



2017/2209(INI)

17.1.2018

DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Legal Affairs

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on media pluralism and media freedom in the European Union
(2017/2209(INI))

Rapporteur: Heidi Hautala

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Legal Affairs calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes with regret that insufficient attention has been paid to the concentration of media ownership in Member States; recalls that EU competition rules play an important role in preventing the creation or abuse of dominant positions; calls therefore on the Member States and local authorities to monitor media concentration and to provide easily accessible information on media ownership and economic influence over media;
2. Is concerned about the legislative and administrative measures used in certain Member States to restrain and control the media, directly or indirectly; stresses that the fundamental principle of editorial independence from the government and from political or commercial interests should be protected; underlines that the coverage of election campaigning should be fair, balanced, impartial and systematically monitored;
3. Reiterates its call on all Member States where defamation is a criminal offence to decriminalise it and to ensure that defamation laws respect the right to freedom of expression in conformity with European and international human rights standards;
4. Underlines that whistle-blowers are a crucial resource for investigative journalism and an independent press; calls on the Commission therefore to provide EU-wide protection in accordance with the Union objectives of democracy, pluralism of opinion and freedom of expression;
5. Highlights that the fight against 'fake news', namely false news and other disinformation spread deliberately via the media, should not result in restricting freedom of internet usage; calls for the Member States and EU institutions to devote sufficient resources to tackling disinformation; is satisfied with the work of the East StratCom Task Force and the establishment of the High Level Expert Group on fake news and online disinformation.