

EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



European Media Policies Revisited: Valuing and Reclaiming Free and Independent Media in Contemporary Democratic Systems

Policy implications of MEDIADDEM, an EU-funded research project investigating media policies in 14 countries for media freedom and independence

March 2013

INTRODUCTION

This is the third and final policy brief in the MEDIADDEM policy brief series. The EU-funded MEDIADDEM project, which ran for a period of three years (April 2010–March 2013) investigated the configuration of media policies in fourteen countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the UK) and assessed their contribution to media freedom and independence. It examined the complex array of policy approaches and the regulatory instruments in use to govern the media in the countries reviewed, and analysed external pressures on their formation stemming from the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe. The aim has been to identify those policy processes and instruments that can best promote media freedom and independence.

Drawing on the research that was carried out and the various reports that were produced in the frame of the project, this policy brief is devoted **to the role of the EU and the Council of Europe in supporting media freedom and independence**. The policy brief provides an overview of key areas of concern in relation to the development of policies that create an enabling environment for media freedom and independence, identifies key pressures on the operation of free and independent media, and makes concrete recommendations as to how these constraints and pressures may be addressed by the European institutions. Where appropriate, it singles out the institutions and other stakeholders that are specifically targeted by the project's recommendations.

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Policy fragmentation

Comparative research in the countries reviewed has shown that state media policies are largely fragmented across media sectors and types of media services. Media policies are also in a state of flux; existing regulatory approaches do not reflect the heterogeneity of available information sources, intensified by the emergence of a wide range of new information services enabled by the internet. In some of the countries studied, an integrated notion of media has gradually developed through case law, albeit this has usually resulted in placing new information services within the scope of traditional media regulation.

At the European level, in light of the changes brought to the media ecosystem, the Council of Europe has advocated the adoption of a *new notion of media*, 'encompassing all actors involved in the production and dissemination, to potentially large numbers of people, of content and applications which are designed to facilitate interactive mass communication ... or other content-based large-scale interactive experiences ... while retaining (in all these cases) editorial control or oversight of the contents'. The Council of Europe has further stressed the importance of a *differentiated and graduated regulatory approach*, in line with the distinct functions of different players in content production, editorial control and dissemination processes (Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a new notion of media). The EU has not to date meaningfully endorsed such an integrated notion of media.

Institutional arrangements

MEDIADEM research has identified important failings in media policy-making at the national level. In many of the countries under study, core aspects of media policy and regulation remain within the direct or indirect control of political power, which creates a potential for the exercise of undue political pressure on regulatory choices and the application of the norms and instruments adopted. This goes hand in hand with insufficient resort to evidence-based policy processes, lack of coordination between competent bodies, and limited openness, transparency and accountability safeguards.

Private regulation, in turn, which has spread and developed around Europe, in line with free speech concerns, faces major legitimacy, inclusiveness and accountability challenges. It is also marked by limited coherence, since different regulatory approaches are followed depending on the medium addressed, and it is often undermined by enforcement deficits.

Findings further show that the full potential of existing public and private regulators in protecting free speech and media freedom is not yet fully exploited. This is because coordination between regulators and the exchange of information on regulatory approaches and best practices, both at the national and the European levels, are limited or absent.

Fundamental rights in Europe and EU citizenship

Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) safeguards freedom of expression and its corollary, the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the Strasbourg-based court that rules on state and individual applications alleging infringement of the ECHR, has developed, throughout the years, a substantial body of media-related case law. This has set overarching European standards for media freedom and the essential function of the media in democracy.

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) employed a fundamental rights discourse in its case law concerned with the media sector at an early stage. Currently, Article 6(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) provides that fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the ECHR and as they result from the constitutional traditions common to the Member States, constitute general principles of EU law. Significantly, Article 6(1) TEU states that the EU recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (CFR), which have the same legal value as the TEU and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Article 11 CFR enshrines freedom of expression and its derivative, the freedom of information, which incorporates both the right to inform and the right to be informed. Crucially, it explicitly states that the freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected. In accordance with Article 51 CFR, the provisions of the CFR, including Article 11 CFR, are addressed to the institutions and bodies of the EU and to the EU Member States when they act within the scope of EU law (on this see CJEU, Case C-617/10, *Åkerberg Fransson*, judgment of 26 February 2013).

