



## The Virtual SciCon 2.0 Conference Series | Transcript

### Small Country – Big Press. What we can learn from our neighbour Luxembourg

Céline Flammang, Luc Caregari and Leonard Novy present the Luxembourg system of press sponsorship in a European context and discuss what might be transferable to Germany

**25 September 2023, 11:00 am CEST**

**Moderation: Anja Noster**

**Anja Noster:** Good morning. And herzlich willkommen, welcome, bienvenue. My name is Anja Noster and I will guide you through today's second lecture. I'm a research associate and PhD candidate at Bauhaus University, Weimar in Germany, with my research focused on journalism support. So I am personally super excited about the input we will get today. As you may have heard from my welcoming words, we will look just across the border from Germany to a country where they speak many languages, namely Luxembourg, and learn more about how our neighbouring country goes about their journalism support, which was, by the way, recorded only two years ago. For that kind of enlightenment, I'm very happy to have Céline Flammang and Luc Caligari from Luxembourg to tell us a little more about the Luxembourg case and for Dr Leonard Novy, not from Luxembourg to pick up their points and put them into a European context. Celine is head of the Unit for Freedom of Expression and Media Pluralism at the Luxembourg Government's Department for Media Connectivity and Digital Policy. She is also the co-author of the law that established the new scheme for professional journalism in 2021. So basically, what we will discuss today. Luke is a renowned journalist, having worked as head of culture and investigation at the Weekly Vox in Luxemburg from 2005 to 2021, and since then he works as investigative journalist at Reporter.lu. Also, he is president of the Luxembourg Journalists Association and vice president of the Press Council. And finally, we also have Leonhard, who is a journalist but also director of the German non-profit Institute for Media and Communication Policy.

**Anja Noster:** I guess most people here know him from that role, and yet he has had and still has many more hats on, such as consultant or lecturer on democracy, media and political communication at the Hertie School of Governance and the Forum Journalism and Media in Vienna, as a researcher and also as author of several books. Before we start, I briefly want to repeat some more guidelines and also some background information about the second lecture. So the second lecture series covers the topic of science journalism in the digital age and is organized by the German Science Journalists' Association, Wissenschaftspressekonferenz, together with the Science Media Center Germany. They have been made possible thanks to a grant from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. And all lectures in this series will be recorded and transcribed. So this on one hand means a good thing. You can basically find all videos and notes from past lectures on science minus journalism.eu but it also means that by participating in today's Zoom session, you agree that the lecture, your questions, your voice and video will be recorded. So we will first have three ten minute inputs, each from each of the respective guests, followed by a 15-minute Q&A. So please be ready to ask all your questions afterwards. You can simply raise your hand, or you can also just unmute yourself or you can use the chat here below so that I can read them out later. So this is all about the formalities and introductions. Let's get started. Celine, the floor is yours.

**Céline Flammang:** Thank you very much. I will share my presentation. Yes. Good morning to everyone. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to present the present regime here in Luxembourg. And we indeed have an experience of almost 50 years of dealing with plus eight. And I would now like to take you briefly back to its beginnings, which will allow us to understand the current system better because the Luxembourg site was created at a very unlikely moment in times of crisis. This was in 1976, when the steel crisis hit Luxembourg with full force because Luxembourg was one of the largest steel producers at the time in Europe and the main employer of the country, which was the steel company, was not doing well at all. Also, the annual inflation rose to 10% and of course the press was also suffering. The paper price rose more than 80%. And in addition to this, the publishers had to switch to offset printing. What's more, the advertising revenues, which accounted for 60% of the press revenues, declined and migrated to the developing broadcasters. So we had declining advertising revenues, the challenge of new technologies, competition from new media, a structural economic crisis. You can indeed get a sensation of a *déjà vu* and the somewhat annoying fact that often journalism costs more money than it is able to generate hit Luxembourg early. As at the time we only had a population of 360,000 people and therefore a very restricted market.

