimited.org/en/current/support-venezuelan-journalists-covering-covid-19>

LATIN AMERICA : Narrativas y Memorias de La Desaparición en Mexico (Stories and Memories of Disappeared People in Mexico) (2020-ongoing)

Themes: Justice, impunity, media for human rights

Donors and partners: implemented by DW Akademie in partnership with Tecnicas Rudas, supported by BMZ funding.

Objectives: to raise awareness about the destinies of disappeared Mexicans and to integrate their stories in the mainstreaming media.

Activities: bringing Mexican media professionals and academia together with relatives of people who have disappeared in a violent way (forced disappearance), create new narratives about forced disappearance

Why it is a good practice: the project uses media story-telling to tackle impunity and support dignity of victims

Further information: <https://www.narrativasymemorias.org/portfolio/sobre-el-proyecto/>

AFRICA : Citizen Engagement and Innovative Data Use for Africa's Development (Data-Cipation) - African Union Member States (2020 to 2023)

Themes: Data governance, digital for democracy.

Partners and donors: funded by German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), executed by: Office of the Chairperson, AUC, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).

Objectives: Leveraging data, digital and non-digital approaches for good governance and development has improved the engagement between AU Organs, Member States and citizens.

Activities: Improving citizen participation in good governance and development through innovative communications and engagement methodologies. Supporting the implementation of digital policies across Africa to improve access to meaningful participation of citizens in the digital transformation. Connecting policymakers with Africa's data and digital innovators for good governance and development.

Why it is a good practice: Systemic approach of digitalisation as enabler for participatory and inclusive decision-making.

Further information & impact stories: <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2022-en-citizen-engagement-and-innovative-data-use-for-africas-development.pdf>

ASIA: Media support programme - Philippines (2020-2024)

Themes: Journalism safety, institutional support, enabling environment for human rights defenders (ex: gender equality, fighting disinformation, digital security, investigative journalism)

Partners and donors: Funded by NMFE (Norway), SPAA (Denmark), EU, implemented by International Media Support (DK)

Objectives: To defend and strengthen freedom of expression and press freedom environments necessary for human rights defenders in the Philippines to carry out their mandates without fear.

Activities: Working with human rights defenders and journalists, digital content producers, CSOs, media associations and national institutions establish sustainable mechanisms that build on the Philippines Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.

Why it is a good practice: Supports a national journalism safety mechanism, multi-donor approach EU/Non-EU.

Further information: <https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/One-pager-Philippines-Nov19.docx>

CENTRAL ASIA: Resilience and Engagement with Varied Information for a Vibrant Environment (REVIVE) - Central Asia/Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan (2022-2024)

Themes: Media literacy and fighting disinformation, media capacity building

Partners and donors: EU – (FPI)

Objectives: Support the production of quality, independent, and factual content in Central Asia, local media literacy and critical thinking initiatives by youth.

Activities: Subgranting of media outlets that combat propaganda and disinformation, training on fact-checking and responsible reporting, support to cross-border journalism projects, digital security and ad hoc emergency support, promotions of media and digital literacy in local languages.

Why it is a good practice: Creative approach around media literacy and quality content creation such as content creation camps, promotion of regional exchanges and peace via media.

Further information: <https://internews.kg/category/proekty/ustoichivost-i-vzaimodeistvie-revive/?lang=en>

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: Yak Vdoma – Ukraine (2022-2024)

Themes: Journalism in exile, human rights, security and informational crisis, journalism safety.

Partners and donors: French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, implemented by CFI (France Médias Monde).

Objectives: Supporting Ukrainian journalists to produce rigorous and balanced information of war in Ukraine.

Activities: To provide shelter to Ukrainian journalists in exile in Romania and their families, material, financial, logistical and psychosocial support, training and an environment to work; to hire and train 17 journalists to produce Ukrainian content on the conflict and its regional impact.

Why it is a good practice: A combination of emergency and middle-term psychosocial and material support for media workers and families in war, direct support to content production.

