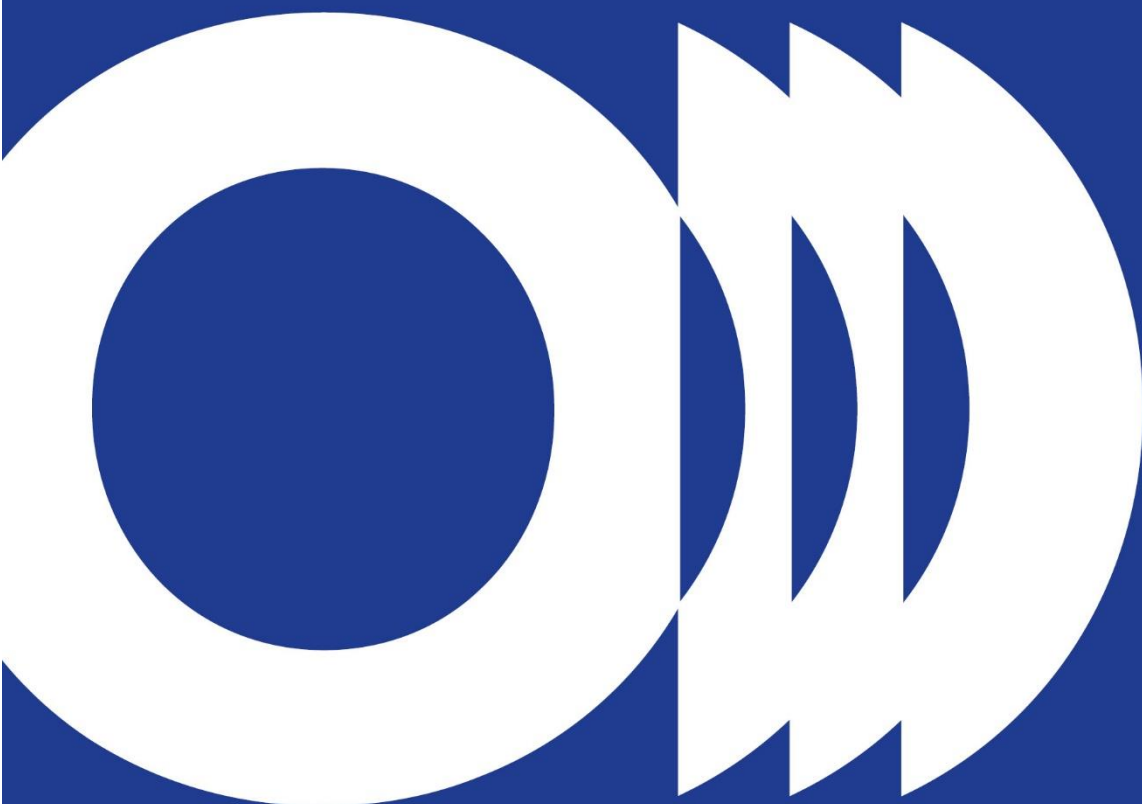


# EBU

OPERATING EUROVISION AND EURORADIO

# UN GLOBAL DIGITAL COMPACT

## EBU CONTRIBUTION



APRIL 2023

## Introduction:

We welcome this opportunity to contribute to the discussion on the Global Digital Compact. We hope that this initiative will contribute to creating a digital public sphere for the public good.

In today's world digital platforms constitute powerful gatekeepers between media services and their audiences. Citizens increasingly rely on these platforms to access media services to understand and engage with the world around them. As a result, a small number of private companies control the digital public sphere: They decide who can speak, which ideas get heard, and, most importantly, which ideas get traction. However, their interests are not at all aligned with those of their users, let alone with the interests of the public. Driven by commercial considerations, their recommender systems and algorithms create filter bubbles and promote sensational and even harmful content, while restricting access to a plurality of trustworthy media content that adheres to the highest journalistic standards. To preserve freedom of expression and information – for which media freedom and pluralism plays a vital role – digital platforms must be regulated in a way that preserves the social and democratic role of the media in the digital age.

Beyond regulation support is necessary for initiatives which offer alternatives to the big digital platforms and shape a digital public sphere which respects fundamental values, human rights and which works according to democratic rules. Our societies need a public sphere which supports freedom of expression, trusted news and quality journalism.

## About the EBU

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is the world's leading alliance of public service media (PSM). We have 112 member organizations in 56 countries and have an additional 30 Associates in Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas. Our Members operate nearly 2,000 television, radio and online channels and services, and offer a wealth of content across other platforms.

Together they reach an audience of more than one billion people around the world, broadcasting in 153 languages. We operate Eurovision and Euroradio services.

## EBU submission

### Connect all people to the internet, including all schools

**Principle:** Governments and Telecom companies should seek to ensure that all people are connected to the Internet with appropriate minimum speeds while ensuring that existing media distribution delivery mechanisms are preserved.

#### **Key commitments:**

Telecom companies should ensure that all end users are covered by a high-speed, possibly gigabit (i.e., a minimum downlink speed of 1000Mbps and uplink speed of 200Mbps), network in accordance with the principle of technological neutrality. If this is done via wireless means, it cannot be to the detriment of existing distribution of terrestrial broadcasting as it is a free-to-air, simple, reliable, and green mode of delivering information.

## Avoid internet fragmentation

**Principle:** Governments and Internet Service Providers should guarantee that there is no discrimination amongst content using the open internet

### **Key commitments:**

Audiences should have unfettered, non-discriminatory, and transparent access to online content of public interest. Measures strengthening transparency need to be combined with a clear policy regarding internet traffic management that ensures that equivalent types of traffic are treated equally. Regulators must prevent new forms of traffic discrimination where only content providers with sufficient resources can negotiate 'preferential' deals, distorting competition, hampering innovation, and reducing user choice. Public Service Media should benefit from fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory access to electronic communications networks to make sure their content is available to all the people of a given country.

## Apply human rights online

**Principle:** Governments and companies should uphold media freedom and pluralism to enable the media to fulfill their vital role as public watchdogs, ensure access to information, and foster free and open debate in the global digital public sphere.

### **Key commitments:**

States and companies should promote a healthy media ecosystem in the digital sphere and enable individuals to discover a pluralistic media offer online. States and companies should introduce appropriate and proportionate measures to ensure prominence of public interest content online, particularly content produced by reliable and professional news organisations and fact-checkers, to promote general interest objectives including media pluralism, cultural diversity, social cohesion, and reliable information. In particular, any initiatives to counter the spread of mis- and disinformation require a steady and abundant supply of quality information by recognised trustworthy sources to counterbalance and verify false and misleading information.

Access to media content and services should not be arbitrarily or unjustifiably restricted. Online platforms may only restrict access to media content or services in accordance with the law or their terms of service and must ensure that the decision is compatible with free expression of journalistic content. Media service providers that are regulated to ensure their journalistic independence should have recourse to procedural safeguards against actions relating to media content or services by online platforms, including prior notice and the right to be heard.

Online platforms with gatekeeping power constitute public fora rather than private spaces. To preserve an open digital public sphere, they may only restrict access to media content and services if that is required by international human rights law. Any interferences with media content or services must be provided for by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.