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Answer given by Executive Vice-President Virkkunen
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.2.2026)

The Commission welcomes the declaration initiated by the Danish Presidency on the necessity of culture and media as a safeguard for our European democracies¹.

The Commission is fully committed to ensuring the independence of the media. In the Communication on the European Democracy Shield², the Commission stresses the crucial role of free, independent and plural media in upholding democratic values and outlines actions to defend and promote media freedom and independent journalism.

The Commission supports the news media sector with full respect for editorial independence. All EU co-financed news media projects operate with full editorial independence from any authority, as per the provisions of the calls for proposals and the ensuing grant agreements. When applying for EU media funding, news media organisations sign a declaration confirming that they abide by the relevant professional standards.

Furthermore, the Commission supports news media projects with full regard for the principle of subsidiarity, focusing on areas of intervention that are more effective at EU level, such as EU wide journalistic projects and cross-border collaborations. The vast majority of public support for news media in EU is provided by the Member States³.

Rules on the implementation of the EU budget are enshrined in the EU Treaties, notably in Articles 317 to 319 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. The Treaties contain provisions guaranteeing democratic control of the EU budget.

¹ <https://danish-presidency.consilium.europa.eu/en/news/new-declaration-makes-culture-and-trustworthy-media-cornerstones-in-defending-european-democracy/>.

² https://commission.europa.eu/document/2539eb53-9485-4199-bfdc-97166893ff45_en.

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4a26df80-bbff-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/>.