Further information: <https://cfi.fr/en/project/yak-vdoma>

WESTERN BALKANS - Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) – Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey) - Ongoing

Themes: Investigative journalism, quality information, tackling corruption, media for accountability, internet freedom, women rights, good governance

Partners and donors: SIDA, EU, USAID, UNDEF, Netherlands, Erste Foundation, Austrian Development Agency, UK (non-exhaustive).

Objectives: Multiple projects to support the network's investigative journalism role

Activities: Project example 1 - *A paper trail for good governance II* (Austria) - contribute to a better functioning public sector that abides by principles of transparency and accountability to its citizens and enhanced enforcement of access to information laws (2017-2019). Project example 2: SIDA core support to BIRN for implementing cross-regional programmes and enhancing the capacity of the Network. (2015-2019)

Why it is a good practice: multiple donor long term investment into a regional network playing an instrumental role in raising the level of accurate information and public scrutiny in a pre-accession countries.

Further information: <https://birn.eu.com/about-birn/programmes/>

Social Media 4 Peace

The overall objective of this project is to strengthen the resilience of societies to potentially harmful content spread online, in particular hate speech inciting violence while protecting freedom of expression and enhancing the promotion of peace through digital technologies, notably social media. This new project is aligned with UNESCO's overall strategy to combat disinformation by fostering the information as a public good and strengthening the transparency of the internet ecosystem.

Building Trust in Media in South East Europe & Turkey

This project aims to strengthen freedom of expression while empowering youth to think critically in a region considered vulnerable to the spread of disinformation. Based on the conclusions of the first phase of the project, UNESCO and the European Union have launched the second phase of the project to continue building trust in media in the region, engaging more actively media and citizens of the region against the disinformation disorder.

Part IV - Sources of information for global trends and country specific situations

- [Council of Europe platform](#)
- [Reporters Without Borders current Press Freedom Index](#)⁴ (January-December 2022) per country. Global and regional trends analysis and infographics are also available. The [RSF barometer](#) shows, in real time, figures of journalists and media workers killed and imprisoned in relation to their journalistic activities. The data is searchable per country, gender, type of abuse, year.
- The [Committee to Protect Journalists database](#) for details on cases.
- [Freedom House's Freedom on the Net](#) annual survey and analysis 2022.
- [UNESCO - World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development Global Report](#). The most recent UNESCO figures are usually embargoed and provided a few days before May 3rd.

Sources to identify experts in the areas of media and freedom of expression:

<https://ifex.org/members/> CSOs specialised in defending press freedom and
<https://gfmd.info/members/> for those focused on media development and journalism support.
Where to find material for EU and MS staff on media pluralism and freedom of expression:

- The EU International Partnerships Academy offers a dedicated [Media Pluralism and Freedom of Expression](#) best practices and the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline: Policy Essentials Handbook.
- Capacity4Dev under the subsection [Media and the free flow of information](#)
- For more materials regarding media freedom and journalism, interviews, featuring prominent journalists, articles, disinformation cases, their debunks and analysis please see <https://euvdsdisinfo.eu/>

⁴ In the RSF press freedom index, "Press freedom is defined as the ability of journalists as individuals and collectives to select, produce, and disseminate news in the public interest independent of political, economic, legal, and social interference and in the absence of threats to their physical and mental safety".

*This document is an expert's paper developed within the **Team Europe Democracy (TED) Initiative**, to support EU Delegations and EU Member States' World Press Freedom Day (WPDF) actions, and beyond, to offer guidance on possible actions related to Media Freedom and Pluralism to foster dialogue and possibly reform in the partner countries. Team Europe Democracy (TED) is an initiative of the European Commission and 14 of its Member States, which aims to defend democracy and to enhance opportunities for democratic progress, by strengthening the coordination and complementarity of European interventions on (i) Accountability & Rule of Law, (ii) Political & Civic Participation and (iii) **Media & Digital**. If you are interested in knowing more about Team Europe Democracy, please consult [Capacity4dev | Connecting the Development Community \(europa.eu\)](#) or contact DG INTPA.G1 (intpa-G1@ec.europa.eu).*