

## Conference of S&D group in the European Parliament

YES TO SOCIAL JUSTICE  
YES TO DIVERSITY  
NO TO DISINFORMATION  
*Riga, 11-13 April 2022*

### *Fighting Disinformation - Media and Multilingualism*

Talking points by **Boriss Cilevičs, MP, Latvia**

Minority media – several aspects:

1. Diversity as a basic value: unity in diversity
2. Freedom of speech
3. Security

Brezigar spoke about the MR dimension. Will focus on 2 un 3

Big transborder linguistic minority communities in EU: Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Russian...

Private media in these languages is, on one hand, in a better position in comparison with media in the language of smaller autochthonous communities – because of potentially much bigger numbers of users and viewers. On the other – they have to compete not only with the media in official languages but also with the media produced in and broadcasted from their kin states.

Until very recently, the transfrontier broadcasting was practically unlimited, in accordance with the Council of Europe Convention on Transfrontier Television and EU Audiovisual Directive.

In the meantime, possible restrictions on the freedom of expression are still very limited. In particular, deliberate lie, fakes, or propaganda are all formally covered by the freedom of expression.

In recent years, we have faced consequences of this approach. The aggression in Ukraine and considerable support of this aggression not only within Russia, but also by a certain part of the Russian-speaking EU residents is good evidence for this.

Lack of attention to minority media makes Europeans belonging to minorities an easy prey of the Russian propaganda. Moreover, consistent policies of gradual eradication of minority media with the declared aim of establishing “united information space in one language” – what is the case, inter alia, in Latvia - make the tasks of the Russian propaganda even easier.

It is not a secret that several countries of origin of many millions of Europeans are not genuine democracies. We should make proper conclusions from the ongoing tragedy in Ukraine.

We should seriously reconsider the very concept of the linguistic diversity as the EU’s basic value.

Still now the declared recognition of the linguistic diversity in the EU means, in practice, the formal equality of all OFFICIAL languages. In the meantime, regional or minority languages are much less supported, even if the number of speakers is much higher than speakers of some official languages. This is true, in particular, with regard to media.

It is time to learn the lesson and make proper conclusions. The EU cannot ignore the need to offer objective and professionally prepared information, opinions, room for discussions, etc for European minorities in their languages. This is a matter of both respect to diversity, minority rights, and security.