Article 20(2) TFEU and Articles 39 and 40 CFR recognise the right of EU citizens to vote in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections in the Member State of their residence. Affirming that the functioning of the EU shall be founded on representative democracy, Article 10(3) TEU pronounces that every EU citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the EU. These fundamental rights of EU citizens can be compromised when freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism are curtailed in the EU.

Failings in complying with the ECHR

Research has revealed that the execution of the judgments of the ECtHR encounters significant difficulties in some of the countries reviewed. Pursuant to Article 46(1) ECHR, states party to the ECHR must abide by the ECtHR final judgments in which they are parties. Although the ECtHR may occasionally provide directions on the measures required, especially in pilot judgments, domestic authorities enjoy a wide margin of appreciation in relation to the means through which they may discharge their obligations under Article 46 ECHR. These include individual measures, adopted to remedy the effects of specific infringements, and general measures aimed at averting similar human rights violations. Supervision is exercised, according to Article 46(2) ECHR, by the Committee of Ministers.

While the adoption of individual measures is relatively easy, general measures are more complex, and usually require the amendment of the domestic legal framework or changes in administrative and judicial practice. States may implement the ECtHR case law in a genuine and systematic manner but may also engage in poor, incremental or deficient implementation. Admittedly, national judges in the countries reviewed have become increasingly aware of the ECHR and the ECtHR case law. In several instances, however, national courts have diverged from the ECtHR jurisprudence or simply ignored it. This shows that the implementation of the ECtHR case law needs to become more consistent and effective. Although responsibility for this rests mainly with national authorities, the Council of Europe has a significant role to play.

A culture of respect of fundamental rights in the EU: procedures

The CFR, while not extending the EU competences, has diversified the fundamental rights sources of EU law, revitalising responsibilities for the EU institutions and the EU Member States. All EU legal acts and policy measures must be in conformity with the CFR, including Article 11 CFR. In addition, the Member States, when they act within the scope of EU law, must comply with Article 11 CFR.

In its *Strategy for the effective implementation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights by the European Union* (COM(2010) 573), the European Commission has stressed the significance of strengthening a fundamental rights culture throughout the EU regulatory process, setting out a set of mechanisms for ensuring respect of fundamental rights in EU legislative acts. Among others, it has reinforced the evaluation of the impact of its proposals on fundamental rights by establishing a 'check-list' to ensure systematic compliance with the CFR, and has called for transparent inter-institutional dialogue when issues of compatibility arise.

Nevertheless, the existing EU impact assessment system falls short of helping policy makers identify the policy areas in which action is required to protect fundamental rights in a proactive manner, including freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism. Rather, the impact assessments conducted are designed to ensure that fundamental rights are not undermined through the foreseen policy interventions. Moreover, limited efforts are deployed to raise domestic authorities' awareness of specific fundamental rights challenges that may arise at the phase of implementation of EU law.

Generally speaking, effective assessment of the impact of regulatory proposals on freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism, and the identification of possible risks at the phase of implementation of EU law by the Member States require a sufficient pool of in-depth, up-to-date information. Efforts in this direction, including by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU, should be bolstered.

A culture of respect of fundamental rights in the EU: policies

Research has shown that some EU policies are more likely than others to face challenges as regards compliance with Article 11 CFR.

The internal market

The MEDIADDEM project has disclosed the variety of laws and regulations adopted in the countries reviewed in order to structure domestic media markets. Media ownership legislation varies significantly from country to country, as is also the case with the norms and provisions concerning media ownership transparency. Whether differences in regulatory approaches hamper the functioning of the internal market remains unclear. The ways in which domestic markets are shaped, however, and the extent to which market entry opportunities become available or not condition free speech, pluralism and the exercise of the right to inform and to be informed.

The project has also revealed the diversity that characterises national laws on libel and defamation and their interpretation by domestic courts. Besides their potential to fragment the internal market, differences in national defamation rules have given vent to practices of 'libel tourism', which may stifle free speech. Also, in some of the countries examined, defamation rules have purposefully been used to restrict media freedom.