**Céline Flammang:** So the government took a number of measures to mitigate the effect of the crisis, like the increase of the minimum wage and the introduction of a

national solidarity tax. As regards the press, it was very partisan at that time and the main publications were all close to political movements. So the government was aware that the pluralistic media landscape was more than necessary in times of crisis. And so the press, it's more like an investment in democracy than an additional cost. And so that's how the press was introduced here. And just in time before Luxemburg was to become an information monopoly. And the parliamentary documents here also showed the idea of solidarity and a positive duty to protect freedom of expression and the will not only to help the publishers, but also the readers by allowing the publishers to keep the prices of the newspapers low. So the model was developed together with the publishers and the journalists associations, and they created a model based on an equal annual share for everyone, big or small, and a flexible share based on the objective criteria of printed pages. And this concept of combining a fixed amount, which is the same for everyone, and the flexible amount which is adapted to each media is still valid today. And because this paper-based model couldn't of course cover online media, we had to find a new way to support press some years ago, and our objectives were to get to a technology neutral model and to replace the criteria of the number of pages with the number of journalists making them and not paper the main factor.

**Céline Flammang:** This was, of course, not easy, and we created a lot of Excel sheets and had a lot of discussions with the publishers and the journalists. But after more than two years of drafting and consultations with the stakeholders, the law was ready. It has three pillars: one for the already existing beneficiaries of the press aid, one for smaller or new publishers, and one for citizen media. As regards the first pillar, it aims at maintaining the existing media. It is based again on a fixed amount of €200,000 per year and €30,000 per year per journalist, and this money has to go entirely into the publication. And in order to avoid an absolute dependency on the state, the media has to have income that corresponds to at least half of the press aid. There are also upper limits. The cap for a daily newspaper is, for instance, €1,600,000 per year. So what's the criteria to get into this regime? You have existed for at least one year and employ five journalists recognized by the Luxembourg Press Council that have a permanent employment contract. You have to be a news media. So reporting on general interest topics, contributing to democracy and be accessible to all, whether free or paying a print newspaper with its own website is also considered as one publication.

**Céline Flammang:** We also aimed at increasing trust in journalism by adding transparency requirements so the media have to publish their editorial orientation and are encouraged to organise media literacy activities. We also aimed at inclusion: publications in every language spoken by at least 15% of the population are eligible. So that's for the moment German, French, English, Portuguese and Luxembourgish. We also wanted to encourage accessibility of the media for people with disabilities by

requiring the beneficiaries to disclose in the annual report what measures they have taken in this respect. And the second pillar is the regime for new or smaller media. It is quite similar to the other regime with just the difference that you can only have two journalists and that you only have to exist for six months and not a year before being eligible for the aid. And in this regime, you get a fixed amount of €100,000 per year if you have twice the expenses. This regime is limited to three years with the idea that after these three years you are ready to jump into the other regime. The third pillar was the citizen media, because we believe they play an important role in a democracy. And here, non-for-profits can get up to €100,000 per year as long as they employ two full time positions, including one professional journalist. The application procedure is quite straightforward.

**Céline Flammang:** The media can file the application online, then an advisory commission checks if they fulfil the criteria of the law. There are ten people in this commission, among them the next speaker category. So there are four members representing the journalists and the publishers, one member from university and five civil servants. And so the civil servants are not in a majority. The commission then calculates the amounts and submits its opinion to the Minister who takes a formal decision and the Commission's reports and the allocated amounts are also published. We also have some indirect measures like reduced VAT rate of 3% instead of 17% and an eight for the postal delivery service. And here you can see the distribution of the last year's amounts so that were more than €10 million which were allocated to 19 publications. And I also always like to draw the attention of the work of the Council of Europe in this respect, who has issued important recommendations on media policy? And finally, I would like to conclude with Victor Picard, who quite rightly points out that often the value of journalism is bigger than the revenue it can generate, at least in a small country. And that therefore, financial subsidies can help to make sure that the content stays democracy driven and not market driven. And in times of crisis and disinformation, this seems more important than ever. Thank you very much.

**Anja Noster:** Thank you very much for this very fruitful presentation, Celine. That was, I think, a very good overview to understand the Luxembourg system a little better. Um, I would like to invite Luc to just maybe react to Celine's presentation or just point out how you perceive it. Yeah.

