



COMMUNITY MEDIA FORUM EUROPE

To: ŠOU - Student organization of University of Ljubljana
Klemen Petek, President of ŠOU
Andrej Klasinc, Director of ŠOU
Andrej Bole, consultant of ŠOU.

Brussels, 12th January 2021

Re: Radio Student threatened with funding suspension by Student Organisation

Dear Klemen Petek, Nadrej Klasinc and Andrej Bole,

It is with consternation that the **Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE)** yesterday received information that the new *University of Ljubljana Student Organisation (ŠOU)* with no prior notice, decided to erase Radio Študent (RŠ) funding from their 2021 budget. Radio Študent is faced with a survival challenge which is unprecedented in their 50-year history.

RŠ is one of very few critical media in Slovenia providing a public service, a commitment they have been commended for holding high during the Corona crisis. This devastating news and situation have therefore been reported in all leading media in Slovenia the past week, pressuring ŠOU to reconsider. No final decision has yet been given.

As a community radio, **RŠ along with other community media in Europe, serves local communities, providing alternative channels of media production and distribution, media literacy and citizens' participation and RŠ is an important voice of civil society from Slovenia in Europe.**

RŠ employs more than 200 young part-time co-workers, who create 17 hours of live programme daily as journalists, speakers, technicians, video directors and language editors. Radio Študent's resiliency in carrying out its educational mission is proved by 50 new colleagues that join them every year after attending an internship program. **RŠ plays an important journalistic, educational and cultural role, also at the European level,** including by discussing topics from current politics that are otherwise ignored in the local media landscape, as well as by supporting a unique alternative music platform.

In this respect, **we would like to draw your attention to how the importance of independent and not-for-profit media is recognised in different European documents.**

In 2018 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in its Recommendation on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership (2018) invited member states **to support the establishment and functioning of minority, regional, local and not-for-profit community media, including by providing financial mechanisms to foster their development.**

CMFE Office Rue de la Linière 11 - 1060 Brussels, Belgium

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Also the **Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the financial sustainability of quality journalism in the digital age (2019)** stresses the importance of financial support schemes for media sectors besides public service media, in particular for regional, local, hyperlocal and **not-for-profit community media**.

Furthermore, the 2009 Declaration of the **Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe** on the role of community media acknowledges the social value of community media as a source of local content, cultural and linguistic diversity, media pluralism, inclusion and intercultural dialogue and recommend to **member states to give legal recognition, access to spectrum (analogue and digital) and funding to the sector**.

The European Parliament resolution of 25 September 2008 on Community Media in Europe (2008/2011 (INI)) states that:

- *Community media are an important means of **empowering citizens and encouraging them to become actively involved in civic society**; whereas they enrich social debate, representing a means of internal pluralism of ideas; and whereas **concentration of ownership** presents a threat to in-depth media coverage of issues of local interest for all groups within the community.*
- ***Community media help to strengthen media pluralism** as they provide additional perspectives on issues that lie at the heart of a given community.*

CMFE expresses full support to our member RŠ and kindly but strongly urges the University of Ljubljana Student Organization to provide stable financing for RŠ. A more inclusive and diverse media landscape in Slovenia must include public service, commercial and not-for-profit media. Independent journalism and media freedom cannot be censored in a democracy!

On behalf of the CMFE board,



Birgitte Jallov
President CMFE

President@cmfe.eu

Founded in 2004, CMFE links various members of the Third Media Sector at the European level. CMFE has an observer status with the Steering Committee on the Media and Information Society (CDMSI) of the Council of Europe and is part of the CoE International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) Conference. CMFE has 98 members (of which 28 are National Federations) from 26 European countries.

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