

Brussels, 3 May 2021

European press publishers celebrate World Press Freedom Day

On the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day and as Europe still grapples with the unprecedented repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic, EMMA and ENPA want to reiterate the fundamental importance of upholding press freedom across Europe.

Despite one year of the coronavirus pandemic and even though Europeans have been putting their trust on newspapers and magazines as the most important source for quality information with their digital circulation reaching an all-time high, the business model of the press sector has been severely challenged in a digital environment dominated by the digital gatekeepers.

In this shifting environment, it is now more crucial than ever for European policy makers to set the necessary financial and regulatory framework in order to maintain a free, independent, sustainable and diverse press sector.

Therefore, we call for appropriate conditions to safeguard the safety of journalists and media workers as well as their independence from any political or institutional pressure. The situation in certain EU countries where press freedom has been seriously undermined remains very concerning. It is also important that events such as the pandemic are not instrumentalised to impose unjustified limitations to press freedom. This trend has been noted by the EU institutions and highlighted by an upcoming Recommendation for the safety of Journalists. In parallel, reports by the Council of Europe and Reporters Without Borders denounce an increase in verbal, physical and judicial attacks against journalists.

In order to be able to invest in journalistic content and to ensure the safety of our journalists, European press publishers call for the swift adoption of the press publishers' right in all EU Member States. As the European Union is also preparing to tackle the abusive practices of gatekeeper platforms with the Digital Markets Act, EMMA and ENPA also call for significant improvements on it, by obliging them to provide fair and non-discriminatory access to their services and add a binding mechanism forcing them to negotiate fair pricing conditions.

Ilias Konteas, Executive Director of EMMA and ENPA said: «The press is the watchdog of our European democracies. The respect of rule of law, independent journalism and press freedom must be preserved everywhere in the European Union. In order for Europe to support a healthy and sustainable press sector, the European Institutions need to take appropriate measures to address the current imbalances in the digital market, by ensuring that the abuses of the digital gatekeeper platforms are properly countered in the Digital Markets Act.»

ENPA, the European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA) is the largest representative body of newspaper publishers across Europe. ENPA advocates for 16 national associations across 13 European countries, and is a principal interlocutor to the EU institutions and a key driver of media policy debates in the European Union. www.enpa.eu.

EMMA, the European Magazine Media Association, is the unique and complete representation of Europe's magazine media, which is today enjoyed by millions of consumers on various platforms, encompassing both paper and digital formats. EMMA represents 15,000 publishing houses, publishing 50,000 magazine titles across Europe in print and digital. www.magazinemedia.eu