**Luc Caregari:** Yeah. And we should have talked earlier because I also wanted to start in the 70s, so, uh, but what I can add to, to this that it was also, um, a more political context. You have to see that in that time most Luxembourg newspapers were really tied to political parties and were not as independent as they are now. I think real independent journalism in Luxembourg has begun in the 20 tens. Yeah, you can really, investigative journalism really started in 2013 for me. That's my personal view. Um,

and I think there was a general consensus that a reform was really, really inevitable for years now because the system, as Celine told us, is based on paper. So you got subvention on square centimeter of paper and there was a transitional aid for online media, but that was also unsatisfactory. And so the reform was promised. I think, correct me if I'm wrong, Celine, in 2013 already it was in the yeah, it was in the first coalitions. Um, yeah, in their papers. And the first text was deposited shortly before the 2018 elections and it was not a very, very good text at that moment. So the concept of government did not approve it before the elections and after the Coalition was re-elected, the work began really between I have to say, I have to admit, as press Council and as journalism journalists, we have been consulted. Consulted does not mean really listened to but consulted.

**Luc Caregari:** And yeah, some of the issues we have addressed have not been yet as I really understand, been being addressed because we have warned um, you know, just so that everybody does understand the title of journalist. It is not secured in Luxembourg. It's not a status, it's professional journalist and you only can become a professional journalist if you are approved by a commission that is in the Press Council. And the Press Council is run by the editors and the journalists on an independent basis. So you have a commission there where you have to apply. And if and if this commission says, yeah, you have all the criterias to, uh, to be a professional journalist, then you get the card. And now this card has been monetized because as you saw in Celine's presentation, it's €30,000 you get from that card. That's we want because first of all, the infrastructure of the Press Council has not been affected by the new law. So it's still people doing this in their work time. And we have two people working for the Press Council who have who can prepare the dossiers, but that's still not really enough. And then the other problem is the definition. The criteria to be a journalist is still very vague. And we had a working group in the Press Council who addressed this and made proposals and unfortunately, we were not listened to.

**Luc Caregari:** So that we now have um, yeah, a lot of people who try to get into the profession just to get the subventions but who don't really fulfil the criteria. And we don't have the, necessary means to, to control everything. I mean one criteria is you have to make more than 50% of your income through journalism. And number two is no publicity. And that's where it gets difficult because sometimes we cannot control every media in Luxembourg. We don't have the means to do it. And so it's sometimes it's very yeah, it's a bit frustrating. But as I have understood this, this will be addressed after the elections. Um, yeah. Also, some conflicts on the way where even editors who have the subsidies have a different interpretation of the law than the Commission. So far, we've not been to tribunal, but it's not impossible that it can, that it could happen. Another problem is, yeah, it's for the print media because everybody gets the same rate. And if you are an online media where like I work, we don't have all these printing

costs and shipping costs and all the logistics you have there, but we get the same amount of money than they do. And that puts the sector in a certain crisis because Luxembourg also has had a bigger media crisis these last years. We've seen massive layoffs of journalists like 70, 70 journalists in a row.

**Luc Caregari:** That's something that I've never seen. That was at Luxembourg Award now media was when they were bought over. And yeah. So I don't think the law covers these problems as well and yeah. Uh, what did I want to say. Oh yeah. And the Grants Commission often has to treat dossiers that have no real chance to pass at all or are really at the limits. And we're losing time and efficiency in the process. And sometimes, well, for me personally, I'd like to treat the dossiers that where we say, okay, these are dossiers that fulfil all the conditions and we let them pass and we often lose time with people who, uh, yeah, we still want to try even if they don't comply with all the criteria. And last but not least, sorry, Celine, I have to say this. You know, it has been not this reform, it has been another missed chance to grant journalists in Luxembourg access to information by the law because we are one of the only countries that does not have this disposition. And so that would have been a chance to rewrite the law in that way, because that has been a demand from the journalists' association and from the Press Council since like two decades now. And that was also an yeah, an opportunity missed. And yeah, I think that's it from me.

**Anja Noster:** Thank you, Luc. I think that was already good. Hand over to some more discussion in the end. I think it would be good to also have a bit more of a European perspective to put if that's what you want to talk about, Leonard. But to maybe just put the whole press aid system a bit more into context, I figured there is some discussion about the definition of journalists, a surge in applications, which I guess at first sight might be a good sign. But um, yeah, I would love to jump into that after your presentation, Leonard or maybe not presentation, but reaction to this from a non-Luxembourg perspective, which makes things sometimes also a bit easier if you're not in the country that is affected by changes and reforms.

