



MEDIA COUNCIL:

Conseil de Presse Luxembourg, Luxembourg Press Council

ESTABLISHED IN:

1979, however the complaints commission was only established in 2005

LEGAL BASIS/RECOGNITION

yes, in the Law on freedom of expression in the media¹

FINANCIAL SUPPORT GOVERNMENT

yes²

MEDIA COVERAGE

press, broadcast and online

ACCESS FOR COMPLAINANTS

for those directly involved

Nb. in case of legal proceedings the council will cease the complaints procedure

PUBLIC MEMBERS

yes, but very limited³

RULES FOR PUBLISHING DECISIONS

no⁴

OTHER TASKS/ACTIVITIES

Issuing official press cards, examining all questions relating to freedom of expression in the media, organising training courses for future and established journalists⁵, as well as organising media education, including the 'Young Journalist Contest'. Furthermore, the council interferes with new media legislation.



Specific elements

In the small, rather concentrated media market, the council plays an important role. The missions of the council are described in the law and the first task mentioned, is to issue press cards. It is essential for publishers to insure that the journalists they employ have press cards because the government subsidy is based and calculated on the basis of the number of professional journalists: in addition to an annual flat subsidy of € 280.000 per publication, an additional subsidy of € 30,000 per year per full-time equivalent professional journalist with a permanent contract.⁶ The publishers also have to accept the rules foreseen in the code of conduct.⁷

A number of press cards are held by free-lance and retired journalists or journalists that work for publishers that, for other reasons, are not eligible for a subsidy. Professional journalists apply for a press card to demonstrate their respect of the rules of the code of conduct and the credibility and protection attached⁸. The council can revoke a press card because of a complaint being upheld, but this has never happened. As for the representatives of the publishers in the council, the internal rules foresee a simple count of professional journalists employed by the publisher, with a minimum of five for practical reasons.⁹

In 2024 the council took the initiative to renew its code of ethics because, as the previous version dated from 2004, an update was necessary to integrate the challenges of the technological developments and the growing concerns for credibility of journalists.¹⁰ Since its establishment in 2005 the complaints committee issued only 54 decisions.¹¹

Specific strenghts

The council decides who can be a professional journalist and who not, which gives credibility to the profession. Strong supporter of journalists.

Specific weaknesses/criticism

It is for new – smaller, innovative and/or specialized – media very difficult to enter the system; the council lacks participation from newer digital and social media platforms. Large media organizations dominate decision-making, limiting representation from smaller publishers and independent journalists.

Some major newspapers are underrepresented, affecting the council's credibility. Legal advice for laws pertaining to media is often ignored. The council is not sufficiently committed to the profession in public, for example towards politicians. Further, the council was said to be too slow, too inactive and too conservative (there is now a breath of fresh air).

The complaints procedure has been criticised as unknown and ineffective, and seen by some as 'amateurish'.¹²