Research has further shown that technological developments and the restructuring of the information supply chains have generated conflicts between new intermediaries and incumbent news content producers, specifically on the issue of copyright protection. Disputes have reached domestic courts and freedom of expression arguments have been advanced by both content producers and service providers either with a view to protecting incentives in content production or in order to promote access to content online. National approaches lack coordination, which may create hindrances from an internal market perspective. Divergences can also be noted as regards the protection of the end-to-end architecture of the internet (i.e. its openness and neutrality), which is key to free speech and the freedom of information. The countries under study have not adopted consistent positions on the issue, which has paved the way for a shift of regulatory power to the private sphere through the conclusion of contractual agreements between intermediaries and content producers. These may represent a potential source of concern for freedom of expression and freedom of information due to the burgeoning use of electronic communications and data inspection techniques that in some cases, may also result in content filtering and blocking.

Competition rules

The application of EU competition rules to the media sector shows that competition law and policy may contribute to the promotion of free speech and pluralism. However, such contribution has for the most part been indirect, consisting in reducing barriers to market entry, important as this may be. So far, there has been no explicit recognition of the requirements that stem from Article 11 CFR for competition law and policy. Concurrently, and despite the changes brought to the media ecosystem, there has been no comprehensive reappraisal of traditional competition tools in order to capture the complex dynamics

of new media and the challenges that these pose for free speech. In addition, less attention has been paid to *ex ante* regulation, which through the provision of structural remedies, may usefully complement *ex post* antitrust scrutiny that often proves less suitable to address the fast pace of market changes.

Support policies

MEDIADEM findings reveal the importance of sustaining professional journalism for an effective exercise of the right to inform, the right to be informed, and media independence more broadly. Journalism is facing substantive pressures of both an economic and technological nature. Financial instability, arising from decreased sales and reduced advertising, licence fees and state subsidies, has placed journalism in general and investigative journalism in particular under severe strain. Journalists have further been required to produce more content, in less time, for different platforms as a consequence of budget cuts and the need for 24-hour online news production. This may encourage heavy use of recycled copy material and press releases, restricting access to diversified sources. Precarious working conditions may also undermine journalistic autonomy and compliance with high professional standards and ethics. EU support for professional, quality journalism could help mitigate such trends.

MEDIADEM research has additionally shown that the development of user-generated content has created ample opportunities for an enhanced exercise of free speech and the right to inform, as the former passive recipients of information have become information producers themselves. User-generated content thus offers significant potential for citizens' participation in public debate and the steering of news. Through various support policies, the EU could help ensure that user-generated content continues to flourish. This should be complemented by activities that enable citizens to access, understand and critically evaluate the news and information services they opt to receive.

External relations

Protecting the end-to-end architecture of the internet is not an exclusively European issue. As a staunch promoter of fundamental rights both within and outside its territory, the EU should portray itself as a fervent supporter of free speech in cyberspace in its external relations.

Public service media

In the countries reviewed public service media are considered to play a key role for the realisation of the right to inform and the right to be informed. This is so, despite technological developments and the emergence of new forms of direct participation by citizens in content production through different kinds of media. Although user-generated content has revived debates on the ways through which pluralism can be protected and enhanced, the democratic functions of public service media, including promoting and making space for a range of views and opinions as a means to guarantee pluralism, have not been contested. Rather, public service media have been permitted to use new technologies as an additional means to meet their public service

obligations, provided that their public service remit is precisely defined, so as to allow for the concurrent development of viable commercial media. Only in a limited number of the countries studied, have new trends emerged through arrangements made for the provision of public funds to public service content offered by private operators.

Research, however, has shown that in many of the countries examined, public service media are subject to political pressures which may affect their editorial and operational independence. Pressures on available resources have also become increasingly pronounced, which may undermine the ability of public service media to properly discharge their functions. Deficiencies in terms of accountability, transparency, openness and responsiveness to the public have also been noted. Openness and responsiveness to the public, in particular, coupled with increased accessibility, may usefully contribute to enhancing freedom of expression by stimulating engagement with audiences and production of user-generated content. Although the Council of Europe has engaged in detailed standard-setting in the field, monitoring and enforcement remain problematic.

