***For a Common European Media Space***

proposed on 16 May 2025 by **Francois Leray, EB Member**

**The Federal Committee of the Union of European Federalists, convening in Brussels, Belgium, on 21-22 June 2025**:

**1. Proposed Resolution**

**1.1 Preamble**

European democracy requires a robust, shared media environment that fosters engagement, promotes informed citizenship, and bridges the communication gaps between Member States. To support this vision, we call for the establishment of a transnational European media network with national media affiliation, offering news, cultural content, and entertainment accessible to all Europeans. This network would foster a common sense of European identity, strengthen democratic discourse, and advance European citizenship.

**1.2 Context and Challenges**

The European political debate struggles to captivate broad public interest across the Union. In response, media often emphasize divisive issues, while national parties and media outlets, operating within competitive, multichannel landscapes, exacerbate polarization by favoring national controversies over constructive EU-wide discussions.

The national framing of European elections, particularly the role of candidates for the European Commission presidency, has undermined efforts to elevate European democratic processes. Despite the intent of the Lisbon Treaty to enable a more direct link between EU leadership and its citizens, media framing has largely nationalized these elections, limiting their resonance and impact.

**1.3 The Need for a European Public Space**

A meaningful European public space is essential for fostering a shared sense of belonging to the EU, transcending geographic and cultural divides, and enabling the emergence of a unified political Europe. The fragmentation of national media landscapes into atomized, country-specific systems weakens the prospects for a cohesive European public sphere and stifles transnational discourse.

To develop such a European public space, the Union needs a dedicated platform for public debate and information dissemination that is complementary to, but not a replacement for, national public spaces.

In line with Article 11 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which emphasizes the need for citizen participation and dialogue, this platform would increase transparency, legitimacy, and engagement across Europe.

**1.4 Learning from Federal Models**

In federal systems worldwide, transnational public spaces are essential to national unity, with approximately 40% of the world’s population living in federations where media networks link constituent states. In countries such as the United States, Brazil, and India, media are organized at the state level yet offer shared programming at the federal level. Although these models are not fully replicable, they demonstrate how shared media can foster a federal identity alongside regional identities, enhancing cohesion and encouraging a shared public consciousness.

**1.5 A Vision for a European Media Network**

Europe needs its own independent, decentralized media networks that operate at both the national and Union levels, open to both public and private actors. These networks, and their digital platforms, would provide European-focused news, culturally rich content, sports programming, and entertainment to affiliated national channels. Models for this already exist, such as the “Big Three” networks in the USA (ABC, CBS, NBC) or Rede TV in Brazil, which affiliate with local stations across states, enhancing federal awareness and identity.

Transnational initiatives like Arte, Eurosport, and Euronews are promising steps, but Europe needs to go further to foster a truly transnational media landscape that aligns with the scale and aspirations of the European project. Given Europe’s vast audience potential, private investment could be attracted, supported by a regulatory framework and Union-provided incentives, including the creation of a public European media and digital network.

Even though social media tends to erode the market share of traditional media, TV networks are still the first mainstream media for citizens and are much more trusted than social media as a news source for all generations. In addition, traditional networks are now fully digital with an influential audience on social media.

**1.6 Overcoming Language Barriers**

The linguistic diversity of Europe, once a barrier to transnational media, can now be navigated through advanced digital translation, AI-powered subtitling or AI lip syncing. These tools enable unified program broadcasts while respecting linguistic diversity, allowing each Member State to engage with shared content in their own language and thus promoting mutual understanding.

**1.7 Call to Action**

Imagine the representatives of European political parties, trade unions, the Commission, and civil society engaging in real-time, Union-wide debates across the 27 Member States' most popular media platforms. Such a transformation would foster a sense of belonging to a common political entity among Europe’s 450 million citizens, whose public spaces are currently isolated from one another. Synchronicity is the main driver for a political community.

