



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

CDCPP (2012) 52

30 August 2012

1st meeting of the Bureau
Paris, 20-21 September 2012

Council of Europe Offices
55 Avenue Kléber, 75016 Paris

MARS – Media Against Racism in Sport *A joint UE / CoE Programme for a European Media Network for Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

The Bureau:

- **took note** of the progress of the work and activities of MARS, its contribution and its complementarities with all the activities carried out on diversity and intercultural dialogue, and **confirmed** its interest in media issues, and therefore in areas for future activities as described in the forthcoming MEDIANE project, still to be confirmed (mid September) by the European Union (DG Justice / Fundamental rights and citizenship programme)

BACKGROUND

In Europe, only a quarter of news subjects are women, even though they account for over half of the European population (GMMP, 2010)! While immigrants represent around 10% of the EU population (*Eurostat, 2011*) migrants and ethnic minorities represent less than 5% of the main actors in the news in Europe (*Ter Wal, 2004*). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people represent roughly 6% of the population of the United Kingdom but account for less than 1% of the population seen on TV. 20% of the British population is disabled but less than 1% is represented in British TV (*CDN 2009-10 Progress Report*). Through the sources they use, the subjects they select and the treatment they choose, the media influence the agenda (what to think about) and public perception (how to think) of contemporary debates. This is why the Council of Europe considers truly inclusive information - where everyone can participate as witnesses, players, producers etc. - to be crucial for social cohesion and democratic participation. But today, too many people are still excluded from media.

The MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport – EU / CoE joint programme focuses, though not exclusively, on sport as an important area for social cohesion and a major sector of investment for the media industry. Sport media coverage does not reflect social and cultural diversity: only 5% of press reports cover cultural and social aspects of sport; 40% of all sport articles refer to only one source and 20 % refer to no sources at all; female athletes have four times more chances to be covered by a female journalist rather than a male one but less than 5% of sport news and stories are made by female journalists (*Play the Game, 2005*).

Building upon Council of Europe standards on media pluralism, diversity and non-discrimination and the outcome of the 2008-10 CoE Antidiscrimination Campaign, MARS aims at encouraging media to treat non-discrimination and diversity as an on-going angle of media coverage. It encourages innovative modes of media content production that could be reproduced in all media sectors and forms of media coverage by stimulating practice exchanges in the fields of training, ethics and production. MARS brings together media professionals (journalism students and trainers, journalists, media managers, etc.) in the context of National and European Media Encounters and Media Work Exchanges, conceived as first steps towards a European media network against racism and for intercultural dialogue.

PROGRESS

MARS activities are based on the principle of exchanges and interlinking of professional practices with a view to enriching training, production and even media regulation methods to foster diversity and non-discrimination in media content. It has two main groups of activities: the first is national (15) and European (3) media meetings (“encounters”), while the second is European media work exchanges (210). In addition to the outputs derived from the above activities (training tools, media reports, case studies), MARS is developing a resource centre for media industry professionals and any other stakeholders. This online resource centre will bring together the outputs of the programme, the main reference texts of the Council of Europe and of other bodies relating to media, diversity, non-discrimination and intercultural dialogue, and a directory of websites and contact persons who specialise in these subjects.

Between January 2011 and July 2012, MARS organised eleven national meetings (four on production issues, in Austria, Cyprus, Ireland and Germany, three on ethics and editorial management, in France, Poland and Lithuania, and four on training, in Italy, France, Romania and Finland) and two European meeting, in Belgium (October 2011), on journalism and media training and literacy and in the United Kingdom on Ethics and editorial management (June 2012). These meetings brought together more than 500 media professionals, including news directors, chief editors, journalists, managers of media diversity cells, media officers of sport and civil society organisations.

In addition to the 37 media reports produced and shown at the production meetings, each of these events also generated its own media coverage, fostering diversity debate in each of the countries concerned. The meetings on ethics provided opportunities for journalists, who are often reluctant to raise such issues, to begin a discussion, and will result in an awareness-raising booklet for distribution in newsrooms.

The European meetings afforded an opportunity to take stock both of current training activities and of ethical issues; the reports are available on line.

After the call for candidatures for the European media work exchanges, which entail two professionals working as a pair during reciprocal five-day visits to the two countries concerned, 140 candidatures have been received, and about thirty exchanges have been launched. All outputs will be available online once finalised. The MARS website has carried news of all these activities and disseminated the different outputs produced. A regular newsletter also makes it possible to keep in contact with a current total of exactly 4156 European media stakeholders (the initial numbers were approximately 1,200). A Facebook page for friends of MARS has also been created at the initiative of journalists involved in the programme, and this passes on information about MARS while at the same time fuelling discussions relating to the programme's themes. Today, more than 350 people follow the page.

NEXT STEPS

By the end of the MARS programme end 2012, four national meetings [1 on training in Belgium (Mechelen, Oct. 2012), 1 on production in Hungary (Budapest, Sept. 2012) and 2 on ethics in Spain (Madrid, Oct. 2012) and Bulgaria (Sofia, Sept. 2012)] and one European meeting in France (Bordeaux, Nov. 2012) on media cross-productions are scheduled.

This last European meeting will join more than 140 media professionals together in a 4-day production session but it will be also the unique opportunity to present MARS outputs and outcomes. The choice of the location has been made considering the valuable offers of partnership both from some media groups (France Televisions, Radio France and Sud Ouest media group) and media organisations, such as the Institute of Journalism of Bordeaux Aquitaine offering its venue and equipment for hosting this final meeting.

Furthermore, some 100 participants in European media work exchange are to be involved in 50 such exchanges, thus creating 50 outputs (training tools, case studies related to the ethics and editorial management of diversity, and media reports which have to include diversity as an angle of media coverage). At the end of the MARS process, these outputs will be available on-line and will be promoted so that media industry players have resources available which can give rise to new training, production and regulation methods so that diversity and the principles of non-discrimination are considered to be recurrent angles of media coverage.

A database of European contact persons specialising and/or involved in media issues, diversity, non-discrimination and intercultural dialogue will be made available on-line.

As mentioned during the plenary session of the Committee, a new follow-up project has been introduced to the European Union, in the form of a reply to a new call for tenders (Fundamental Rights and Citizenship). This final decision of the EU might be known by mid-September 2012. This new proposal entitled MEDIANE (Media exchanges for Diversity Inclusiveness, Antiracism and Non-discrimination in Europe) will involve further European or sub-regional/sub-thematic exchanges and the extension of European media work exchanges. MEDIANE will culminate in the creation, development and promotion of a Media Index on Diversity Inclusiveness, an index comprising indicators validated by the different media industry stakeholders and derived from the exchanges and the outputs stemming from the meetings and exchanges. The Index will be a tool for media and their staff to assess their own diversity/inclusion capacity and decide in which fields to work to achieve cross-cutting inclusion of diversity and of the principles of non-discrimination in the definition, production and distribution of media content. To this end, MEDIANE will work with the same partners as MARS, with the addition of the EJTA (European Journalism Training Association); also to be invited to participate are the EBU (European Broadcasting Union), ENPA (European Newspaper Publishers' Association) and ACT (Association of Commercial Television in Europe, which has already confirmed its participation). Involvement of the various training stakeholders, content producers and distributors is a vital precondition of the success of MEDIANE, particularly for the building up, recognition and use of the INDEX, for which the inspiration has been the Intercultural Cities Index.