**Leonard Novy:** So indeed, yeah. Thank you very much, Anya. Thank you, Celine. And thank you, Luc. Indeed, I really listened with great interest and I'm not an expert on Luxembourg, and Luxembourg is certainly a special case in very many ways in terms of its size and its linguistic diversity and its traditional history of the press. And so, obviously, we're not talking about 1 to 1 transferability or so. But I do think from an outsider's perspective, and particularly given the discussions that we're having in Germany and other European countries, there is a lot to be learned. And at the same time, I followed what you just said with great interest because the devil is always in the details. And when it comes to how these things are operationalized and I myself just a caveat. I mean, I don't research this topic full time, but of course I follow it with great

interest. I'm active as a jury member in a quite remarkable initiative in Vienna, where I am at the moment: the Vienna Media Initiative that focuses on innovation and I want to just start off by making some general remarks and then talking about these, what I believe are success criteria when it comes to press support. I mean, Celine already alluded to the fact that we are indeed experiencing a market failure in journalism, and obviously not since yesterday, as Celine rightly said. And we don't need to get into the details of all of that and to the microeconomics and the positive externalities and inefficient allocation of resources and all that.

**Leonard Novy:** But it's always been the case that the social benefit of journalism as a public good has always been higher than the private demand for it. And that wasn't such a big problem, of course, in the pre-digital area where basically publishers could more or less print money in many countries where the access to the public was technically limited and you basically had this quasi monopoly on advertising and so on. And as we all know, these times are over and the enormous returns that come along with it or went along with it are over as well. And we all know the consequences. Still, a high demand and necessity for journalistic information, social media, social entertainment, creator content and all that does not replace professional journalism. And at the same time, we are seeing the massive crisis of the very institutions that produce it and that have difficulty monetizing their work. And the fact that some institutions that we all know and have sort of access to by our fingertip, the New York Times and others, have been increasingly successful and very successful in actually monetizing their content and marketing their content. Um, that doesn't change the overall picture. The fact that the provision of comprehensive, reliable and diverse journalistic information to society at large, that this cannot be, it's not a given anymore. And we're already seeing it all over in Europe with shrinking budgets, job cuts, steadily worsening working conditions and the closure of new newspapers, press diversity, particularly at the local level.

**Leonard Novy:** Obviously it differs from country to country, but I think we can all share the impression and the empirical evidence that press diversity is shrinking. And what this boils down to is that media freedom sort of understood not only in terms of formal rights, the protection against attacks and censorship, but media freedom in the sense of the de facto independence of the press as an institution. That's the way the sociologist Paul Starr framed it. Media freedom is decreasing and endangered, and many, many of the established media that we've grown accustomed to will, if trends continue, will not survive. Also, by the way, in Austria, where I'm at at the moment, which means, as many of you know, is an interesting case in terms of press support, both direct and indirect. And that sort of comes back to what Luc mentioned, that Luxembourg with what I believe from an outsider's perspective is a remarkable case. It's also not safe or not immune from these developments. And all this against the

backdrop of an ongoing process of digitalization that at first sight seems to promote innovation and diversity. But in fact, as we all know, boils down to a massive concentration of economic but also sort of journalistic power in the direction of big tech. And in that sense, I believe Elon Musk, who sort of according to his mood of the day, sort of decrees rules for public discourse.

**Leonard Novy:** This is just a very public manifestation of a sad general state of affairs that we've witnessed against the economic power of the platforms. European media houses at large, they all look like cute folklore groups. That's the way a German producer has framed it. And that's true. And I'm mentioning this and I'm getting to the press support issue in a moment, but I'm mentioning this because of the ongoing conflict that we're witnessing between publishing houses and public broadcasters, which I think is part of our debate when it comes to the broader picture and this debate and these conflicts that we're witnessing there. I mean, I understand the pain that many publishing houses experience when it comes to their competition, particularly in Germany with a 10 billion public broadcasting system. But nevertheless, I think the real problem that we're facing, broadcasters, publishers and societies at large, is the asymmetrical relationship, of course, with big tech, whose algorithms are optimized for profit and not for the benefit of society and the few breadcrumbs that Google and so on that they're giving away from their profits via copyright laws and media bargaining codes and so on. That doesn't change the overall picture. So we need to find solutions at a European level, I believe, when it comes to preventing the complete marginalization of our media markets or media companies, but also with respect to the individual European markets. Um, and that's when, that's when we get to the point of press support, because one thing we know, I mean there are a lot of uncertainties.

