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Media concentration and threats to media pluralism and independence

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Mogens JENSEN and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Access to information through pluralistic and independent media is essential in a democracy. Media pluralism is a precondition for the quality and variety of information, and therefore for the public to freely form their opinions and participate discerningly in public debates.

According to the case law on Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), member States must take adequate measures to ensure pluralism and hence transparency of media outlets. However, pluralism of media outlets is challenged by the increased economic pressure and competition through digital media, but also by more insidious media capture.

Media outlets are taken over by wealthy companies or individuals, whose interests are disconnected from independent journalism and aimed at profitability, or even focused on the possibility of leading the opinion of a segment of society. Through media concentration or processes of media capture, this opinion-leadership may have become dominant in some regional or national markets.

This risk is increased by a concerning lack of transparency in media ownership structures. Indeed, media outlets are frequently owned and controlled in a non-transparent manner, either because of a lack of transparency obligations under domestic law, or through non-transparent legal constructions of indirect or hidden ownership, which is often linked to political affiliations or economic interests. Moreover, these phenomena, coupled with the lack of adequate financial support schemes, are also destroying the network of small local media outlets and they threaten the survival of media outlets that give a voice to minority communities or marginalised groups.

The Parliamentary Assembly must examine these questions more carefully, in order to propose concrete lines of action, which could also be taken up in the national strategies for strengthening media freedom, which will be developed within the framework of the Council of Europe Campaign for the safety of journalists.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group