



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

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

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

Item 5.2.4 of the draft agenda

The Committee:

*- **noted** the progress of the work and activities of MARS, its contribution and its complementarity 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.*

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 public debates!

The MARS - Media Against Racism in Sport – EU / CoE joint programme chooses to focus, though not exclusively, on sport because it is considered as an important area for building social cohesion as it is also a major sector of investment in the media industry. However, sport media coverage does not reflect social and cultural diversity and does not ensure equity for all. Only 5% of press articles 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 standards set by various Council of Europe bodies on media pluralism, expression of diversity and non discrimination and the outcome of the 2008-10 CoE's antidiscrimination Campaign, the MARS – Media Against Racism in Sport – EU / CoE joint programme aims at considering non discrimination and expression of diversity as an ongoing angle of media coverage. Through this approach applied to sport coverage, MARS wants to encourage innovative modes of media content production that could be reproduced in all media sectors and used by any form of media coverage. By stimulating media cross-practices in the field of training, ethics and production, MARS aims at implementing an inclusive and intercultural approach to media content production. To achieve these outcomes, the MARS programme offers media professionals (journalism students and trainers, journalists, media managers, etc.) to participate in 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 in order to take better account of 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). MARS works essentially in the fields of media and journalism education and training, ethics and editorial management, and, finally, production. In addition to the outputs derived from its activities (training tools, media reports, case studies), it is intended that MARS should develop a resource centre for media industry professionals and any other stakeholders interested in these issues. This resource centre will bring together in one place the outputs of the programme, the main references 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. The resource centre will derive

from conversion of the programme's current website (www.coe.int/mars), on which information is currently posted about MARS activities and outputs, once these are available and finalised. In 2011, MARS organised five national meetings (two on production issues, in Austria and Cyprus, two on ethics and editorial management, in France and Poland, and one on training, in Italy) and one European meeting, in Belgium, on journalism and media training and literacy. These meetings brought together more than 180 media professionals. In addition to the 15 media reports jointly produced and shown at the production meetings, each of these events also generated its own media coverage, enabling debate to be fostered and enriched in each of the countries visited. The meetings on ethics provided opportunities for journalists, who are often reluctant to raise such issues, to begin a discussion, and are intended, in the two countries concerned, to give rise to the production of an awareness-raising booklet for distribution in newsrooms. The European meeting afforded an opportunity to take stock of current training activities and those which it would be desirable to develop (over 40 lines of action proposed); the report is available on line in French (and is currently being translated); the Italian meeting enabled nine of the 40 lines proposed at the European meeting to be examined in greater detail. A call for candidatures has also gone out for the European media work exchanges, which entail two professionals working as a pair during reciprocal five-day visits to the two countries concerned. More than 75 candidatures have been received, and about ten exchanges begun. 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 over 3,400 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. More than 250 people follow the page.

NEXT STEPS

For 2012 and the end of the MARS programme, ten national meetings (4 on training, 3 on production and 3 on ethics) and two European meetings (one in the United Kingdom on issues of ethics and editorial management, the other in Portugal on production) are scheduled. Furthermore, some 140 participants in European media work exchanges are to be involved in 70 such exchanges, thus creating 70 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 so many tools available on line and will be promoted so that media industry players have media 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. In order to achieve this, and as already indicated, once the outputs have been finalised and made available, they will be placed on line on the MARS programme site, converted at the end of the project into a permanent resource centre available to media professionals and to the media themselves. Added to this resource centre will be a database of European contact persons specialising and/or involved in media issues, diversity, non-discrimination and intercultural dialogue; persons able to offer support to any stakeholder (an individual or a group) likely to wish to include diversity and the principles of non-discrimination as recurrent angles of media coverage. Lastly, in parallel with this MARS process, it has been decided to propose to the European Union, in the form of a reply to a new call for tenders (Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, deadline March 2013), a complementary project entitled MEDIANE (Media exchanges for Diversity Inclusiveness, Antiracism and Non-discrimination in Europe). The main lines pursued by MEDIANE will be further European or sub-regional/sub-thematic exchanges and the extension of European media work exchanges. It is

intended that 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, with a view to providing the media and their staff with a tool with which to assess their own diversity inclusion capacity, and which will help them to 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, it is proposed that 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.