**Leonard Novy:** We still lack empirical evidence when it comes to the effectiveness of press support measures and so on. But one thing I believe we know for sure is the market alone won't fix it. And you're all familiar with the various fields of political action, the issue of regulation and taxation, the reform of our public service broadcasters and their mandate and their positioning in the digital world. And I do think a lot speaks for new concepts of direct support to preserve media diversity and facilitate innovation, facilitate the transition to new economically viable business models for the press. Um, for a long time, particularly in countries like Germany, we've been very skeptical of direct funding measures. And because of fears of political interference, because of that fear that it would compromise editorial independence and so on. But I do think these measures and more direct measures are justified and indispensable, particularly in the short term when it comes to the broader picture in Europe. I think many of you are familiar with it. We have lots of indirect measures in a number of countries, reduced VAT rates, postal rates and so on, which structurally



speaking, in effect very often benefit or favour, prioritize print over other means of delivery and digital products. And when it comes to direct intervention, well, a lot is happening I believe from and in Luxembourg is a case in point.

**Leonard Novy:** They differ significantly in scope in the areas of application, still very often focus on the print press, particularly in central and southern Europe. But we're also seeing, and Luxembourg is a case in point, the Scandinavian countries are as well a combination of various direct measures which support operating costs, production, distribution or innovation and I believe then we're talking about a success factor which are increasingly tech or platform neutral subsidies for analogue and digital products, which means, as you do it in Luxembourg, you actually support journalistic work rather than paper. Now, as I said, do I have two more minutes? Yeah, as I said, I mean, from what I know, there's still a lag when it comes to empirical, comprehensive, comprehensive, empirical picture with regard to effectiveness and efficiencies of the various funding measures. But we do have hints on what works and what doesn't, and it's meant many of the criteria that I just briefly want to allude to won't surprise you. And many of the criteria that I mentioned, I think are, on the face of it, reflected in what you're doing in Luxembourg. The idea of not supporting by the watering can, as we say in Germany, "nicht mit der Gießkanne unterstützen". We need efficiently and effectively designed measures with a clear focus on the actual necessities or strategic objectives that could be promoting or maintaining diversity at the local level, where, of course, the crisis hit most hard in many regions and countries.

**Leonard Novy:** The idea here being that structural diversity, a variety of titles, certainly more than one in every region, that this actually has a positive effect on the diversity of topics and opinions. Also, another clear strategic objective, which is, of course, the promotion of innovation and transformation, something that on a smaller scale we're doing in Vienna with the Medieninitiative, where we found a way to operationalize. What does innovation actually mean in all these measures? It's important to avoid negative side effects. Céline alluded to this as well. Avoid windfall effects, strengthening really those who need it rather than those who are sort of floating in money anyway. Which leads to the second point. I believe press support should not be reserved for the top dogs on life support or intensive care. They should be taken platform neutral, not prioritize one distribution form over the other so as to avoid market barriers for new players. And it goes without saying, the issue of state neutrality or fairness in Germany is still an issue which in practice means subsidies must be transparent. There must be clear and sort of objective rules and criteria that are independently audited and regularly evaluated and that we know from Scandinavia. We know that that works. Scandinavia ranks high in the rankings Reporters Without Borders and so on. When it comes to media freedom and editorial independence.

**Leonard Novy:** But it's not a, it's not self-evident. It's something that needs to be taken care of. What I like about Luxembourg, from what I heard, is your focus to operationalize or to put quality into the picture, which again, sort of you could see this running foul or running into a conflict with the aspect of independence. But by just asking for editorial statutes and so on to be made transparent. That is one aspect by which I believe you do place an emphasis on quality. And overall, given the landscape that we're in, and by that I'm coming to a close, I think we just need to be able to adapt these measures. They need to be regularly monitored, evaluated and adapted to changing circumstances, be it economic, technological and also social or societal changes. The way society changes and the fact that you have citizens journalism into the picture is, I believe, in a case in point. So long story short, I mean, there is no panacea, certainly not, nor is there 1 to 1 transferability. But I do think there's a lot to be learned. Innovations do not fall from the sky. They are the result of political and social conditions that either promote new ideas, new concepts or can put brakes on them. And this all starts with with and transfer of knowledge. So I want to close by thanking you for this, for making us meet today. Thank you.

