

Submission to Coimisiún na Meán on draft Media Pluralism Policy

October 2025

The Pro Life Campaign thanks Coimisiún na Meán for the opportunity to comment on the draft Media Pluralism Policy and on the wider question of diversity in media ownership, content, and access.

The goal of genuine media pluralism is both necessary and commendable. However, lofty principles mean little unless those responsible for implementing them demonstrate genuine commitment and integrity in trying to ensure they are given effect. In our experience, Coimisiún na Meán has so far failed to inspire public confidence that it understands, much less protects, true pluralism and diversity in Ireland's media environment.

Coimisiún na Meán is entrusted with a crucial public responsibility: to act as Ireland's media watchdog, ensuring balance, fairness, and integrity in the nation's news coverage.

In parallel, it administers millions of euros in public funds to media outlets to promote what it describes as "high-quality, trusted and independent news." Those dual functions create an unavoidable conflict of interest. It is impossible to act as an impartial regulator while simultaneously distributing vast sums of money to the very bodies one is meant to regulate.

This arrangement undermines credibility and calls into question every claim of independence or objectivity. The power to allocate substantial funding gives Coimisiún na Meán immense influence over which voices are amplified and which are excluded. Such control inevitably shapes the national conversation and restricts genuine diversity of thought.

The question must be asked plainly: how can an organisation charged with safeguarding impartiality also serve as a financier of the same outlets whose output it oversees? That contradiction strikes at the heart of trust and accountability. It is not a procedural flaw; it is a structural one.

Our experience on the abortion issue illustrates this imbalance starkly. Approximately 95 percent of RTÉ's output on abortion presents a single, 'pro-choice' perspective. That overwhelming bias should alarm any regulator genuinely committed to pluralism.

Yet when the Pro Life Campaign and others submitted formal complaints in 2024 about an RTÉ Investigates programme - a one-hour-and-five-minute broadcast exclusively on abortion that excluded even a single pro-life voice - Coimisiún na Meán concluded that the programme met all journalistic standards and didn't find a single thing wrong with it. With respect, that decision was indefensible. It deepened public cynicism about your organisation's neutrality and reinforced the perception of ideological bias within Coimisiún na Meán's ranks.

This was not an isolated case. Similar determinations on comparable complaints reveal a consistent pattern: a reluctance to confront bias when it aligns with dominant or fashionable narratives. That pattern erodes public trust and betrays the very concept of media pluralism the Commission claims to defend.

With respect, we must ask: how many individuals representing pro-life or broadly conservative viewpoints have been invited into the core of Coimisiún na Meán's deliberative structures? Consultation at arm's length is not the same as inclusion. True pluralism demands that dissenting perspectives are not merely tolerated but actively engaged at the level where decisions are made.

Ireland deserves a regulator that embodies fairness, independence, and courage - one that resists ideological conformity and ensures all citizens are served, not just the views of a chosen elite. Until Coimisiún na Meán addresses its internal blind spots and the inherent conflicts in its current role, "media pluralism" will remain a slogan rather than a lived reality.

We wish the Commission well in its deliberations and stand ready to contribute constructively to any genuine effort to broaden diversity and restore public trust in Ireland's media.

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