



European Council
The President

SGS 20 / 001912

Brussels, 13. 05. 2020

Honourable Member,

Thank you for your open letter co-signed by 41 Members of the European Parliament on the state of the media and the need for immediate action in this sector, which is currently facing an existential crisis due to abrupt loss of advertising revenue.

I am acutely aware of the issues you raise. Already in a fragile economic situation, struggling under the pressure of the major online platforms, this sector has clearly been hit hard by the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has triggered an abrupt collapse in advertising revenue.

This comes at a time when verified, trustworthy, fact-based information is more important than ever. Independent, high-quality journalism is the engine of our democracies, as part of the system of checks and balances which holds authorities to account.

You make a number of concrete suggestions for action by the Commission and I understand that Commissioners Breton and Gabriel have already had the chance to discuss these issues with the Parliament's CULT Committee. As far as the Member States are concerned, the EU Ministers of Culture and Media, meeting via videoconference on 8 April in order to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural and creative sectors, also emphasised the urgent need to support journalists, many of whom are freelancers now facing a sudden and dramatic loss of income. At the EU level it is important that action is taken to help build the resilience and independence of the EU media ecosystem, not only in response to the current short-term shock caused by the COVID 19 pandemic but also in the medium-term as the sector faces up to the structural challenges brought about by the emergence of global on-line platforms.

Yours sincerely,

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