



Towards European Media Sovereignty

An Industrial Media Strategy to
leverage Data, Algorithms and
Artificial Intelligence

A report by Guillaume Klossa, special adviser to European Commission
Vice-President Andrus Ansip.

With the support of associate experts Dieter Boen, Daniel Knapp, Sten-Kristian
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Executive Summary

Context

European Commission Vice-President Andrus Ansip appointed former EBU director Guillaume Klossa as a special adviser last October 2018. He asked him to share his views on the challenges and opportunities for Europe linked to the development of new digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain with a specific focus on the media sector. This report « For a European Media Sovereignty » is a answer to this request. It tries to propose a New industrial Media Strategy to foster a sustainable pluralistic and independent European media ecosystem contributing to democracy, culture and sustainable growth.

Perspective

We live in a world undergoing radical and extremely rapid transformations. The situation looks glum: international relations are based on force, informational disorder has become the norm in a very short time, democratically unaccountable organizations and algorithm-driven platforms use technologies that fragment societies, citizens' trust in their political and social institutions is deteriorating. In a word: our democracy is at risk. The media is both a vehicle for these disruptions, and a means to counteract them. But the European media ecosystem, a foundational pillar for healthy democracies, has become a patient in intensive care, which has an increasing difficulty to keep the attention of its audiences and their trust in a war for attention, and in a period of informational chaos.

An urgent wakeup call is needed to ensure a strong pluralistic, economically viable, innovative and independent reliable media ecosystem. This is crucial for the European Union, its democracies, its citizens, its consumers and its companies. It is a matter of social cohesion. It is a matter of trust in ourselves, in the value of our public debate and our capacity to be sovereign. We, as individual citizens and collectively as democracies, need to be able to conduct an informed and rational debate and to take rational collective and accepted decisions. It is also a major economic matter and a challenge in terms of innovation. Sustainable and free media are a key condition for liberal democracy and the social market economy to operate efficiently and transparently.

The media sector is central in our society and can also easily and rapidly serve as a test ground for actionable applications of ground-breaking technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain. These are the future pillars of the digital revolution following the era of the World Wide Web, the Social Networks and Big Data. Media is central because it is a visible sector engaging all the citizens on a daily basis as well as the social, economic and cultural stakeholders. If it takes advantage of the latest technological developments to transform itself quickly, it will have a domino effect on the entire European society and economy. Strong links exist between innovations in the media and other sectors such as defence, security, health and automotive, enabling the potential for cross-fertilization.

The situation is clear: the media sector is at the forefront of the ongoing data, AI and Blockchain revolution, a revolution which does not know geographical borders. In this respect, it is now time to develop a real and ambitious systemic EU industrial strategy for the media, leveraging all the potential of these technologies for the sector. It is important for this strategy to be in line with the core European values in terms of fundamental rights, diversity, pluralism, quality and of course freedom of speech. This is why I encourage the media sector to play a key role in the testing and implementation of the ethics guidelines prepared by the expert group on AI set up by the European Commission and to adapt them for the

A specific use case for the media sector is all the more important since the data collected about users to provide media services tell a lot about the very personal identity of each of us and about our personal democratic choices. These elements must be consequently considered and protected, as the secret vote is.

Paradoxically, the media sector has never been really considered as a strategic industrial asset for Europe for different reasons: it was long perceived as a very fragmented sector that was predominantly national and low profile in terms of innovation. In addition, there was no comprehensive public awareness of the link between the weakening of democracy and the weakening of a pluralistic and independent economically viable media ecosystem. The nexus of changes encompassing the convergence between video, text, sound, augmented reality and gamification, the changes brought by the platform economy as well as the coming and rapid improvement of automated translation will render obsolete the traditional concept of frontiers and the very definition of the media sector. The shift is gigantic from traditional mass media to data-driven and converging media including newspapers, publishing, tv, radio, games, social platforms, communications companies. These media players are well aware of this change of paradigm. Long reluctant to cooperate, they are increasingly aware that innovation and transformation is coming essentially from the global platforms and the tech giants. For most of the media players, putting data technologies and AI at the core of their business models is becoming a priority to compete and differentiate.

Looking at the bright side, opportunities to use technologies like AI and Blockchain for the media sector are manifold. They should be put at the service of the quality and positive social impact of media. These technologies can allow to improve the quality of information and better contextualise it. They can help to fight fake news, develop a better understanding of the audience and an ever-more personalised relationship, better measure the audience in a cross-platform world, but also better distribute the content and better monetize it, supporting creativity. New technology can also help authenticate information and archives, develop micropayments, and better manage copyrights which deserve first experimentations. Looking at the other side of the coin: the same technologies can also be used to weaken the media ecosystem via the production and propagation of fake news, the development of deep fakes with a strong risk of falsification of any kind of digital archives, and to extract economic value from the media ecosystem.

There is a very small window of opportunity for Europeans to leverage these potentials and regain democratic sovereignty empowered by a sustainable, innovative and much more co-operative media sector. Seizing it requires the urgent mobilization of all the stakeholders. Regulation and competition should also be shaped for the era of tech giants and artificial intelligence.

