

Citizen Beta #14

Transforming Media

Media Reform, Regulation and Accountability

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Media Reform Manifesto

1. Controls on media ownership
2. Independent, trusted and effective regulation of the press
3. Well-funded, independent public service media
4. Protection for communication rights
5. Action on lobbying and transparency

Download at <http://s.coop/ediaanifesto>

See also draft Media Plurality Bill at <http://s.coop/luralityill>

Controls on media ownership

Ownership caps:

- across the total media market
- as well as in separate markets for national and regional news

So that no single voice can control more than 20 or 30% of a designated media market.

Any publisher with a 15% share in a designated market should be subject to a Public Interest test in respect of any merger or takeover.

Independent, trusted and effective regulation of the press

Implementation of the arrangements for press self-regulation put forward by the Leveson Inquiry in 2012.

In addition we need:

- system to offer an effective right of reply to inaccuracies, operated by a regulator that represents, among others, working journalists and the public.
- regulator should require publishers to operate a “conscience clause” that enables journalists to refuse to work unethically.
- All media workers must have the right to union recognition.
- With increasing pressures on media to accommodate the commercial demands of owners and advertisers, stronger safeguards are needed to protect editorial independence.

Well-funded, independent public service media - 1

BBC Charter and the licence fee settlement must maintain a strong, independent BBC that can perform central role of public service media across platforms, local neighbourhoods, and communities of interest.

- Licence fee best way to finance BBC but should be collected as a progressive tax on households, with tiered rates for working households and free services for those in receipt of benefits.
- Cease “top-slicing” for digital infrastructure or services that benefit commercial providers with no public service obligations (e.g. paying for staff at 4 companies that control local press).
- Need for a more accountable, democratically elected body to oversee BBCs work.

Well-funded, independent public service media - 2

- Stricter obligations on commercial public service broadcasters relating to levels of investment in original programming and nature and range of programming at peak times.
- Providers of broadcasting content should meet public service obligations once they reach a certain threshold of market share in return for access to spectrum.
- New sources of finance are required for other public service media, eg. levies on companies like Google, satellite and cable providers not covered by PSB provisions, recording equipment, pay TV revenues, advertising income, mobile phone operators.
- Big Media corporations, including internet giants like Amazon and Google, must be made to pay proper levels of tax.

Protection for communication rights & Transparency on Lobbying

- Theresa May's Snoopers Charter etc
- Joke of a Lobbying Register (working with SpinWatch on this)
 - There should be a statutory system to compel the disclosure of who is lobbying whom and how much is being spent in the process, in Westminster and the devolved assemblies.

More (and questions)

@StopFundingHate / #StopFundingHate

- launched facebook page Aug 8th
- 5.2m views on video
- 78k likes
- 41k signatures on petition
- ~500 comments on Richard Branson blog about petitions

The **“every time there is a correction/ retraction in the media make sure everyone knows about it machine”**

Better Media Fund

- everyone routinely put £ in a pot, fund projects that help create a more **Diverse, Democratic and Accountable Media**, or to **Know the Media, Be The Media, Change The Media**