



## Recommendation 582 (1970)<sup>1</sup>

# Mass communication media and Human Rights

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having considered the proceedings of the Symposium on human rights and mass communication media held in Salzburg in September 1968 as a result of its [Resolution 338 \(1967\)](#) on press legislation ;
2. Having regard to its declaration on mass communication media and human rights, which confirms the principle of independence of the press and other mass communication media and which states inter alia that these media perform an essential function for the general public<sup>2</sup> ;
3. Convinced that the right to freedom of expression and information, including freedom to hold, seek, receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers, and to publish and distribute them should be ensured to everyone, including the press and other mass media ;
4. Considering that the right to freedom of expression and information is a right guaranteed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and that the right to privacy is guaranteed by Article 8 thereof ;
5. Recalling that recent technological advances have enormously expanded the range of diffusion of ideas, words and images, and thereby augmented their impact on the individual ;
6. Recalling further its [Recommendation 509 \(1968\)](#) on human rights and modern scientific and technological developments ;
7. Believing that action by member states is necessary in order to secure the effective application of some of the principles embodied in its declaration on mass communication media and human rights,
8. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
  - a. invite member states to encourage national and international professional organisations to draw up a professional code of ethics for journalists based on the principles embodied in the declaration on mass communication media and human rights, covering inter alia such matters as accurate reporting, rectification of inaccurate information, avoidance of calumny, respect for privacy, also taking into account all other relevant work on this subject, and respect for the right to a fair trial as guaranteed by Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights ;
  - b. instruct a committee of specialised experts to study the scope and the effects of press concentrations, and to make recommendations on possible measures of economic assistance ;
  - c. set up, in accordance with [Resolution No. 3](#), on press legislation, of the 4th Conference of European Ministers of Justice held in 1966, a committee of specialised experts to study the possibilities of harmonisation of provisions of national press legislations such as the right of reply, seizure and confiscation of publications, and professional secrecy of journalists, to study the problems raised by the portrayal of violence by the mass media, and to make recommendations concerning press councils on the basis of the experience of those countries where press councils have already been set up ;

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1. Assembly debate on 23 January 1970 (18th Sitting) (see [Doc. 2687](#), report of the Legal Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 January 1970 (18th Sitting).

2. See [Resolution 428 \(1970\)](#).



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- d. invite member states which have not already done so to encourage professional organisations to set up press councils, with the view of exercising self-control, such press councils being empowered to deal with instances of unprofessional conduct committed by any organ of the press in their state ;
- e. instruct the Committee of Experts on Human Rights to consider and make recommendations on :
  - 1. the extension of the right of freedom of information provided for in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, by the conclusion of a protocol or otherwise, so as to include freedom to seek information (which is included in Article 19 (2) of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) ; there should be a corresponding duty on public authorities to make information available on matters of public interest, subject to appropriate limitations ;
  - 2. the protection of the status and freedom of foreign correspondents, including the staff of international press agencies, by the elaboration of an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights or of a convention, or otherwise ;
  - 3. the establishment of an agreed interpretation of the right to privacy provided for in Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, by the conclusion of a protocol or otherwise, so as to make it clear that this right is effectively protected against interference not only by public authorities but also by private persons or the mass media.