14 Strategic Recommendations for a European Media Sovereignty

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Recommendation 1 : Develop a new industrial media strategy co-built with a EU media stakeholders' forum focussed on leveraging new digital technologies and creating a virtuous circle between European media, technology and the creative field. A shared ambitious and proactive "Vision 2030" should be defined, with a rethinking of the media at the time of convergence, AI and platform. This new industrial media strategy should be a top priority of the next European Commission mandate. Its three objectives should be to :

- (1) speed up the digital transformation of European media and help media companies to benefit from the untapped opportunities of the Digital Single Market,
- (2) create a level playing field while preserving European fundamental values and
- (3) favour a sustainable, innovative, cooperative and independent media ecosystem serving democracy, creation and society transformation.

This strategy should take advantage of the next European Budget (MFF) and of its new programs such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe.

Recommendation 2: Give European citizens fundamental rights over their data including access control and data interoperability when dealing with personal data linked to the consultation of political, societal and cultural information that should be protected as the secrecy of the vote is. We need a New Deal on Data particularly when it deals with Media.

Recommendation 3 : Create a right of access to diversified and free quality news in one's own language for every European citizen. This right should be implemented through European platforms for quality content, equipped with automated translation tools and accessible to all European citizens. A specific effort should be conducted to speed up the quality of automated translation in the different EU languages through a specific media automated translation initiative. The EC should favour projects in this purpose. Establish a must-carry equivalent for platforms that curate and recommend content based on algorithms.

Recommendation 4 : Create a citizen's right of transparency and accountability with regard to the objectives of media algorithms. In this respect, request social and content platforms to provide transparency over recommendation and curation algorithms. Platforms that use algorithms to optimize what content people see shall need to transparently convey what an algorithm is optimizing for (i.e. maximising time spent on platform).

Recommendation 5 : Implement Ethical Artificial intelligence guidelines for the media sector. The Media stakeholders should take the lead as soon as possible on this issue by providing feedback on the pilot phase of the EU ethical guidelines. By doing so, European media will set the global standard for AI guidelines in the media sector.

Recommendation 6 : Launch a EU Media data initiative with the following objectives:

- facilitate metadata standard
- sponsor digital content archiving
- help data sharing between organisations and facilitate data flow
- favour the development of shared data-management platforms
- when dealing with personal data, foster the development of privacy-preserving data processing systems.

The European Commission should have the leadership of this initiative.

Recommendation 7 : Create a European Media digital innovation fund with a One billion Euros initial EU public funding. This fund should be focussed on data analysis technologies that will shape and nurture the media sector, such as AI, blockchain, neurosciences. It should be established for 5 years and be renewable. Its financing could come from the EU but it should be complemented by private funds (businesses and foundations). It should be part of a wider media innovation investment strategy in the media sector supported by European Investment Bank and Member States.

Recommendation 8 : Scale up European media and tech hubs. It is fundamental to develop a sustainable European infrastructure for media to speed up innovation through much better connection between Media, Tech and Creation, share best practices and disseminate them rapidly and develop an avant-garde innovation mindset within the media sector. In this respect, the European Commission should scale up initiatives such as the *MediaRoad*, a EU-funded public-private partnership to better link media and tech.

Recommendation 9 : Favor European platforms for quality content, for media analytics and optimization and push European quality search engines and a new cross-devices audience measurement standard. The EU and the Member States should promote the relevant legal, financial and human environment to allow these *Moonshots* to take place rapidly. It allows Europeans to develop infrastructures, interfaces and innovation capacities indispensable to increasing the amount and quality of relevant data and create the conditions to develop powerful AI apps benefitting European citizens and in accordance with societal values.

Recommendation 10 : Implement a media trust initiative based upon media and social media literacy, the promotion of prebunking and debunking initiatives, in-depth cooperation between media and academia, and the certification of media processes and content.

Recommendation 11 : Allocate 3% of Horizon Europe funding to the next European R&D program for media and creative industries, which stands for a 3 billion Euros budget. We recommend a focus on the following fields of R&D :

- AI, neurosciences and educational content
- user-centric and practical privacy-preserving algorithms, technologies (e.g. PIMS, (Personal Information Management Systems, decentralized Web), and related business models
- multi-industry R&D programmes, favouring thus industrial transfers (e.g. entertainment in self driving cars with the car industry; AI, face and voice and more widely deep fakes recognition with the security industry; AI and content analysis with the health sector)
- Automated translation

Recommendation 12 : Create a European digital regulation body. We consider that the EU should develop a specific Digital regulatory body which would have three core functions :

- monitor, analyse and incentivise the behaviors of digital actors. This body could request data from digital actors including online platforms, manage access and publish dashboards and open data to empower end-users and comparison tools. The body would interact in an ecosystem including academic researchers, Non profit, DG Competition and National competition bodies (and also bodies in charge of consumer protection, fair competition or privacy protection) and interest "Reg Tech" third parties.
- impose to systemic platforms the development of sandboxes notably to test key algorithms (e.g. ranking algorithms) and new policy making approaches, in particular w.r.t. Fairness, Accountability and Transparency. These access should be shared with qualified researchers to study and help understand their impact on competition and society.
- set up common standards and be requested to implement future regulations adopted by the EU notably based upon cooperation with national regulators. The regulator would also steer a EU group of regulators on digital.

