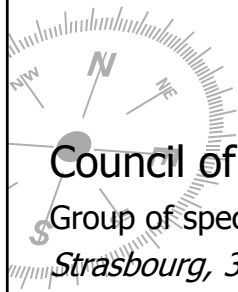


# Broadcasting and Citizens

## Media accountability and viewers' participation in Europe

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Council of Europe

Group of specialists on PSB in the Information Society

*Strasbourg, 3rd – 4th November 2005*

## C o n t e n t

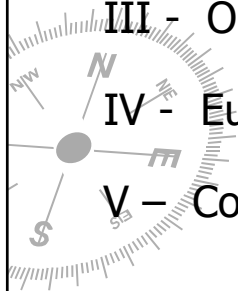
I – The research background

II – Participation & accountability

III - Options for participation

IV - Europe: a fragmented picture

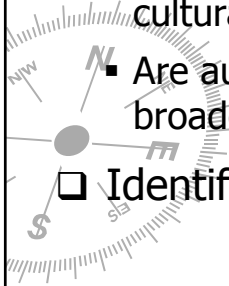
V – Concluding remarks



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## I – Background: objectives

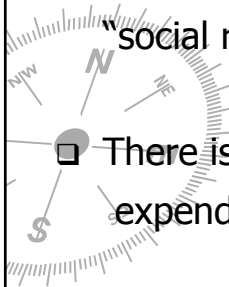
- ❑ Relations between Broadcasting & Citizens:
  - Do audiences have real opportunities to express themselves / exercise their rights?
  - Are citizens well informed about the social, cultural and civic role the media can play?
  - Are audience interests taken into account by broadcasters and media authorities?
- ❑ Identify best and innovative practices



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## I – Background: rationale

- ❑ Media accountability and viewers' participation make part of the democratic process
- ❑ Media – as all other companies – have their “social responsibility” (negative effects)
- ❑ There is a legitimate public interest in public expenditure (public products / services)



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## I – Background: context

- ❑ Make part of the EACTV Project funded
  - in 2004 – by the European Commission (DG Education and culture)
- ❑ EAVI has also been created in the framework of the EACTV Project
- ❑ Eight partners in six countries – BE, DE, UK, CH, SP, IT- have originated the research / association

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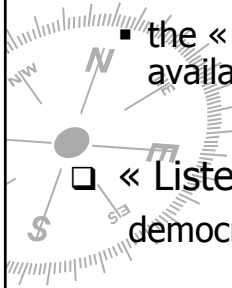
## I – Background: methodology

- ❑ 29 Countries: UE + CH/NO + BU/RO
- ❑ Desk research, interviews, case studies
- ❑ Common set of guidelines:
  - Identify current procedures EU citizens have at their disposal (legal basis);
  - Picture of the different forces engaged;
  - Evaluate the efficiency of current procedures;
  - Identify best & innovative practices.

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## II – Participation & Accountability

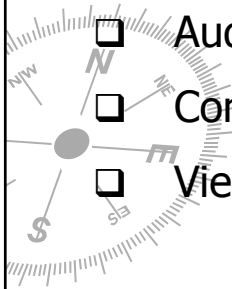
- Viewers / citizens participation is highly dependent from:
  - the quality of the formal / informal « procedures » used for listening to audiences interests (incl. the « institutions »);
  - the « quality » of the information publicly available on media activities (right to know) ;
- « Listening » & « Informing » underpin the democratic process (transparency)



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## III – Options for Participation

- Representation in controlling bodies
- Communication Platforms
- Public Consultations
- Audience research
- Complaints procedures
- Viewers' Organisations (self-initiated)



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### III – Options for Participation: Representation in controlling bodies

- Ex: SRG Regional Societies (CH), NOS  
« pillar » associations (NL):
  - SRG: « *Association of societies open to all Swiss people* »
- Pending issues of the « model »:
  - Representatives play a « double role »
  - Their influence decreases as competition grows

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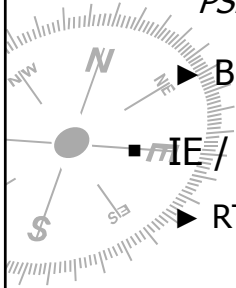
### III – Options for Participation: Communication Platforms

- Innovative participation instruments:
  - DE / MA-NRW: Media Meeting (indip.)
  - UK / OFCOM: Consumer Panel (indip.)
  - UK / BBCi: H2G2 – iCan (Internet forum)
- New elements:
  - Create a stronger link with audiences / media users
  - Introduce non-politically appointed citizens

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### III – Options for Participation: Public consultations

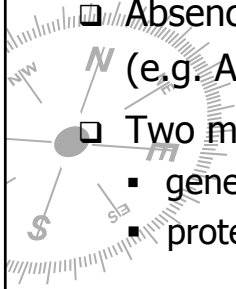
- ❑ Authoritative & ongoing PSBs reviews
  - UK / OFCOM: PSBs review / BBC Chart
    - ▶ « *maintaining and strengthening the quality of PSB television in the future...* »
  - ▶ BBC: reviewing complaints handling process
  - IE / Gov.: « Forum on Broadcasting »
  - ▶ RTE Audience Council / RTE Charter



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### III – Options for Participation: Viewers' Organisation (a)

- ❑ No Viewers' organization in 50% of the countries (14)
- ❑ Their relevance is – often – very low
- ❑ Absence does not mean “low participation” (e.g. A; IE; SE and also DE or NL)
- ❑ Two main types:
  - general representation of viewers interests
  - protection of family / children / youth' interests



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### III – Options for Participation: Viewers' Organisation (b)

- Strong support for PSBs / political lobby;
  - VLV (UK); Pro Yleisö (FI); ARF (DK)
- Protection of young viewers' rights
  - "Ligues des familles" (BE); CIEM (FR); APTV (GR); MOIGE (IT); Family & Medier (NO)
- Public debates / seminars / awards
- Complaints services / assistance

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### IV – Europe: a fragmented picture

Most Advanced	Less Advanced	« Under - Construction »
<input type="checkbox"/> UK	<input type="checkbox"/> FR	<input type="checkbox"/> P L
<input type="checkbox"/> IE	<input type="checkbox"/> IT	<input type="checkbox"/> CZ
<input type="checkbox"/> DE	<input type="checkbox"/> ES	<input type="checkbox"/> SK
<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input type="checkbox"/> CH	<input type="checkbox"/> HU
<input type="checkbox"/> NL	<input type="checkbox"/> LU	<input type="checkbox"/> S I
<input type="checkbox"/> BE	<input type="checkbox"/> GR	<input type="checkbox"/> EE / LT / LV
<input type="checkbox"/> DK	<input type="checkbox"/> PT	<input type="checkbox"/> RO
<input type="checkbox"/> SE / NO / FI		<input type="checkbox"/> BU

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## V – Concluding Remarks

- ❑ ICTs are accelerating the adoption of more performing participation tools;
- ❑ Eastern countries: strong need for a « civil society” culture / initiatives;
- ❑ PSBs role: “facilitator” of the democratic process (modern citizenship);
- ❑ PSBs offer: « maintained and strengthen » (not only “developed and adapted”)

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T h a n k s

