



Athens, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Culture & Audiovisual VTC 19.05.2020**

**Intervention by Deputy Minister to the Prime Minister and  
Government Spokesman Mr. Stelios Petsas**

**Madame Chair, Commissioner, Dear Colleagues,**

At a time when all Europeans are facing the COVID-19 pandemic, latest research shows a shift of the European peoples to traditional professional media as citizens seek safe, responsible, reliable and specialized information.

The extended lockdown of the economy had a profound impact on the media sector.

The Greek Government has reacted promptly taking measures to strengthen the media sector and to support affected workers and companies:

- liquidity has been provided,
- tax and social security contributions have been suspended,
- measures to protect and secure employment agreements have been enacted.

We have also deployed a 20 million euros state communication campaign regarding the pandemic.

Information saves lives.

And it seems that it continues to pay off as the hard data indicate.

Needless to say, there is still serious need for substantial support from the E.U., with stable, sustainable, transparent and adequate funding.

Having said that, here are some proposals I would like to present you:

**First:**

A professional, structured and coherent Pan-European Communication Campaign on Coronavirus, so that the European public be properly informed in the post lockdown era.

The Campaign will include member state's media (television, newspapers, radio, and internet sites, local and regional ones).

Such an initiative provides a double dividend:

- a. priceless information to all
- b. financial benefit for media

**Second:**

Establishment of a Special Emergency Fund for the media, either within the scope of the "Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative", or as an ad hoc financial instrument under the European Investment Fund to channel funds to the sector.

Furthermore may I also share with you the following:

- Ensuring that large platforms comply with the provisions of the Copyright Guidelines Directive.
- Promoting programs for the development of journalistic skills and training as well as media literacy programs.

Dear Colleagues,

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we can grow stronger, even if we are fewer.

Yesterday's announcement by Chancellor Merkel and President Macron shows that we can accomplish that with collective work, inspiration and solidarity.

Dear colleagues

Supporting the Media is a matter of democracy.

Media is not just another sector of the economy.

It is a pillar of Democracy.

Thank for your attention.