Recommendation 13 : Consider a supervision of systemic platforms, with the possibility to impose targeted measures allowing real-size/real-time experiments for testing their Fairness, Accountability and Transparency.

Recommendation 14 : Make media a priority of the European Artificial intelligence strategy. The European Commission should consider AI and media as key priorities both in terms of organisation and policy-focus The current Commission is actively delivering on its AI strategy, with a next deliverable on ethics. It is crucial that the next Commission continues this work and ensures synergies between an industrial media strategy and the AI strategy. We recommend to put the focus on education and talents promotion and conservation.

Biographies of the report team

Guillaume Klossa is special adviser to Andrus Ansip, Vice-President of the European Commission. Director of the European Broadcasting Union from 2013 to 2018, he led the EBU Big Data Initiative and initiated with the support of the European Commission the *MediaRoad* project, a European public private continental partnership to boost digital innovation in the European media ecosystem. Previously he had senior top executive responsibilities in major European corporations. Former sherpa to the reflexion group on the future of Europe (European Council), Guillaume is lecturer at Sciences-Po Paris. He co-chairs the Civico Europa citizen movement and, with civic tech Make.org, he is at the initiative of the WeEuropeans consultation, the biggest ever transnational and multilingual European consultation operated by citizens. He also founded EuropaNova, a leading Paris-based European think tank and created EYL40, the first European young leaders' program.

Dieter Boen is Head of Technology Strategy and Innovation at the Flemish public broadcaster VRT. Dieter strongly believes in the value of international collaboration and maintains an open innovation approach. His department works together with European and Flemish partners, among which startups, universities, broadcasters and other media organizations. By maintaining a strong connection with VRT brands, the department is able to turn innovation into practice. This approach also lies at the heart of VRT Sandbox and its initiative to support startups, which has now grown into an international network of media innovation accelerators.

Daniel Knapp is an advertising and media analyst with more than 15 years of international experience. He has served in leadership roles spanning market analysis, strategic advisory, and business intelligence. He is currently setting up a data science company for media and advertising in London and San Francisco. Previously he was Executive Director at IHS Markit, overseeing the company's global advertising research, consulting and forecasting practice. Daniel's key research areas span all domains of digital advertising, platform economics, data strategies and the business application of AI/ML technologies in media. Daniel holds a PhD from the London School of Economics (LSE). His academic work focuses on the sociology of algorithms and the datafication of media.

Sten-Kristian Saluveer is audiovisual media innovation and policy strategist and advisor, and content & technology entrepreneur based in Estonia and Japan. He is the founder of Storytek Accelerator-mixing deep audiovisual sector knowledge, technology and funding with a selection of hand-picked tech entrepreneurs and content creators, as well as curates the NEXT innovation section of the Cannes Marche Du Film.

Marc Schoenauer is Principal Senior Researcher (Directeur de Recherche 1ère classe) with INRIA, the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control. He graduated at Ecole Normale Supérieure, with a PhD in Applied Maths at Université Paris 6 in 1980. After 20 years with CNRS (French National Research Center), working at CMAP (Applied Maths Lab) at Ecole Polytechnique, he joined INRIA, and founded the TAO team (Thème Apprentissage et Optimisation) in Saclay in 2003 with Michèle Sebag.

Since the early 90s, Marc Schoenauer has been working in Artificial Intelligence, at the interface between Evolutionary Computation and Machine Learning. He is author of more than 150 papers in journals and major conferences of these fields. He is or has been advisor of 33 PhD students.

Marc Schoenauer is Chair of SIGEVO, the ACM Special Interest Group for Evolutionary Computation, since 2015 (Executive Board Member since 2005). He has been president of AFIA, the French Association for Artificial Intelligence (2002-2004). He was one of the experts of the Villani mission working on the French Strategy on Artificial Intelligence in 2017-2018.

Charles Manoury is policy assistant in the cabinet of Vice-President Andrus Ansip. His work is especially focused on delivering the European Commission's outputs on Artificial Intelligence. He worked previously in the Publishing industry, studied European Law in Paris and Utrecht as well as European politics in Bruges where he wrote his Master thesis on the European approach on AI.

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Background

In October 2018, College of Commissioners appointed Guillaume Klossa as special Adviser to Vice-President Ansip on new technology and the media sector. The Special Adviser's mandate included the preparation of a report on how to use new technologies (inter alia Artificial intelligence and blockchain) to strengthen the media sector in Europe. This report is the result of numerous meetings that the Special Adviser had with stakeholders of the sector. The Special Adviser also has been assisted in his work by four experts. Opinions expressed in this report are personal and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Commission or its Vice-President.

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End of Executive Summary