



Network of Free European Journalism Draft charter

Network of European media organisations and professionals with the following aims:

Short term

- Sharing information and knowledge to strengthen members individually
- Making up-to-date information and knowledge easier and faster to access
- Be networked throughout Europe by colleagues with the same professional journalistic attitude and approach
- Being stronger together against outside pressure
- To have regular contact across Europe with like-minded colleagues
- Breaking down journalistic country borders within Europe
- Looking for new ways to survive financially without losing independence
- Providing a place for journalism training
- Working together on dossiers and themes and putting them on the agenda

Longer term

- Creation of a new and independent European Press Office
- Building a shell around the network of other professionals who can support the organisation and its members in various situations. This could include lawyers, tax specialists, language specialists, travel and accommodation organisations, ICT specialists, hardware suppliers, publishers, and so on

The network aims to encourage independent information provision to develop the critical minds of readers/viewers/listeners; not to promote any particular ideology. It prefers reflection to belief, arguments to beliefs.

Motto

Freedom is always the freedom of dissenters - Rosa Luxemburg

Guide

- Munich Charter

https://nl.frwiki.wiki/wiki/Charte_de_Munich

- Bordeaux code

https://www.wikiwand.com/nl/Code_van_Bordeaux

Why network Parrhesia?

Journalism in the West has forfeited its role as a check on power.

As a result of the dominant social and political ideology of neoliberalism and associated commercialisation of many domains in Western societies, many formerly independent journalism enterprises have been transformed into media companies and have fallen into the hands of the powerful and wealthy. These new owners use the media to maintain and reinforce their own power and wealth. Journalism courses have also degenerated into vocational training where employees for media companies are trained, not where free independent journalism is taught. Being a journalist has become a job with salary and status, not a vocation or work from intrinsic motivation or conviction.

A journalist (m/f) is an ordinary flesh-and-blood human being and also has his role in society. That often means he has family, house and mortgage and needs to generate an income to do so. By receiving a "salary for work" as an employee of a corporate media company, he actually and fundamentally gives up part of his journalistic independence. Thus, this fundamentally violates that complete journalistic freedom. All this in accordance with the saying: 'Whose bread you eat, whose word you speak'.

Because of the importance of money, cost-benefit analyses and revenue models, decisions are made about which topics are written about, which opinions are, which are not, which countries are positive, which negative, and so on. This does not encourage objectivity but promotes owners' interests.

This situation has led to the instrumentalisation of journalists on the part of those in power: the big asset managers, the NGOs, the PR conglomerates, the big-corporates (big tech, big data, big pharma, big money, etc), in short, the transnational elite of oligarchs. Politics and media are bought and influenced by them (prescribed content in exchange for financial incentives) and are therefore no longer independent. They no longer serve the free people against the power of governments.

There is no more democracy. Indeed, in a functioning democracy, there should be an opportunity to be properly informed. One should be provided with good information from all kinds of different sources. A person needs that to make good decisions, for instance about who or which party to vote for.

The most famous example is the corona crisis, where groups have used their power to gain more power, such as WHO and national governments, or make more money, such as Big Pharma and GAMAM (Google, Amazon, Meta, Apple, Microsoft).

Over the past few years, several groups have seen the light of day that have tried in various ways to make a different voice heard (paper, internet, radio, TV). The content of many of these channels has apparently proved undesirable, as censorship is increasing hand over fist, the latest feat being the Digital Services Act (DSA), which came into force on 25 August 2023. Enforcement of this act is in the hands of the European Commission and special coordinators.

In other words, freedom of expression in Europe is under great pressure. It is increasingly difficult for journalists to work freely. Establishing a network can help strengthen each other, get out from under the pressure and give journalism back its role as a controlling power and a louse of the elite.

From and for whom

The network is intended for European organisations that practice journalism and subscribe to the above guiding principle and also have a proven record of putting it into practice by going against the current mainstream narrative.

Both journalists working independently and journalism organisations can become part of the network.

Paresia is an initiative of Kairos (BE) and De Andere Krant (NL) which invite all free independent journalists and organisations in Europe to join.

The name Paresia

Parrhesia stands for daring to speak boldly in public about an uncomfortable truth. In the words of Michel Foucault, *"More specifically, parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, risking his life because he recognises speaking the truth as a duty to convert or help others for the better (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses openness instead of persuasion, truth instead of lies or silence, the risk of death instead of quality of life and safety, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy."*

The provisional working name Paresia was chosen because it is a short term from ancient Greek, thus avoiding translation problems. The aim is to let everyone work and communicate with other Europeans in his/her own language as much as possible. The choice for one general working language of the network is emphatically not made, as a European network presupposes European diversity of which language is an essential part.

Roadmap

- ongoing: actively approach potential members of the alliance, draft and elaborate the alliance charter and translate and disseminate it
- First quarter 2024: first meeting to get acquainted. Here the charter is endorsed and cooperation, i.e. the exchange of up-to-date information and knowledge, is officially launched.