Professional journalism

In the area of journalism, on account of free speech safeguards, private regulation is predominant in the countries surveyed. However, it takes a variety of forms, ranging from pure self-regulation to co-regulation, delegated or endorsed *ex post* by the executive or by independent regulatory agencies, and it is usually fragmented across media. With the exception of those rare cases where public regulation provides a definition of 'journalism' (i.e. in Belgium and Italy), in most countries reviewed private regulation defines 'journalism' or 'journalists' by means of a status-based model (associated with journalists' membership to a professional association) or an activity-based model (i.e. explaining what journalism should or should not do and thus what the role of journalism is).

The journalistic landscape is presently undergoing a deep transformation as technological innovations and the development of new types of information services have triggered the emergence of news content producers that blur the distinction traditionally drawn between professional and non-professional journalists. This creates serious interpretative difficulties because the definition of professional journalism and/or journalists can determine a) who deserves special privileges (i.e. access to sources and information, protection of journalistic sources, availability of defences against libel, defamation, privacy invasion, etc.); and b) who is bound by the responsibilities and ethical requirements accompanying journalistic conduct.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY-MAKERS

Adopt an integrated notion of media for technology-neutral policy-making

Media policies should rest on an integrated notion of ‘media’ and become firmly founded on the principle of technological neutrality.

- The **Council of Europe** should ensure the proactive follow-up of Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)7, clarifying the regulatory implications of the adoption of an integrated notion of media particularly as regards regulatory differentiation and graduation.
- The **EU institutions** should endorse an integrated notion of media for their regulatory activity, irrespective of the legal basis in use and the type of the legal instrument envisaged (soft or hard law), following a differentiated and graduated approach. This could be achieved: a) by understanding ‘media’ as encompassing all actors involved in the aggregation and provision of content to a generalised audience, regardless of the technology used, and b) by differentiating and graduating regulatory responses on the basis of whether, and if so, the extent to which the actors concerned enjoy editorial control.

Improve governance arrangements

The European institutions should assist the Member States in developing mechanisms that promote regulatory independence and effective policy-making processes more broadly.

In particular,

- The **Council of Europe** should re-affirm its firm attachment to a ‘culture of independence’ and lead reflection on the mechanisms through which compliance with the 2008 *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the independence and functions of regulatory authorities for the broadcasting sector* can be ensured. The identification of best practices, including through the involvement of civil society and the media, could be particularly helpful in this respect.
- The **EU institutions** should carefully consider the imposition of a requirement for the independence of public regulators when reviewing the Audiovisual Media Services Directive in order to ensure the implementation of its provisions in an impartial and transparent manner.

Both the **Council of Europe** and the **EU institutions** should further contribute to the development of mechanisms that enhance the capacity of private regulation to realise public values.

- The **Council of Europe** should affirm the importance of promoting a ‘culture of independence’ within private regulation, adopting general guidelines on the independence of private regulators. These should identify the legal, financial and accountability arrangements that can best support the independent performance of private regulators and set out criteria and methodologies for direct and peer monitoring.

- The **European Commission** should adopt general and media sector-specific guidelines for the *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluation of private regulation within its overall ‘smart regulation’ toolkit as a means to improve the implementation of EU law by the Member States when private regulatory solutions are encouraged.

Many of the above mentioned activities, particularly those pertaining to the promotion of a ‘culture of independence’, are likely to play a significant role in promoting stronger pan-European coordination of regulatory (public and private) approaches, in support of free speech, media freedom and pluralism. Other measures that should be considered in this regard are the following:

- Foster cooperation between the **Contact Committee** established under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the **Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications and the European Platform for Regulatory Authorities (EPRA)**;
- Strengthen the powers of **EPRA** in order to allow it to engage in standard-setting and monitoring, and thus overcome its present role of a forum for ‘informal’ discussion;
- Create a **European network of private regulators**, entrusted with key standard-setting and monitoring functions, leaving enforcement to a decentralised level;
- Consider use of the open method of coordination in a flexible, voluntary, non-binding manner, as a means to foster the exchange of information between the **EU Member States**, share knowledge and identify best practices on the processes, regulatory approaches, norms and instruments through which free speech, media freedom and pluralism can best be promoted.

Improve the implementation of ECtHR judgments

The Council of Europe should take steps to help improve the execution of the ECtHR’s case law by the Member States and support dialogue among judges.

