WHAT do we want from politicians to help promote fairer media that can be independent of government and business, and more responsive to the concerns of ordinary people?

We want effective ways to challenge inaccuracies in reporting. We want to ensure communities have access to a diverse range of communication services geared to serving their needs. We want an end to the corruption that surrounds the largest media corporations – but how do we achieve this?

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF) is preparing a **Media Manifesto** for 2015, to highlight these issues in the run-up to the 2015 UK General Election. The CPBF is working in partnership with the Media Reform Coalition to invite other civil society organisations, trade unions, and individuals to join us by commenting on our proposals, sharing their own and indicating areas of support and agreement.

We are launching the Manifesto initiative on 1 December. The consultation runs until 31 January 2015 and we invite comments and responses online (addresses on back page). We plan to publish the Manifesto by March 2015. Everyone interested in media reform is welcome to join in.

There are four main proposals:

- **Controls on media ownership**
- **Independent, trusted and effective regulation of the press**
- **Well-funded, independent public service media**
- **Protection for communication rights.**

**CONTROLS ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP**

TO STRENGTHEN media diversity, we need regulations to limit how much companies can own and require those with significant market shares to meet agreed standards.

Firms should help ensure media plurality by adhering to agreed standards, protecting journalistic independence and editorial output. But we are proposing ownership caps across the total media market and markets for national and regional news in different media, set at 20 or 30 per cent maximum share.

Any publisher with a 15 per cent share in a designated market should be
subject to a Public Interest test in respect of any merger or takeover. Ownership concentration above the 15 per cent threshold may be permitted if publishers meet certain obligations, such as investment in newsgathering or original programming, upholding codes of practice, and protecting editorial independence. We call on Parliament to

- Limit the power of ministers to override curbs on media concentration
- Impose public service duties on large media groups
- Strengthen the public interest test for media mergers
- Give the regulator Ofcom stronger powers to tackle media concentration and launch periodic reviews of media plurality.

Ofcom itself must be made more accountable to the public.

INDEPENDENT, TRUSTED AND EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF THE PRESS

WE CALL for the implementation of the arrangements for press self-regulation put forward by the Leveson Inquiry in 2012. In addition we need the system to offer an effective right of reply to inaccuracies, operated by a regulator that represents working journalists and the public. The regulator should require publishers to operate a ‘conscience clause’ that enables journalists to refuse to work unethically. IPSO, the body set up and dominated by the newspaper industry cannot perform this role.

WELL-FUNDED, INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA

CHARTER renewal and the 2016 licence fee settlement need to result in a strong, independent BBC that can perform the central role of public service media across platforms, local neighbourhoods, and communities of interest.

The licence fee remains the best way to finance BBC services by users, though with changes to decriminalise non-payment. The licence fee should fund BBC public services alone and cease to be ‘top-sliced’ to finance digital infrastructure or other services for the benefit of commercial providers.

We recognise that there is a crisis of trust with governance of the BBC and a need for a more accountable, democratically elected body to oversee its work. This should reflect and promote greater cultural diversity, social experiences and opinion across the nations.
New sources of finance are required for other forms of public service media, such as levies on recording equipment, pay TV revenues, advertising income, and mobile phone operators. And the Big Media corporations, including multinational internet giants like Amazon and Google, must pay proper levels of tax.

**PROTECTION FOR COMMUNICATION RIGHTS**

BOTH journalists and the public are at risk from state surveillance. There is also a growing threat from private companies whose business models are based on economic surveillance, gathering data as a commodity to sell to advertisers and exploit themselves. Powerful corporations like Google invest heavily in lobbying to secure regulatory favours, while states induce them to give up more data on users.

Neither the state nor private interests can be trusted to safeguard peoples’ communication rights. These rights include access information and services (including so-called ‘net neutrality’), privacy and freedom of expression. They are rights to receive and impart information, to cultural diversity and protection from discrimination. Free communications also depend on protection for journalists and other communication workers to foster a diversity of voices.

**RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION**

To respond please go to


You can indicate which proposals you support, which you consider the most important, and add your comments.

We also invite responses via email to

[manif2015@cpbf.org.uk](mailto:manif2015@cpbf.org.uk)