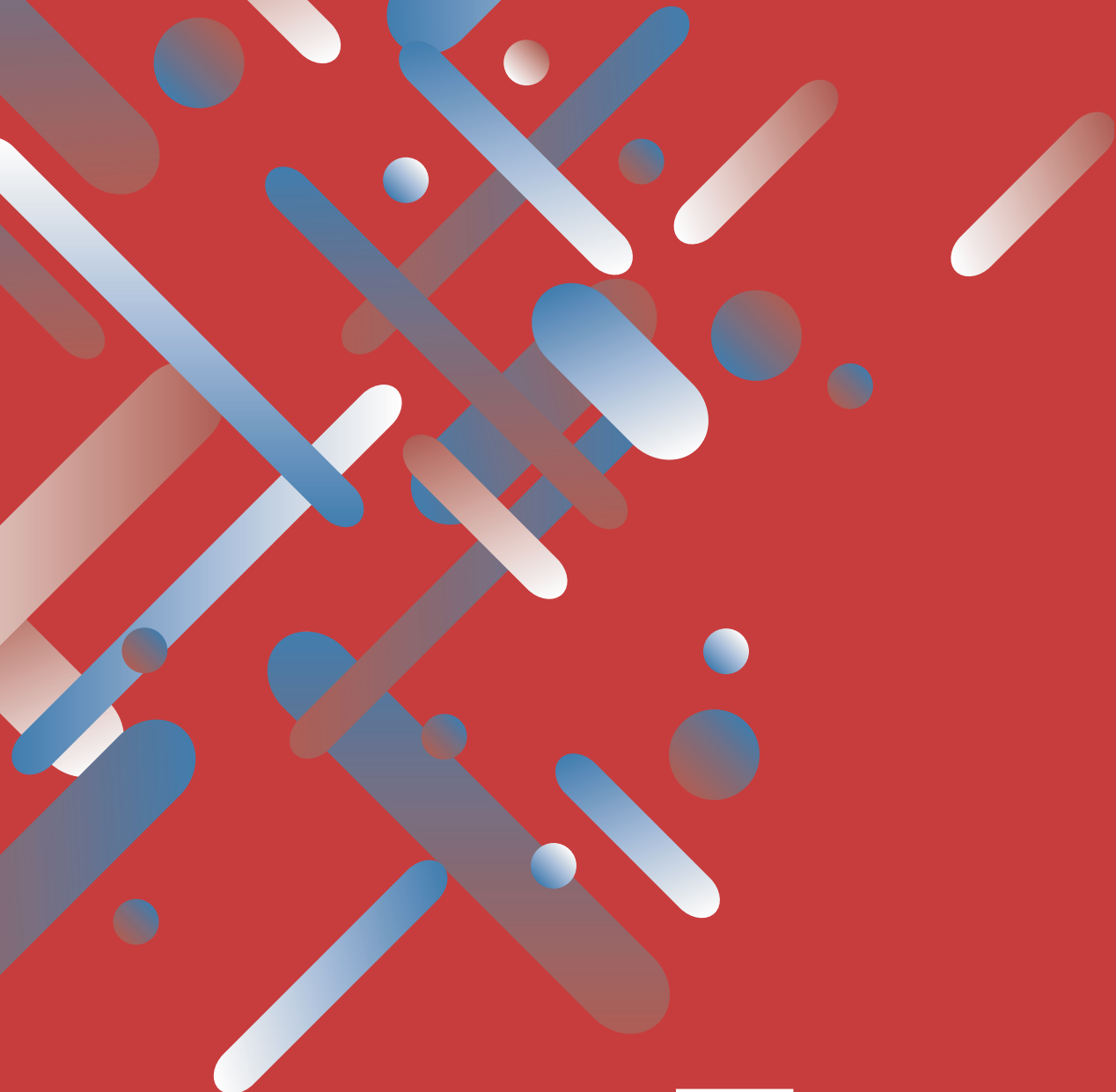




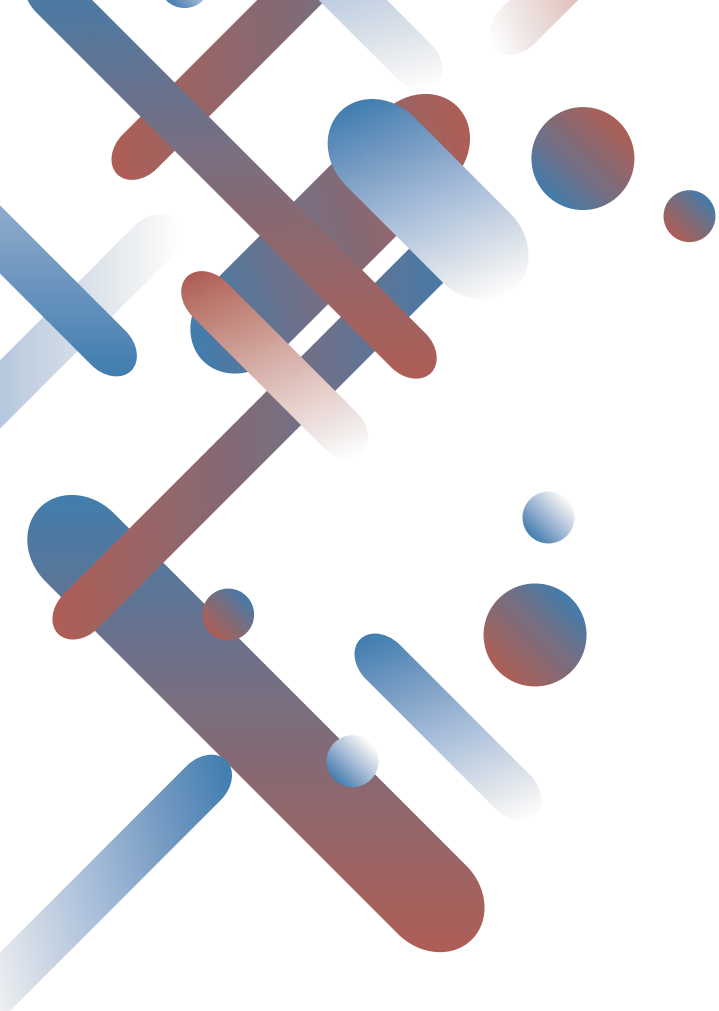
**PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA
STANDING UP FOR JOURNALIST
SAFETY, MEDIA FREEDOM
AND DEMOCRACY**



BRUSSELS DECLARATION

SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

A Joint Initiative of CBC/Radio-Canada, RTBF and VRT



Preamble

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has set out, since 1948, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, which “includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers”¹;

Whereas freedom of expression and freedom of the press are essential foundations of a democratic society, recognized by the European Court of Human Rights, which states that without “pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness [...] there is no ‘democratic society’”²;

Whereas these freedoms are threatened by the current rise in physical violence and online harassment against journalists, crews and media professionals, which disproportionately targets women and under-represented groups³ — a trend fostered by

¹ [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), as proclaimed on December 10, 1948.

² [Handyside v. United Kingdom](#) (December 7, 1976), Columbia University: Global Freedom of Expression.

³ See reports conducted by [UNESCO](#), [International Women’s Media Foundation](#), [Reporters Without Borders](#) and [Amnesty International](#).



what the UNESCO calls “a climate of endemic anti-press rhetoric, including by political leaders”;

Whereas this trend is accelerating in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing self-censorship among journalists, driving more professionals away from the news and media industry, and weakening pluralism and democracy as a result;

Now, therefore,

All undersigned media organizations set out the following principles, which they shall stand by and advocate for, both individually and through concerted action.

⁴ [*Highlights from the 2020 UNESCO Director-General's Report on the Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity.*](#)

⁵ [*Wanted! Real action for media freedom in Europe, Annual Report by the partner organisations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, Council of Europe, April 2021.*](#)