**Anja Noster:** Thank you for your input, Leonhard. So remember, you can put your questions into the chat. I already see one. I was just thinking to have a brief follow up on what you already said, Leonhard, that for um, press aid to work it is important to make it, to make it platform neutral basically. And I think Luc also mentioned that already that basically is the Luxembourg case. Different sizes of media companies can access the same amount of money. So you mentioned that Luxembourg award is struggling a bit more because they have all the print distribution when compared to, for example, Reporter.lu. Celine, I was wondering, so this is a question for you, Celine. Um, what do you do to actually measure the impact of the press aid system you have and to see if you have to adapt it? I, I see that Luc already mentioned that maybe there is need for some more reform. I know the law is only two years old. I also know you have elections coming up. So my question is, um, a. How do you measure the impact? What do you look at? What is the criteria? And yeah, is there more coming, maybe more after the elections, if you can say anything about it. Thank you.

**Céline Flammang:** Yes, thank you. Yes, indeed. We measure it. We just finished a consultation, an online consultation of all the beneficiaries and also the Press Council and the Association of Journalists, where we asked them with their experience of the law, the pros and cons, if they have suggestions for adapting the law. And this will indeed be the um, the conclusions of this will be given to the new government. And then there might, there will be adaptations, of course, if needed. And if you allow me, I just want to also react to something Luke said. So to make this a bit more lively, we have access to documents in Luxembourg. It's not as if we don't have anything. We have access to documents for every citizen within one month, and so including

journalists. And there will be an access too, for journalists, which we are working on and which will be up to the new government to finalize.

**Anja Noster:** Luc, Are you also part of the selection committee or you're more like the observer maybe or on the grants committee.

**Luc Caregari:** I mean, yeah, I'm representing the journalists in the submission or the subvention committee. Yeah.

**Anja Noster:** And who else is part of this committee? How is it set up?

**Luc Caregari:** Well, it's for journalists. Correct me if I'm wrong, Celine. Um, it's five civil servants from different ministries. It's two from the Ministry of Media and Communication, one from the Finance Ministry, one from the State Ministry or.

**Céline Flammang:** The Press and Information Service. Yes.

**Luc Caregari:** And the press. The SIP. Yeah, the SIP, the press information services. And then one professor from the university who is also listening in. Hello, Raphael. And yeah, and then four people from the journalists and four people from the editors.

**Anja Noster:** Thank you for that. When looking back at how you came to the reform in 2021, I mean, you said it was already started like initial ideas were in 2013, 2014.

**Luc Caregari:** Original promises. Yeah, because there was a general consensus. It has to be reformed. It can't go on like that. It's not. It's not. I mean.

**Anja Noster:** Coming from Germany, I know that these things take time and some sometimes.

**Luc Caregari:** Neuland: internet. Yeah.

**Anja Noster:** Yes. But, um, so maybe from both your perspectives and Leonhard, you can also chip in what was most difficult about actually putting up such a reform? Was it that the stakeholders didn't get together? Was it that, um, I don't know. It wasn't clear what to actually target. What to tackle was it that it wasn't clear how much money to give? What was the most challenging part, I guess for both of you was very different? But you can start.

**Luc Caregari:** Right. What was the most difficult part? I think getting everyone on the table was not so difficult. But then there was in the beginning, I think, there was a bit

of confusion because there were different ideas in the room that were circulated and not all information circulated with the same people. But I think we in the end we tackled that there was some pressure from some editors who wanted it to go faster. And I mean, there was yeah, this, this political mingling you cannot get around. I found that a bit exhausting for me because I'm a bit more of a pragmatic person when it comes to this and not really politically interested. So there was yeah, that's what I found exhausting. And then to say also a positive thing like we have not always been listened to, but one thing we have been listened to is the composition of the Grants Commission, because I think if I remember well in the first draft, there were no or only one representative of the journalists. And now you have a majority of people from the profession who can, we can decide. Yeah. That's. Yeah. Yeah.

