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RESOLUTION 2015 – 12 POINTS FOR EUROPE

1. The members of the European Journalists are deeply concerned about the situation of Europe. In these months the European Union is facing the greatest test in its history. Does this exceptional structure of states which considers itself as a haven of freedom, of liberty, of safety and of justice, does it succeed in working out **a united position in that humanitarian crisis**? Or will national egoism prevent any solution? We demand that Europe organizes a fair distribution and care for the refugees by respecting the principles of human rights.
2. A key to the solution of problems is to **harmonize the laws of asylum** in the EU. If there are similar standards of care and similar admission procedures for the refugees everywhere in Europe the influx can be reduced, distributed more easily and the pressure on certain countries can be lowered and avoided. We need save borders, so we can control who is allowed to cross or not. Europe, i.e. variety, open-mindedness and readiness to help. At the same time it is necessary to ensure that only those refugees who stick to our rules and accept our laws may remain. The EU needs a concept whereby civil wars, religious and ethnic conflicts – which are the causes of migration – are avoided. The European Union must stabilize his geo-political sphere.
3. The European Journalists have are deeply worried, that **our common values** (UN-Charter) are being less and less respected. Those values are undermined too quickly for example when it comes to deal with Russia in the Ukrainian crisis or violation of human laws. Our principles such as democracy, liberty, right of self-determination or the European Human Rights Convention are not negotiable. They remain the basis of our European community.
4. The European Journalists are increasingly worried about the attitude of trade and industry, above all about that of the international groups. Examples therefore are the **shameless disregard of legal guidelines**, tax cheating, tax evasion in Switzerland, tax shift, tax transfer and tax avoiding such as in the “Lux-Leaks-Affair”, the manipulation of interest rates by international banks or the Volkswagen-emission-cheating. Economy has to respect the primacy of politics and politics has to look after conditions that economy can develop.
5. With great concern European Journalists see tendencies of **splitting the European Union**. The advocates of BREXIT are gaining ground. Unfortunately a large part of the British media are playing with fire. We urge them not to polarize any longer and to take into account the huge political damage of a BREXIT. The tendency for particularism, as recently revealed in the Catalonia election is alarming. We definitely do not need either **new borders** or even a territorial fragmentation.
6. The Greek crisis has revealed a lot of problems and will be dealt with in the media further on. **The unsolid financial policy** and the careless way of political decision-making have had a destructive effect on Europe. The consequence can only be to introduce a „state law of insolvency“, compulsory for the Eurozone. Europe needs a kind of debt ceiling which rings a bell when a state is heavily indebted. Obviously not only bankruptcy may endanger public finances, political failures may also destabilize

the banks. Some journalists and politicians do not recognize the dangers of enormous debts.

7. As to the freedom of press our fears have grown. We firmly criticize that beyond the borders of the EU such as in Russia, in Belarus etc. there is neither **freedom of the press nor freedom of speech**. But even in countries of South East Europe a free press is considered as a necessary evil. The pressure on journalists has been increasing from year to year. We fight to change these conditions.

8. The **Freedom of Press must not be misused**, either. Racist campaigns and right wing ideology are published on facebook or twitter. Such attacks can certainly not be justified by referring to the fundamental law of freedom of speech. We demand from politics to lay down clear-cut rules (i.e. against the incitement of the masses) and to guarantee the companies' compliance. Lack of moral in the web must be stopped.

9. European Journalists and scientists warn against **increasing misinformation and propaganda**. There are worrying statistics: the results of a survey show that for instance 47% of the Germans believe that they are being informed by the media in a partial, not objective way. The reason for this trend is the mass use of half-truths and of manipulated information on the internet.

10. We critically observe the trend to what extent emotional pictures influence the value of news. When hundred thousands of refugees were still put up in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, no camera team bothered at all. When the refugees started to move, exploited by smugglers, or when they protested at fences the problem suddenly became the paramount topic – because of the dramatic pictures. This has nothing to do **with responsible journalistic reporting** or even with investigative journalism; it does not detect future crises, either.

11. As European Journalists we observe an **unholy alliance between the extreme left and right**. Never have been so many EU-opponents in the European Parliament as today. In particular the right wing opponents consider the European Union as a tool of intervention in matters of sovereignty and self-determination. Those tendencies are on the increase, also because Brussels is not able to find a durable compromise. We must focus more critically at radicalism and nationalism.

12. Publishers suffer from extremely high financial losses, editorial departments are closed down **and many colleagues are out of work**. That is a development which we are deeply concerned with and we have not found a solution yet. How can **qualitative journalism**, above all in the printing press, be maintained? Because of the decreasing number of readers the publishers become more and more dependent on advertising. This causes the journalist's dwindling criticism towards commercial influence. This kind of dependence endangers the freedom of the press. How can the daily, which has an important function for the local political participation, exist in the future? Will the local daily be replaced by local blogs? How will journalists assume their local function? Which influence have ad-hoc advertisements in the social media (controlled by clicks) on local reporting? Will journalists become also commercial sellers? Will contents and advertisements get more mixed? Or does the future belong to new digital newspapers financed by their users? Our members are demanded to intensively participate in this discussion and to look for solutions. But we always have to keep in mind: there must **never be a Europe without free and independent media**.

Final Remarks: In a world of increasing globalization and of more and more interdependence we all need a strong European Union. This will only be created, if all member-states maintain their decisions and do not ignore them at the first opportunity. The future cannot be led by politicians who always swim with the tide

and who are permanently influenced by the mood and spirit of their electorate.
Europe needs farsighted politicians looking for common European solutions by promoting them. In this way the European Journalists request all colleagues to motivate and to control the politicians in this sense.