- The **Council of Europe** should expand its activities on human rights training of national judges. The establishment of institutionalised fora allowing for enhanced dialogue between the **ECtHR and national judges** should also receive attention and support.
- The **ECtHR** should make increased use of its prerogative to indicate appropriate implementing measures in cases raising systemic failures in the protection of freedom of expression and media freedom.
- The **Committee of Ministers** should engage in a more effective and transparent supervision of Member States’ implementation efforts. This could be achieved through

requests for the provision of detailed information by national authorities on the alignment of domestic practices and rules to ECHR standards and the ECtHR case law. The Committee of Ministers should also publish regular reports highlighting best practices and deficiencies in the implementation of the ECtHR jurisprudence.

- **The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe** should become actively involved in the monitoring of the implementation of the ECtHR judgments. They should follow closely both the activities of the Committee of Ministers and the implementation efforts of the Member States, highlighting best practices and identifying shortcomings.

Mainstream free speech, media freedom and pluralism in EU law and policies through appropriate procedural arrangements

Procedural arrangements for ensuring respect of Article 11 CFR in EU law and policies should be strengthened.

- The **European Commission** should revise its guidelines on assessing the impact of regulatory proposals on fundamental rights, providing detailed guidance on the mechanisms that may help identify the policy areas where action is required to protect fundamental rights, including free speech, as safeguarded in Article 11 CFR.
- The **European Commission** should develop a comprehensive strategy for raising domestic authorities' awareness of possible fundamental rights challenges that may arise at the phase of implementation of EU law, undermining compliance with Article 11 CFR.
- The **Fundamental Rights Agency** of the EU should step up its efforts in providing the EU institutions and the Member States when these implement EU law with expertise relating to freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism. This could be achieved through the conduct of studies and the collection and analysis of relevant, objective and reliable data.

Mainstream free speech, media freedom and pluralism in EU law and policies

Effective respect of Article 11 CFR requires mobilising a range of EU policies to that purpose.

The internal market

- The **European Commission** should engage in a meticulous study of whether differences in media ownership and media ownership transparency regulations in the EU Member States hamper the proper functioning of the internal market, and if yes, consider possible legislative intervention in the field, with due respect of the requirements of Article 11 CFR. In a similar vein, the European Commission should explore whether greater uniformity is needed in the fields of libel and defamation.
- The **European Commission** should carefully assess whether

existing EU copyright legislation is congruent with free speech concerns, the right to inform and the right to be informed, taking due note of the changes brought to the media ecosystem, and verify whether existing exceptions and limitations to copyright protection need to be reviewed. Contractual limitations and technical measures should be scrutinised as regards the terms and conditions under which they allow access to information.

Competition rules

- The **European Commission** should accommodate fundamental rights concerns in the application of EU competition law. Free speech, media freedom and pluralism considerations, in particular, should be *explicitly* and *consistently* integrated in the application of EU competition rules. In more detail:

- In terms of *ex ante* policy actions, the **European Commission** should ensure that pluralism considerations are firmly embedded in competition analysis, including through the imposition of appropriate commitments and remedies. Also, it should assist the Member States in implementing Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services in a fundamental rights-friendly way. Via use of Article 19(1) of this Directive, the European Commission should issue recommendations on electronic communications networks and services that a) encourage the interoperability of pan-European services and end-to-end connectivity; and b) ensure that, in similar, circumstances, market players are not subject to discriminatory treatment.

- In engaging in *ex post* competition analysis, the **European Commission** should a) provide sophisticated guidance on pluralism-focused obligations that ensure fair, non-discriminatory access to content and infrastructure; and b) provide constant vigilance over contractual agreements between intermediaries (i.e. internet service providers and aggregators) and content producers that may undermine the end-to-end architecture of the internet.

Support policies

- The **EU institutions** should make use of both action and operating grants in order to support professional journalism. Existing funding programmes in the field of education and youth, vocational training, industry, research, citizenship and fundamental rights (i.e. Erasmus, Youth in Action, Leonardo da Vinci, Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, Seventh Research Framework Programme, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Funding Programme, etc.) could be of particular use in this regard. Financial instruments such as guarantee facilities should also be considered.
- The **EU institutions** should build on and make better use of existing competences to promote the development of a support strategy for user-generated content as a means to enhance free speech. Drawing on the resources of a variety of EU

policies (i.e. citizenship, education and youth, vocational training, industry), funding could be channeled to projects that encourage the production and diffusion of user-generated content, help integrate user-generated content in conventional media, promote new forms of journalism, such as networked, collaborative journalism, and foster the development of community-driven content and community media. Financial assistance could also be directed to research projects in the field.