Fragmented national media environments create fertile ground for nationalism, anti-European rhetoric, and scapegoating that targets "Brussels". International examples show that a transnational media space is feasible, aligns with European identity, has substantial economic potential, and is technologically achievable. The urgency of this initiative is underscored by the potential to offer an alternative media source in Member States where press freedom faces governmental restrictions, reinforcing the EU’s commitment to democratic values.

**1.8 UEF’s Commitment**

The UEF commits to support this project before the European Commission and European Parliament. A true European public space is not only possible; it is a prerequisite for a democratic European federation. By taking this step, Europe will be better equipped to face global challenges, foster a deeper democratic identity, and lay the foundations for a united and inclusive European future.

**2. Context**

To foster a strong and inclusive European identity, it is crucial to address the gaps in knowledge and engagement with European affairs among EU citizens. Recent data underscores these challenges:

- *Lack of Informed Citizenship*: 6 out of 10 Europeans do not feel well-informed about European issues, while only 58% claim to be aware of their rights as EU citizens (Eurobarometer 98, Winter 2022-2023).

- *Limited Interest in European News*: Just 45% of Europeans reported accessing European or international news in the past week, compared to 50% for local news and 47% for national politics. This number drops to 35% among those with lower educational attainment (Flash Eurobarometer, “Media & News Survey 2023”).

- *Insufficient Media Coverage*: Media coverage of EU-wide debates remains limited. In France, for example, 97-98% of news items do not reference European-wide issues, even during election periods. Furthermore, the 2024 European elections received 30% less media attention compared to 2019 and five times less than the French presidential election or the 2022 World Cup (Institut Jean Jaurès, 2024).

- *Public Perception of Poor Information Access*: In France, 73% of citizens report feeling poorly informed about European issues, illustrating a wider European challenge in achieving an informed electorate.

This context highlights the need for a dedicated European media space that can bridge these gaps, ensure comprehensive and accessible coverage of EU affairs, and reinforce a shared European identity.

**3. Example of Implementation**

The European Union could adopt a range of tax incentives to encourage the production and dissemination of daily European-focused TV and digital programming within existing national media channels. This program could involve reduced VAT rates or exemptions from certain social and tax charges, making it financially feasible to produce and broadcast eligible content that meets defined standards. The criteria for program eligibility might include:

1. *Audience Reach*: Programs should aim to cover at least 75% of Member States and reach 75% of the Union’s population.

2. *Widespread Distribution*: To maximize accessibility, these programs should be aired by at least one national media outlet in each Member State, free-to-air and available on digital terrestrial television (DTT).

3. *Uniform Content Production*: Programs should be consistently produced and broadcast across Member States without modification to preserve a unified message.

4*. Content Requirements*: Programming should include a minimum of two hours of daily content, with at least 50% focused on general interest news.

5. *Multilingual Access*: Weekly broadcasts should utilize a minimum of five official Union languages, ensuring linguistic inclusivity.

6. *National Translation and Accessibility*: Content should be translated into each Member State’s official and/or regional languages to ensure accessibility for all citizens.

7. *Centralized Digital Platform*: To enhance accessibility, all content should be accessible on a single, multilingual, digital platform, providing European citizens with easy access to programming regardless of location.

8. *Regulated by a Dedicated EU Entity*: All programming should be managed within a specific legal structure established within the EU to ensure compliance, transparency, and the efficient management of the media space.

9. *Commitment to Media Freedom and Pluralism*: This initiative would operate in strict accordance with international conventions and European laws safeguarding media freedom, pluralism, transparency, and independence.

By establishing a European media space through strategic tax incentives and clear eligibility criteria, the EU can address the existing disconnect, improve citizens' access to comprehensive European news, and promote a more cohesive European identity. This approach not only promotes media engagement with European affairs but also exemplifies the Union’s commitment to democratic values and informed citizenship across the continent.

**amendment FORM**

**Deadline for amendments to the proposed resolutions: 12:00 PM (CET) 10 June 2025**

**Completed forms should be sent to:** **secretariat@federalists.eu****.**

**Please fill out one table per amendment and one amendment form per resolution. Do not add rows or columns to the tables.**

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