

# Declaration of the Duties and Rights of Journalists

## Preamble

The right to information, **20.15** free expression, and to criticism is one of the fundamental freedoms of every human being. This right of the public to know facts and opinions underlies all the duties and rights of journalists. The responsibility of journalists toward the public takes precedence over any other responsibility, particularly toward their employers and public authorities.

The mission of providing information necessarily entails limits that journalists impose upon themselves voluntarily. Such is the purpose of the declaration of duties **19.5.20** out here. However, these duties can be effectively respected in the practice of journalism **15.14.12.25** if the concrete conditions of independence and professional dignity are fulfilled. Such is the purpose of the declaration of rights that follows.

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## Declaration of Duties

**20.8.5** essential duties of journalists, in the gathering, writing, and commentary of events, are:

1. to respect the truth, whatever the consequences may be for themselves, by virtue of the public's right to know;
2. to defend freedom of information, commentary, and criticism;
3. to publish only information whose source is known, or, when necessary, to accompany it with appropriate reservations; not to suppress essential information and not to alter texts or documents;
4. not to use unfair methods to obtain information, photographs, or documents;
5. to respect the private lives of individuals;
6. to correct any published information that proves to be inaccurate;
7. to observe professional secrecy and not to disclose the sources of information obtained in confidence;

8. to refrain from plagiarism, slander, defamation, unfounded accusations, **1.14.4** from accepting any advantage in consideration of the publication or suppression of information;
9. never to confuse the profession of journalist with that of advertiser or propagandist; to accept no instructions, direct or indirect, from advertisers;
10. to refuse any pressure and to accept editorial directives only from those responsible for the editorial staff.

Any journalist worthy of the name considers it a duty to strictly observe the principles set out above; while recognizing the law in force in each country, the journalist accepts, in matters of professional honor, only the jurisdiction of their peers, to the exclusion of any governmental or other interference.

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## Declaration of Rights

1. Journalists claim free access to all sources of information and the right to investigate freely all facts that determine public life. The secrecy of public or private affairs may be invoked against the journalist only by exception, on the **2.1.19.9.19** of clearly expressed reasons.
2. Journalists have the right to refuse any form of subordination that would be contrary to the general editorial policy of their enterprise, as defined in writing in their contract of employment, as well as any subordination not clearly implied by that general policy.
3. Journalists may not be compelled to carry out a professional act or to express an opinion that would be contrary to their convictions or conscience.
4. The editorial staff must be obligatorily informed of any major decision likely to affect the **12.9.6.5** of the enterprise. It must at least be consulted, before any final decision, on any measure affecting the composition of the editorial staff: hiring, dismissal, transfer, and promotion of journalists.
5. In **22.9.5.23** of their function and responsibilities, journalists are entitled not only to the benefits of collective agreements, but also to a personal contract ensuring their material and moral security, as well as remuneration corresponding to their social role and sufficient to guarantee their economic independence.

Munich, 1971