

**From:** [REDACTED] (CNECT)  
**Sent:** vendredi 17 avril 2020 19:52  
**To:** SKONIECZNA Agnieszka (CAB-BRETON)  
**Cc:** VIOLA Roberto (CNECT); BURY Claire (CNECT); ABBAMONTE  
Giuseppe (CNECT); DE GRAAF Gerard (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
(CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
(CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
(CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
(CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
(CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED] (CNECT); [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] (CNECT)  
**Subject:** BTO - VC with the news media industry

Dear Aga,

Please find below my draft BTO from today's video call.

We are at your disposal for any follow up.

Have a good weekend,

[REDACTED]

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COVID-19 pandemic - Structured engagement with the news media industry

BTO video-conference, 17 April

**(i) The perspective of journalists**

[REDACTED]

**of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)**

personal data

The role of journalists has never been more important than now in times of crisis. One of the sectors that cannot afford closing down but needs to continue playing its essential role.

Proposes several actions:

**Short term:**

1. Allow for 0% VAT for journalistic publications.
2. Introduce a "Marshall-support" for media:
  - a. Compensate media suffering from losing ads.

- b. Grant schemes for local media/smaller media startups administered by an independent body, with clear conditions for the media not to lay-off journalists.
3. Urge Member States to include vouchers for advertising in print media when the private sector is financially supported. The EU could also invest in advertising campaigns in media.
4. Young people should be incentivised to buy subscriptions in professional media.
5. Freelancers should benefit from temporary unemployment schemes.

Longer term:

1. 0% VAT should be continued.
2. Support of local media/startups should be followed by a long-term proposal. Actions to drive more advertising to professional media and to incentivise people to pay for content should also continue to ensure growth of our own European media landscape.

**(ii) The perspective of regional news media publishers**

[REDACTED] Henneo, [REDACTED] News Media Europe,  
[REDACTED] WAN IFRA (Spain)

personal data

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

commercial  
interests

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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(iii) The perspective of news media publishers present in several Member States

Schibsted (Sweden/Norway)

personal data

Digital market issues, such as data monopolies threaten revenues for publishers: we see a 30-40% decrease in advertising revenue, while traffic has doubled.

Does not ask any economic subsidy from the Commission, but regulatory responses to establish fair competition on the market.

Requests regulatory measures from the Commission:

Short term:

Schibsted's digital subscription model is threatened by Apple's terms and conditions (Apple is dominant in the Nordics with more around 50% market share). Apple charges 15-30 % for those subscriptions. Moreover Apple denies publishers access to data about their customers. Commission should open formal proceedings against Apple's abuse of dominant position.

Longer-term:

1. To respond to the Apple problem, the Commission should also come with an ex ante regulation that would require mega-platforms to give users access to data of their own customers.
2. Google's dominant position on the digital advertising market must be addressed: 60% of advertisers' spending will not reach the publisher. There should be full transparency in the auctioning process as well as of the fees that go into the system.
3. The e-Privacy regulation favours big tech and disfavours publishers. Users should be able to give their consent to sites that they trust rather than creating a single consent within the browser interface. Suggests to suspend the negotiations and table a new proposal taking into account the importance of data for publishers.
4. Disinformation has 'flourished' during the crisis. The Commission should regulate the liability of social networks by requiring them to take down and keep down illegal user-generated content. Social media should also make sure that published editorial content is not removed or altered. We also need more transparency about how editorial content is treated in the news feed.

[REDACTED] DPG Media and European Publishers' Council  
(EPC) [REDACTED] (Belgium)

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In general, it will be important to plan an exit strategy from the crisis and communicate clearly how the economy should be reactivated.

Sees up to 60% drop of revenues in radio and TV business he has, and foresees a 1/3 contraction of revenues for his overall business, with subscriptions clearly not able to compensate for the losses.

Google's dominance on the programmatic advertising market where it is a referee and a player at once and where is no transparency is clearly an issue to address. The same goes for the issue of level playing field as regards access to data.

On publishers' right, calls for clarity as to what the consequences for players such as Google of this right are.

Calls for speed of action on these issues.

#### (iv) The perspective of national news media publishers

[REDACTED] Les Echos - Le Parisien Group (France)

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
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commercial  
interests

[REDACTED] GEDI, [REDACTED] European Newspaper Publishers'  
Association ENPA (Italy)

personal data

We face a true survival problem for the sector. Under the optimistic assumption that the market goes back to normal in September, it will face at least a 30% drop in advertising revenues. This is exacerbated by the difficult relation with the digital players.

Calls for a dedicated (short-term) European support fund to help (in particular smaller) publishers to help in transition to digital and help/train journalists.

**(v) The perspective of magazine publishers**

**[REDACTED] Roularta Media Group and [REDACTED] European Magazine Media Association (EMMA) (Belgium)**

Mentions advertising/events revenues drops, and while recognizing the need for short-term financial support, focuses on longer-term regulatory asks:

- 1) Invites the Commission to consider withdrawing the proposal for the ePrivacy regulation.
- 2) Calls for no delays in DSA plans foreseen for the end of the year – asymmetric ex-ante regulation needed more than ever. Regulation should in particular include an obligation for market dominant platforms to grant publications and offerings non-discriminatory access to platforms' services.
- 3) Mentions the recent decision of the French Competition Authority against Google as a big success as it should lead to Google negotiating with publishers in good faith. However, expresses concerns that this is not shared among all competition authorities, personal data and pleads the case for an asymmetric regulation for market dominant platforms prohibiting the abuse of their dominant positions.

**(vi) The perspective of commercial radios**

**[REDACTED] Association of European Radios, [REDACTED] the Association of Commercial Broadcasters in Austria (Austria)**

Quotes figures on advertising revenues drops in the commercial radio sector: 50% to 80%, in some markets even 100%. Advertising is the only source of financing for commercial radio (as opposed to e.g. PSB who rely on fees or taxes, or print publishers which can also rely on subscriptions), while costs basis mostly fixed (transmission costs, music copyrights) or not reduceable (personnel costs). For many radio stations the crisis is a matter of economic survival, while radio is an important provider of fast and high quality news and the most trusted medium.

Proposed measures (short-term):

- 1) Direct financial support by the EU: injecting enough money to compensate for advertising losses. Loans/liquidity or credit measures do not work, what works are direct not repayable funds, with fast and non-bureaucratic administration.
- 2) Indirect EU funding via information campaigns by EU institutions (crisis-related or not).
- 3) Temporary state aid relief for Member States.

- 4) Tax relief measures for advertising in traditional media.
- 5) Soft pressure via communication that the EU supports an active national media policy in times of the crisis would help to raise attention for the need of Member States action to protect national media landscapes in times of crisis.

The EU role in longer-term should be:

- 1) Active and future-oriented policy making in digital.
- 2) Ensure a healthy digital media market environment in the interest of quality media online offerings by regulating platforms.
- 3) Reformulating the e-privacy regulation to have effective exemptions for use of personal data by media companies where appropriate.