**Anja Noster:** I guess it sounds very political in the end. I guess that's why you have become a journalist and not a politician. Um, yeah. I mean, what was the, the most difficult part for you bringing this all together? Um, given that you have been co-author of the law, like all those different opinions, putting that under one roof.

**Céline Flammang:** Yeah, that really is a complex process. We really try to listen to everyone and to take everybody's concerns into consideration. But of course, it's not easy to find one criteria that, um, uh, that fits to everyone because there are different business models, there are different publications, there are different needs. But if you want to be equal, of course you find you have to find one amount and one type of criteria. So of course, it's not easy. And the state budget also is not unlimited. So, um, yeah, it's not easy.

**Anja Noster:** Um, I have one question in the chat. I will just rephrase it for you, um, or I'll read it for you. Um, basically it's Maurizio asking about the consultation process and he wants to know who was consulted during this process. Was it small publishers, big publishers, everyone, or was there a focus on specific groups? How did you go about that?

**Céline Flammang:** Uh, thank you. Yes, well, as I said, we consulted the stakeholders we are in contact with. So that's the beneficiaries and the Press Council and the Association of Journalists who represent, uh, the Press Council represents the professional media in Luxembourg.

**Anja Noster:** Okay.

**Leonard Novy:** And can I ask you a question?

**Anja Noster:** Yeah, go ahead.

**Leonard Novy:** Just since you, Céline, you mentioned as the third pillar, the citizen journalism and so on. And I was wondering whether you could tell us a bit about how I mean, since when has this been in place? Since when has the.

**Céline Flammang:** Reform 2021.

**Leonard Novy:** Already started? Two years. Can you talk a bit about the results? I mean, I suppose you're monitoring it. Have there been interesting and promising new projects? What's been the effect of that pillar in particular? And generally, how do you monitor the situation.

**Céline Flammang:** For the third pillar for the citizen media, you mean?

**Leonard Novy:** Yeah, just out of interest whether because obviously it's a topic that we talk about a lot in Germany. Bernhard Pörksen and the media scholar sociologist talks about the "redaktionelle Gesellschaft" in terms of media, news, literacy, media competency, both passive and active, as it were. So I'd just be interested to hear what the actual effects have been in Luxembourg.

**Anja Noster:** And maybe we have one. Yes, sorry, Celine, maybe you can also give a couple of examples of citizen media in Luxembourg that have received this.

**Céline Flammang:** We have one publication in this regime, and as far as we can see, this has helped them to stabilize their activities and to develop them. So they have now more security than they had before. Um, because they have a convention of for three years. So. Yeah, they organise more activities and you see it in, in the result of their work.

**Luc Caregari:** Yeah but you, but you have to add that this is a media that has been founded in the 1980s, I guess. Yeah. And that has always existed on subscription basis and always had had kinds of subsidies, but not from the Ministry of Press and Information. But they, I think they had money from culture, from the Ministry of Culture, and now it's, they have moved officially on the side of news organizations. And yeah, so it was more like a reorganization at officialization of them as a citizen.

**Anja Noster:** Media Okay. So the search you mentioned earlier, Luc, about the applications for the press card, that's not so much coming from the citizen media site yet, but that is coming from the small publishers side. And that is what makes it difficult for you because there are higher numbers of application that you have observed since 2021.

**Luc Caregari:** Yeah. And as I said, we do have some criteria that are not really, really, really clear. But how can I say I mean, one criteria is general information. You have to be a media that publishes general information. So you cannot, for example, take a sports magazine as a real pure player, sports magazine, you cannot apply. But you had people who applied with such publications and then we always have to explain them. It's general information. But the problem, and that is one of the weak points of the law, we have no real definition of what is this general information. So this can be distorted. And I think.

