

4<sup>th</sup> December 2015

Dear Vice-President Ansip,  
Dear Commissioner Oettinger,  
Dear First Vice-President Timmermans  
Dear Commissioner Jourová,

We write to you in the context of your Digital Single Market Strategy to share our concerns with recent developments which directly target the sharing, linking and aggregation of news online with a new form of 'ancillary right' triggering mandatory payments. We are aware of such developments in Spain and Germany, and concerned that the European Union is not fully aware of the adverse effects of such initiatives.

We strongly believe that the European Union has a leading role to play in defending the free flow of information across Europe and fundamental rights to information.

As publishers of news, information and entertainment, the ethos of our profession is to embrace freedom of information, and we are in no doubt that what is essentially an obligation to secure new rights, permissions and payments for links will be harmful in this respect. But while much will be said about the consequences of such initiatives for citizen's access to news and information, we fear that their deeply destructive impact on news publishing is being passed under silence.

As publishers, we are troubled to hear that such initiatives are claimed to help us.

As publishers, we know such proposals make it harder for us to be heard, to reach new readers and new audiences. They create new barriers between us and our readers, new barriers to entry for news publishers such as ourselves. It will be harder for us to be present, discovered and accessed by our readers online. It will be harder for our readers to engage with our stories online, to share links or our headlines with their friends. It will be harder for us to grow, develop new sources of information and innovate in our business. Incredibly, in Spain, we are deprived of control over our own content, since we are not allowed to disseminate our news without payment, whether we like it or not.

In short, this legislation is a step away from a forward-looking, modern and diverse European press. It will only make it harder for us to grow and develop innovative models. When the dust settles and the Spanish and German laws come into full force, it may be too late to realise that they are bad for journalism and European news publishing.

We call upon the European Union to weigh in against such developments.

Yours sincerely,



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***About the publishers***

**AEEPP:** The AEEPP represents hundreds of publishing companies that publish more than 900 titles across a wide range of sectors, periodicities (daily, weekly, biweekly, monthly, yearbooks) and channels (print, digital, free and paid) with together run over 500 million copies a year, reach an estimated 125 million readers a month in print and over two million unique visitors a day 'on line'. AEEPP publishers employ 2,400 professionals, mostly journalists.

**ANSO:** ANSO is the first Association in Italy to represent digital publishers. ANSO acts in defense of online information representing 155 local newspapers in Italy. With its 3.800 titles published every day, its 15 million readers and 55 million articles read per month, ANSO has got an exceptional place in the world of local online information. Daily involved in its institutional responsibilities, ANSO organizes national events and conventions, promotes new opportunities of business for online news publishers and values their works.

**Denník N:** Independent Slovak daily founded in 2014 by former employees of the biggest broadsheet daily after it was hostilely taken over by local financial group. "N" is published both in print and digital form, has several of the most popular Slovak news apps and is supported mostly by readers' subscription fees. It is the most quoted Slovak daily paper and has the highest number of journalism awards winners among its staff.

**Echo24.cz and Weekly Echo:** Launched in 2014, Echo24.cz is an independent online news and opinion site. Staff consists mainly of opinion writers, reporters, the editor and the management team. Echo24.cz has 680 000 monthly users, 1 800 000 visits and 4 400 000 page views. Echo Weekly, also launched in 2014, started as a digital-only publication and has expanded with a printed version too. It has a circulation of 11,000.

**Eldiario.es:** Eldiario.es is a Spanish independent online news site that focuses on politics and economy. Its goal is to help citizens analyse and understand a complex reality through a rigorous and honest journalism. It defends freedom, social justice, human rights and a more transparent and open democracy. The independence of eldiario.es is based on the fact that more than 50% of the company is owned by journalists and other employees that work in its newsroom. Because of that, it is not tied to the interests of any corporate group. It was founded in 2012 in Madrid and it also has local editions for other Spanish regions.

**Golem:** Founded in 1997, Golem.de is the leading news and information source for IT professionals in Germany. The site offers articles and videos on a great variety of topics, ranging from core technologies, politics and economics to science. Golem.de puts a lot of effort in research and quality control and has built a reputation for well-written and profound stories on IT and technology. It reaches over 2 million readers.

**Les Echos:** Les Echos is a French daily which provides quality, comprehensive coverage of general news, economic and business affairs. Available in print and digital form, the mission of Les Echos is to provide information that impacts the economic landscape, to deliver key insights in decision making and help readers anticipate and make the right decisions for their business. Launched on social networks, Les Echos Live has been praised for its innovative offer. Les Echos reaches 6 310 000 readers every day, online and offline. Les Echos' newsroom includes 180 economic journalists and an outstanding network of regional and foreign correspondents.

**Meltygroup:** meltygroup is a global media group headed by 29 year old Alexandre Malsch. It is composed of 13 thematic websites in France ([melty.fr](#), [meltyFashion](#), [meltyStyle](#), [meltyBuzz](#), [meltyFood](#), [meltyCampus](#), [meltyXtrem](#), [meltyDiscovery](#), [Fan2.fr](#), [june.fr](#), [mcm.fr](#), [virginradio.fr](#) and [neonmag.fr](#)) and also present in Italy, Spain, Brazil, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic and Morocco with local versions. The group attracts more than 26 million visits a month worldwide covering 27 countries, and has established itself as the 1st web media group among 18-to-30 and 12-to-17-year-olds.

**SPIIL:** SPIIL (Syndicat de la Presse Indépendante d'Information en Ligne) is the professional association of French independent news publishers, with 150 news companies as members. Since 2009, SPIIL advocates for equality between online editors and print editors, in terms of taxation, legal protection, or state subsidies. SPIIL also advocates for the democratic value of independently-owned news publications.

**The European:** The European is a debate and opinion magazine from Berlin - published online and in print. The European was founded in 2009 to raise societal questions. It thereby embraces the art of debate as the basis of its journalism. With 150,000 monthly users The European is part of a global network of high quality emerging journalistic businesses.

**The Journal:** Founded in early 2010, TheJournal.ie is an Irish news website that invites its users to shape the news agenda. The team of journalists produces over 70 original stories a day and interacts with the online community over social media and in the comments section. The site is best known for its breaking news coverage and its high profile columnist and bloggers. TheJournal.ie also operates three sister brands, TheScore.ie for all things sport, The Daily Edge for pop culture & entertainment news and Business ETC for business news. TheJournal.ie is also Ireland's No.1 news source in social media with 190,000 facebook fans and 50k Twitter followers across its different verticals.

**300polityka:** 300polityka is a Polish media hub for political insiders and influencers providing daily playbook newsletter each morning and evening, alongside media and political analysis throughout the day. It has kicked off 2.5 years ago and gained successful appeal to its niche of the Warsaw corridors of power.