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PRESS RELEASE

EMFA provisional agreement: a mixed result that leaves the door open to threats against press freedom

Media freedom and pluralism are essential preconditions and guarantees of democracy. European press publishers uphold and defend these values and freedoms every day. We acknowledge the improvements introduced in the EMFA text during the negotiations; nevertheless, some fundamental concerns remain that risk counteracting the objectives of the regulation while departing from its intended minimum harmonisation approach.

Namely, for the first time a traditionally self-regulated sector with strong national specificities like the press will be regulated under EU law and under the oversight of an EU regulator. Furthermore, the EMFA opens the slippery slope of regulating the internal functioning of newsrooms, thus challenging a fundamental principle of press freedom as well as national and constitutionally protected traditions. Lastly, EMFA fails to adequately protect legal media content on very large online platforms (VLOPs) since its procedural safeguards still allow VLOPs to restrict the visibility of legal media content on the basis of their T&C, limiting media freedom and pluralism online.

Mike Koedinger, President of EMMA, said: “While some improvements have been achieved, the EMFA has put into question some historically established principles of the press without providing adequate solutions to existing issues that affect the free press.”

Jean-Pierre de Kerraoul, President of ENPA, said: “While aware that the text is the result of negotiations, we regret some missed opportunities on the protection of media content online. The long term, real-life effects of the compromise must be duly considered.”

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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. See: www.magazinemedia.eu/

ENPA, the European Newspaper Publishers' Association is the largest representative body of newspaper publishers across Europe. ENPA advocates for 14 national associations across 14 European countries and is a principal interlocutor to the EU institutions and a key driver of media policy debates in the European Union. See: www.enpa.eu/