**Maurizio Maffei:** I don't want to interrupt the discussion, but I would like to express without biasing too much the discussion about Luxembourg. But I believe that pluralism is not just about political pluralism. Journalism is not just making journalism about the daily life or politics or economics. Also sport journalists are sport journalists. I see that, especially the small editor that tries to operate in a niche and try to find the space and try to hire journalists in some way are penalized by the current law. The current law is brilliant because instead of measuring the square meters of people that have been printed, the law is supporting the professional journalists. The point that is no more supporting the professional journalism is just the accounting. How many journalists? The big group, because there is also a threshold about who is entitled to access. You are entitled to be part of the Editor Association, the publisher association. If you have more than five journalists, if you don't have more than five journalists, you are not a publisher. According to the current situation here in Luxembourg. I speak about this because there are plenty of small publishers. They try also to access in some way the resources of this law. This 30,000 per journalist. And they can trigger the mechanism only if they have at least two journalists and they are supposed to make the jump to five journalists before the period of three years expires.

**Maurizio Maffei:** I think there is a misbalance and a misinterpretation again, of what could be the help for the professional journalists would be much better to leave this kind of support to the professional journalists without having limits to two journalists or five journalists. I think it's much more professional or much more balanced, much fairer respect to who is doing the business, especially small medium enterprises here in Luxembourg. But this is not yet perceived and that is the reason why I asked the question before to Céline. Once again, there is no perception that there is a this a number of small entities that would like to have the support today for small entities, no matter if it's a generic journalism or not. Uh, the current law is a limit with €50,000 for each journalist. Imagine that this is the salary for a professional journalist at the beginning of the career and the middle of the career, 60,000 is almost 50% of the salaries covered by the administration at the end of the career, say around €100,000. We had already this example, you know, uh, the contribution from the administration

would cover one third of the salary. Imagine the small entities that don't have any access to these resources. They cannot compete to hire journalists. So this is the detrimental also for the journalism itself. A journalist is encouraged to work only for big publishers from five to above and nothing for small entities. Where is the pluralism there?

**Anja Noster:** Maurizio, thank you for your question. Um, Celine, maybe you want to react. I think this would actually be our last question. Then I can do a brief, um, wrap up and yeah, if there's anything important still to be asked, you can put it into the chat. Then I will try to include in my conclusion. Um, so Celine. Maybe. Maybe this is also more a general question, I guess, because we have tried to tackle this already with the question about maybe more reform. I know there is also the elections coming right now. So I guess nothing is going to happen right now. But Luc also voiced ideas about how to change this. So, yeah, so maybe what is the way forward for the system? And what about maybe potential changes about small publishers?

**Céline Flammang:** Yes. Thank you very much for the question. There are some aspects who came up for the number of the journalists. We believe that too, that you cannot do a publication with less than two professional journalists or the journalistic activities which we are searching and editing and writing, etcetera, according to the criteria we have, it's in our view, it's not possible to do this with less than two professional journalists. Also, the amount of 30,000, that's not a price tag of a journalist. It's not that there's no link with the value of a journalist or the remuneration of a journalist. And as regards the pluralism, this regime really tackles democracy, opinion forming in a democr'cy. So it doesn't tackle lifestyle magazines or sport magazines, as Luc said. But really the information an informed citizen has to get in a democracy.

**Anja Noster:** Thank you, Celine. Mean guess for the way forward. You are also all invited to have a look at the knowledge reservoir that SciCon has built. Because we had already guests from Denmark and the Netherlands and like Scandinavian countries, the UK, I guess obviously press aid is always set in a very specific context. It's probably also never going to be perfect. At least I haven't seen a country yet where I would say this is the perfect system, but this is an evolving topic and maybe that's also something that you can do. I guess that's something you also already do, looking at how other countries do it. At least Luxembourg is moving on this topic, whereas Germany is maybe not so much, at least not on a federal level. But I thank you all for your input. It was very interesting and I hope all my guests would agree. I would just like to mention that our next session will be held on October 11th at 11 a.m. Same time as this time around. It will be held in German, which has the title Journalismus für die Demokratische Gesellschaft. So Journalism for Our Democratic Society with Klaus Meier and Maike Kerner from a university here in Germany, Katholische Uni at

Ingolstadt. And they will actually share some results from some journalism innovation research that they are currently doing. So this is all for today and thank you very much. You can always reach out to us through the website that I think Alina has already posted there or also afterwards to I guess each of the guests we had here today. So virtual applause. Thank you very much for joining.

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