

# Upgrading journalistic practices to tackle **the ecological emergency:** a charter

The scientific consensus is clear: both the climate crisis and the rapid decline of biodiversity are underway, and human activity is to blame. The impacts on ecosystems and human societies are global and, in some cases, irreversible. Planetary boundaries are being reached and exceeded one after the other, and half of the world's population is already highly vulnerable to climate change.

In its sixth report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasizes the crucial role the media must

play in informing people about climate change. It is up to journalists to rise to the challenge that these upheavals represent for current and future generations. As we are faced with the critical emergency of the climate crises, we journalists must step up our practices in order to fully address these issues – and what's at stake – in our coverage.

That is the purpose of this charter. We therefore encourage all journalists and media to:

- 1 | Cover all stories related to climate, biodiversity and social justice in an interdisciplinary manner**

They are intricately intertwined. Ecology can no longer be limited to a separate column; it must become a prism through which stories are approached.
- 2 | Take an educational approach**

Scientific data relating to ecological issues are often complex. We must explain orders of magnitude and scales of time, help identify causal links, and provide elements of comparison.
- 3 | Reflect on wording and images used**

Carefully choosing words and pictures is crucial so as to accurately describe the facts and convey the urgency. We must avoid representations that may distort reality and understate the seriousness of the situation.
- 4 | Widen the scope of coverage**

Refrain from solely calling on individuals to take responsibility and action, and consider upheavals as a systemic problem requiring political responses.
- 5 | Investigate the causes of the current events**

Question our growth model; weigh the role of economic, financial and political actors in the ecological crisis. Remember that short-term considerations can be detrimental to humanity and nature.
- 6 | Guarantee transparency**

Mistrust of the mainstream media, entangled with the spread of misinformation playing down facts, compels us to carefully review all data, facts, pieces of information given out and experts quoted, as well as to display sources and disclose potential conflicts of interest.
- 7 | Expose strategies employed to plant seeds of doubt in the public's mind**

Lobbies are actively striving to misinform and undermine the public's understanding of issues, thereby hindering necessary action to address the crisis.
- 8 | Inform on actual solutions**

Thoroughly investigate ways to act in favour of the climate and biodiversity, be they on a small or large scale. Cross-examine the solutions set out.
- 9 | Keep training**

In order to grasp the bigger picture as well as the intricacies of climate change in our societies, journalists must be provided with vocational training throughout their careers. Such a right is paramount to ensuring quality of coverage.
- 10 | Oppose financing resulting from the most polluting activities**

To ensure editorial coherence in coverage of climate issues, journalists must have the right to express their concerns or disapproval of financing, advertising and/or media partnerships when these are linked to businesses they deem harmful.
- 11 | Strengthen newsrooms independence**

In order to be freed from any pressure, editorial decisions must be completely independent from media owners' interests.
- 12 | Gear up for "low carbon" journalism**

Lower the carbon footprint of journalistic activities, using more environmentally-friendly tools and means, without refraining from necessary fieldwork. Encourage newsrooms to rely on local journalists whenever possible.
- 13 | Cultivate cooperation**

Take part in a united media ecosystem and defend journalistic practices keen to preserve living conditions on Earth.