

AUDIOVISUAL AND MEDIA POLICY

This fact sheet explains the EU's audiovisual and media policy, governed by Articles 167 and 173 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees respect for 'the freedom and pluralism of the media' under Article 11(2). At EU level, the key piece of legislation is the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, with the MEDIA strand of the Creative Europe programme acting as the main EU funding instrument. The European Media Freedom Act establishes a framework for media services in the internal market.

LEGAL BASIS

- The [Treaty on European Union](#) does not provide for any direct powers in the field of audiovisual and media policy;
- The [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (TFEU): given the complex nature of media goods and services, which can be defined neither solely as cultural goods nor simply as economic goods, jurisdiction over media policy is instead drawn from various articles of the TFEU, namely:
 - 28, 30, 34 and 35 (free movement of goods);
 - 45-62 (free movement of persons, services and capital);
 - 101-109 (competition policy);
 - 114 (technological harmonisation and approximation);
 - 165 (education);
 - 166 (vocational training);
 - 167 (culture);
 - 173 (industry);
 - 207 (common commercial policy);
- [Protocol \(No 29\) to the Treaties on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States](#) aims to strike a balance between the EU rules on competition, on the one hand, and the right of the Member States to organise and fund public service broadcasting with a public service remit, on the other;
- The [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#): Article 11 on freedom of expression and information;
- The [Audiovisual Media Services Directive](#) (AVMSD): it aims, among other things, to create a level playing field for (emerging) audiovisual media, preserve cultural diversity and protect children and consumers;
- The [European Media Freedom Act](#): it puts in place a new set of rules to protect media pluralism and independence in the EU;

- [Creative Europe](#): under its MEDIA strand, Creative Europe is the EU's main funding programme for the audiovisual industry, aiming to promote competitiveness, scalability, cooperation, innovation and sustainability in the audiovisual sector.

OBJECTIVES

According to Article 167 TFEU, the EU encourages cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supports and supplements their action in the area of artistic and literary creation, including the audiovisual sector. The EU's goal in the audiovisual field is to create a single EU market for audiovisual services. It is also required to take cultural aspects into account in all EU policies. In addition, the EU aims to safeguard media freedom and pluralism. Decisions are reached under the ordinary legislative procedure.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Regulatory framework

1. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive

During the 1980s, developments in broadcasting technologies led to an increase in the number of commercial TV stations in the EU, with broadcasts being received in several countries. This led to the adoption of the 1989 'Television without Frontiers' Directive, which defined common minimum standards. Its first revision in 1997 put in place the 'country of origin' principle: broadcasters are under the jurisdiction of the Member State in which they are based. The 2007 revision introduced provisions for new services, such as 'video on demand'. The directive was codified in 2010 and renamed the AVMSD.

The directive was last updated in 2018, when Parliament and the Council agreed on a revision, based on the Commission's proposal. Key aspects of the amended AVMSD include:

- changing the limit for commercial communications from 12 minutes per hour to 20% per day between 6:00 and 18:00;
- protecting minors from content that may be harmful to them, with the same regulation applying to traditional broadcasts and on-demand services;
- extending the provisions on European works to on-demand services providers, which must ensure that European works make up at least 30% of their catalogues;
- bringing video-sharing platforms under the scope of the AVMSD for the purposes of combating hate speech and protecting minors from harmful content.

A public consultation on the AVMSD was launched in spring 2026 with the aim of collecting information on the impact of the current AVMSD and its upcoming review, announced under the [European Democracy Shield](#).

One of the goals of the AVMSD is to protect minors from inappropriate on-demand content. In 2022, a new [strategy for a better internet for kids](#) (BIK+) was adopted. Among the various initiatives in this area are the [Better Internet for Kids](#) programme and the [Safer Internet Centres](#).

2. Copyright in the digital single market

On 17 April 2019, Parliament and the Council adopted a [directive on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market](#) ((EU) 2019/790). The main aim of the directive is to modernise the copyright rules for the digital single market in order to achieve several fundamental objectives:

- More cross-border access to online content;
- More opportunities to use copyrighted materials for education, research and cultural heritage purposes;
- A better functioning copyright marketplace;
- Implementation of the [Marrakesh Treaty](#) in EU law.

The legislation has the biggest impact on online platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Google News.

3. Portability of online content services throughout the EU

On 14 June 2017, Parliament and the Council adopted a [regulation on cross-border portability of online content services in the internal market](#) ((EU) 2017/1128) with the aim of ensuring that subscribers to online content services in their own EU country, such as those providing films, sports events, e-books, video games and music, can access them when temporarily staying in other EU countries, along with new roaming rules adopted that same year as part of the EU's digital single market strategy.

4. The European Media Freedom Act

In 2024, Parliament and the Council adopted the European Media Freedom Act to safeguard media freedom and pluralism. It aims to: enhance the editorial freedom and independence of media service providers; ensure that media service providers can operate more easily across borders in the internal market; enable media service providers to benefit from the digital transformation of the media space; establish safeguards for media service providers and journalists against interference; inject more transparency into the market, notably as regards media ownership or the allocation of state advertising; and enhance regulatory cooperation and convergence.