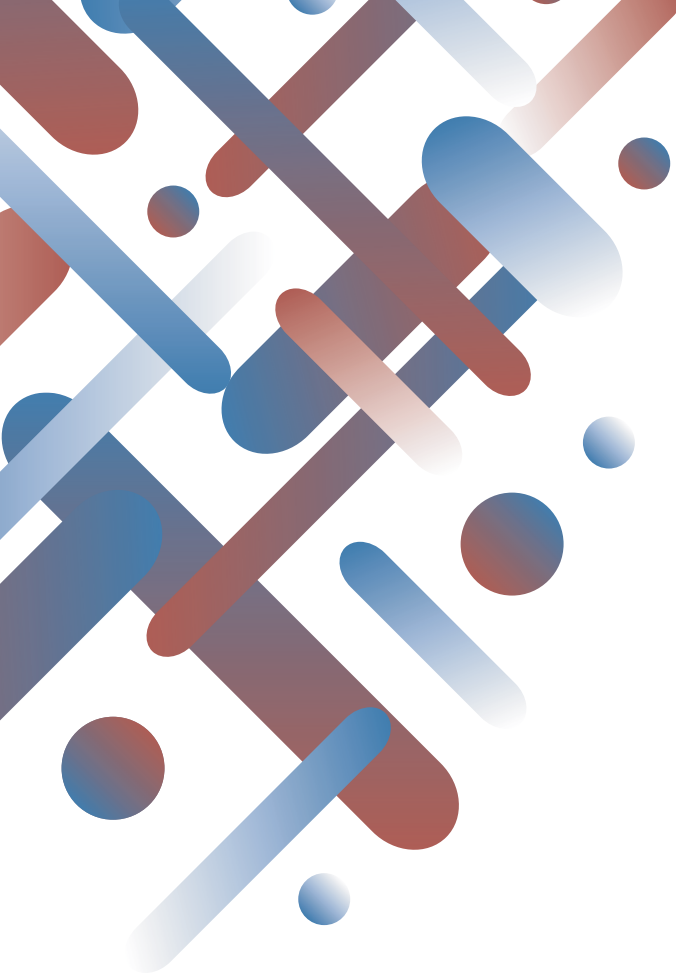
Principles

1. Enhancing the safety of journalists, crews and media professionals

All journalists, crew members and media professionals need to be able to safely perform their duties. To that end, the signatories commit to providing the resources and support their employees need to protect themselves from physical violence and online harassment, while raising public awareness about the impact of those attacks on democracy.

2. Standing up for the independence of public service media

The signatories commit to publicly condemning any attempt to undermine the independence of public service media — whether it's through political pressure, financial threats or retribution, harassment or attacks against employees, or anti-media rhetoric. They also commit to improving understanding of the distinction between public and state broadcasters.

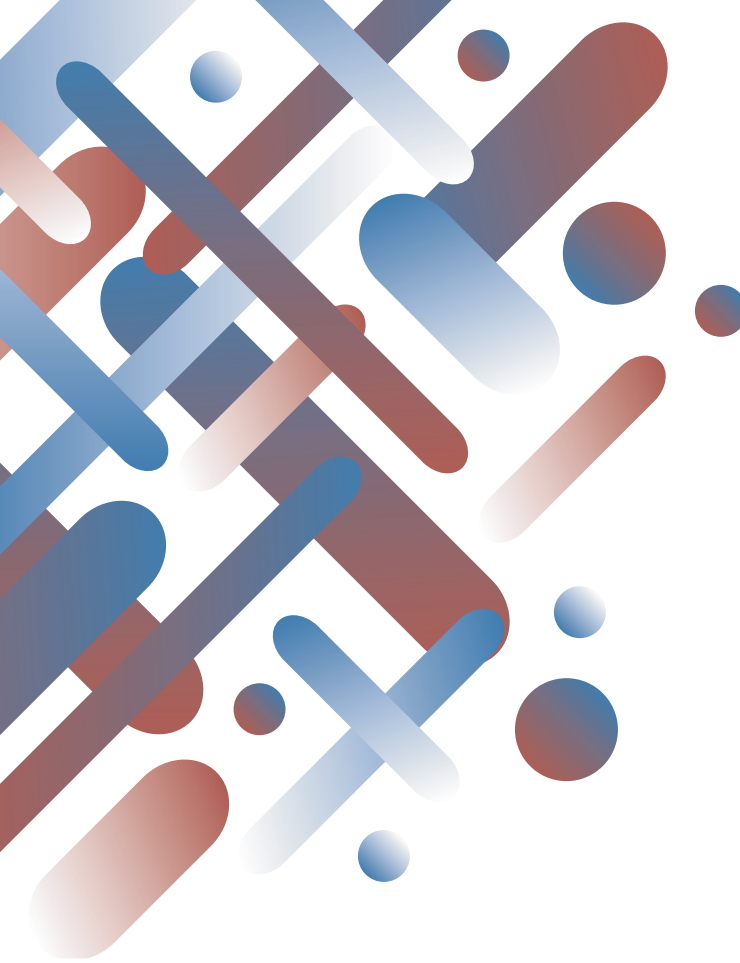


3. Fostering an informed and civil democratic debate

In response to the global disinformation crisis, the signatories commit to providing trusted news and information, supporting fact-checking initiatives, boosting media literacy, and monitoring and removing hate speech from their platforms. They also pledge to call on social media companies and regulators to eradicate online hate on third-party platforms.

4. Supporting a strong news ecosystem with a diversity of sources

A diverse mix of public, community and private news media is fundamental to a strong news ecosystem and healthy democracy. Consequently, the signatories commit to collaborating with other domestic media outlets to protect local journalism — including sharing best practices on journalist safety and speaking with one voice on common challenges.



5. Promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within our organizations and in the societies we serve

In order to uphold the ideals of pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness that underpin democratic societies, the signatories commit to more accurately reflecting the diverse makeup and perspectives of the populations they serve, both in their programming and workforce — while also leading efforts to make their workplace inclusive for everyone.