- In the context of its media literacy initiatives, the **European Commission** should take steps to promote the production of user-generated content as an effective tool in strengthening freedom of expression. Action in the field of media literacy should also increase citizens' awareness of the various constraints facing the operation of traditional and new media players and the impact of these constraints on content production and free speech.

External relations

- **The EU institutions** should pro-actively participate in the international debate on internet governance in order to ensure that the end-to-end architecture of the internet is preserved, to the benefit of freedom of expression.

Public service media

The independence of public service media and their openness and accessibility to the public should be strengthened.

- The **Council of Europe** should take action to stimulate more direct uptake of its guidelines on the editorial independence and operational autonomy of public service media. Options regarding forms of monitoring independence and ensuring compliance with the standards set should be explored and best practices identified.
- The **Council of Europe** should embrace user-generated content as a key element of public service provision, in support of freedom of expression.
- Given the important democratic, social and cultural role of public service content, and with a view to facilitating access to it, the **EU institutions** should explore the need for an EU-wide approach to the prominence of public service content on all significant intermediaries offering access to content from a range of different providers.

Reach a better understanding of journalism and the challenges it faces

In the light of technological developments and changes in the production of news content, the boundaries of the journalistic profession should be re-designed and increased attention paid to the challenges it faces.

- The **Council of Europe** should foster debate on the

understanding of contemporary journalism, clarifying the privileges and duties inherent in it, in accordance with the jurisprudence of the ECtHR.

- A precious contribution in this respect could also be made by the **EU** 'guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, including the protection of bloggers and journalists', envisaged by the *Action Plan* of the *2012 EU Strategic Framework for Human Rights* (11855/12).
 - **Journalists and other stakeholders** should establish a multi-stakeholder European platform which should serve as a forum for the exchange of views and debate on the challenges facing contemporary journalism from the perspective of free speech, journalistic independence and compliance with ethical requirements. Such a supranational forum should also improve mutual learning on the instruments that can best support autonomous and accountable journalism.
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RESEARCH PARAMETERS

Objectives of the research MEDIADEM has been an EU-funded research project on media policies for free and independent media.

The project sought to:

- understand the nature of media freedom and independence;
- explore the formulation and implementation of state media policies in order to identify the factors that exert an influence throughout the process;
- identify the full array of the policy processes and regulatory models and instruments that support media freedom and independence;
- evaluate and explain variable patterns of media policy-making from a cross-country and cross-media comparative perspective in order to single out best practices for the promotion of free and independent media;
- engage directly with policy-makers, the media community and civil society in order to reflect on appropriate policy responses to the challenge of realising media freedom and independence;
- develop concrete policy recommendations for policy-makers, the European Union and the Council of Europe regarding the development of policies that foster free and independent media.

Scientific approach/ methodology

To obtain meaningful research results regarding how media freedom and independence can be promoted, MEDIADEM adopted an interdisciplinary approach which lied at the crossroads of legal research, media studies and political science.

The project combined theoretical with empirical analysis and adopted a broad European perspective. Our country cases covered both EU Member States and EU candidate countries. They included: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the UK. The selection of these countries testified to the diversity of European media policy-making and reflected the multiplicity of regulatory approaches followed or in need to realise media freedom and independence.

The project's work plan consisted of a compilation and in-depth analysis of legal documents, government reports, policy papers, case law, broader academic literature and semi-structured interviews with various state and non-state actors involved in media policy-making. The latter included state ministries, regulatory bodies and agencies, media operators, journalists and their representative associations, and civil society organisations, among others.

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For more information	Evangelia Psychogiopoulou Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy 49 Vas. Sofias Ave., 10676 Athens, Greece T: 0030-210-7257110, F: 0030-210-7257114 Email: epsychogiopoulou@eliamep.gr <hr/>
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