5. Anti-SLAPP Directive

A [directive on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings](#) ((EU) 2024/1069) was adopted on 11 April 2024, also known as the Anti-SLAPP Directive. It aims to protect journalists and human rights activists from abusive cross-border civil proceedings, known as 'strategic lawsuits against public participation' (SLAPPs) by enabling judges to identify SLAPPs and dismiss them early on.

B. Funding programmes and support initiatives

1. Creative Europe

The Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) has an overall budget of EUR 2.44 billion, of which at least 58% must be allocated to the MEDIA strand and up to 9% to the cross-sectoral strand, which also partly supports the audiovisual sector. MEDIA is specifically designed to strengthen the audiovisual sector's competitiveness.

It helps audiovisual professionals to develop new skills, as well as stimulating cross-border cooperation and mobility, and boosting innovation in the creation and production of European audiovisual works. It also supports the worldwide circulation, promotion and theatrical distribution of European works in the new digital environment. The promotion of Europe's audiovisual heritage and of media literacy are also explicitly mentioned among MEDIA's priorities.

The cross-sectoral strand promotes activities aimed at helping the media to adjust to the structural and technological challenges it faces, including by strengthening a free, diverse and pluralistic media environment, quality journalism and media literacy.

On 16 July 2025, the Commission proposed a successor to the Creative Europe programme under the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework, entitled 'AgoraEU'. The proposed programme contains a 'MEDIA+' strand that would support not only the audiovisual and video games industries, but also free and independent journalism and news media, so as to tackle disinformation.

2. Action plan for the media and audiovisual sectors

In December 2020, the Commission launched an action plan entitled '[Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation](#)'. The audiovisual and media sectors – particularly badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic – remain essential for 'democracy, Europe's cultural diversity and digital autonomy'. The action plan focuses on three areas of activity to help the sector:

- Recover from the crisis;
- Support its green and digital transformations;
- Enable and empower individuals and companies in Europe.

3. Media literacy, pluralism and freedom

Media literacy is the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content, and to communicate in a variety of contexts. It is a fundamental skill for the younger generation and for adults. The EU considers media literacy to be an important factor in active involvement in today's information society.

The Council conclusions of 30 May 2016 on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training underline that media literacy is more important than ever in the age of the internet and social media. These conclusions were followed up with the Council conclusions of 9 June 2020 on media literacy in an ever-changing world.

The 2018 revision of the AVMSD strengthened the role of media literacy (Articles 33(a) and 28(b)), with [Member States reporting regularly on media literacy measures under the directive](#). Furthermore, a media literacy programme is in place under the MEDIA strand of Creative Europe.

Media pluralism is the need for transparency, freedom and diversity in the media landscape. In 2011, the European University Institute established the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom with co-funding from the EU. In addition, the EU implemented the [Media Pluralism Monitor](#) in all Member States and select candidate

countries, a scientific tool designed to identify potential risks to media pluralism, based on a set of indicators and updated yearly.

4. Other initiatives

In 2015, the [European Film Forum](#) was launched as a platform for structured dialogue between policymakers and the audiovisual sector, taking place every year at locations such as the Cannes Film Festival.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Parliament has emphasised that the EU should stimulate the growth and competitiveness of the audiovisual sector while recognising its wider significance in safeguarding cultural diversity. It has also stressed the importance of media freedom and pluralism, including the protection of journalists and media literacy. It acts as co-legislator on all regulatory and funding instruments mentioned above and oversees their implementation.

1. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive

After the revision of the AVMSD in 2018, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the implementation of the revised directive](#), calling for the harmonisation of the EU's audiovisual media market to be sped up. A [study on the implementation of the revised directive](#) was also commissioned.

2. Creative Europe

In 2024, Parliament adopted a [resolution assessing the implementation of the 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme](#), highlighting that the programme is oversubscribed, including its MEDIA strand, and needs a bigger budget, also given high inflation rates.

3. Action plan for the media and audiovisual sectors

In its October 2021 [resolution on the Commission's 2020 action plan for the recovery of the media and audiovisual sectors](#) amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Parliament called for a new legislative approach. It proposed a permanent EU news media fund to protect journalistic independence, and raised concerns about media diversity, citing ownership concentration and state influence. It also stressed the need to address the 'disruptive impact' of global online platforms.

4. Media literacy, pluralism and freedom

Parliament's 2019 [resolution on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in national and European democratic processes](#) urged Member States to include specific courses on media literacy in their schools' curricula in order to improve media literacy from an early age. Parliament again gave considerable attention to the topic in its 2020 [resolution on strengthening media freedom](#).

In its May 2021 [resolution on AI in education, culture and the audiovisual sector](#), Parliament underscored the impact of AI technologies on the fundamental rights and values of society. It highlighted potential risks such as data protection, discrimination and limitations on cultural and linguistic diversity, which could impede media pluralism and diversity of opinion. The resolution called for a clear ethical framework for

algorithms and for the responsible use of AI in the media to prevent the dissemination of fake news and disinformation, notably through deepfakes.

5. The LUX Audience Award

[The LUX Audience Award](#) is organised by Parliament and the European Film Academy, in collaboration with Creative Europe MEDIA and Europa Cinemas. It promotes the distribution and visibility of European films throughout the EU by inviting European audiences to vote for their favourite films, and by providing subtitling for the five films nominated for the prize in the 24 official EU languages and for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

This fact sheet is prepared by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens, Equality and Culture. For more information, please visit the website of the [Committee on Culture and Education](#).

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05/2026