

BUDGET IS OPPORTUNITY TO HELP PROTECT DEMOCRACY
AND COMBAT DISINFORMATION – INDEPENDENT
BROADCASTERS OF IRELAND

October, 2025 - One of the most important tools for Irish society in protecting the democratic process against disinformation must be reinforced in the Budget, the Government has heard, as it finalises Exchequer plans. Trusted radio news and current affairs is the medium that is capable of correcting deliberately circulated falsehoods in real time, the Independent Broadcasters of Ireland stated today.

Ireland's independent radio broadcasters in their Pre-Budget Submission to the Government stated that fair, accurate and balanced journalism in their sector is a key bulwark protecting society against social media division, misinformation, and disinformation.

The Independent Broadcasters of Ireland (IBI) said it is essential that support for news and current affairs output in the radio sector is not treated as a one-off and that the very modest, proportionate and ringfenced funding it proposes in its submission is provided for in the upcoming Budget.

IBI's submission is for just €4.5 million of funding in total in the Budget for independent radio stations all over Ireland, equivalent to less than 1.4 per cent of media funding in the current year from the Exchequer.

Independent Broadcasters of Ireland Chief Executive Michael Kelly said: "There is a pressing need for fair funding and a level playing-field in regulation and legislation in Ireland and across Europe. In her recent State of the Union speech, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called for the protection of media resilience through significantly boosting funding for media and supporting independent and local media in Europe. The next Budget is an opportunity for our Government to do that in Ireland."

Michael Kelly continued: "At a time of risk to democracy and social cohesion through misinformation and disinformation on social media and web platforms, there has never been a greater need for the trusted, accurate and balanced news and current affairs services which Ireland's independent radio stations provide. Their journalists can crucially fact-check and correct misinformation in real time and can reach citizens with accurate facts without interference from social media recommender-systems or algorithms. Our proposals would help provide a more even playing-field to independent radio, strengthen critical and emergency communications, and help prevent the development of news deserts in Ireland, as has happened abroad. The benefits of our modest submission would be very significant."

Key Proposals in the IBI Budget Submission:

Continuation of Ringfenced Funding for News: €3 Million

1. Continue the €3 million ringfenced funding provided this year to the independent radio sector in order to support the creation, production and broadcast of additional high quality, accurate public service content, to support an alternative trusted source of news and current affairs for Irish citizens.

Capital and Critical Infrastructure Fund: €1.5 Million

2. Establish a dedicated fund to support essential capital works and maintenance of critical radio transmission systems and broadcasting infrastructure. These systems, maintained by independent stations across the country, are vital for ensuring communication resilience during severe weather events or national emergencies when other communications channels invariably fail.

30% Ringfencing of Sound & Vision Scheme for Independent Radio: Zero cost

3. Allocate 30% of all Sound & Vision Scheme funding specifically for content produced by independent radio broadcasters. This measure can be introduced without impacting other sectors, as existing TV and radio production companies already benefit from RTÉ's ringfenced and State-mandated multimillion independent sector commissioning processes. This has zero cost.

Ends