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PROMOTION OF TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Transfrontier co-operation in Europe, No. 8

PROMOTION OF TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Study prepared by the Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation,
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Examples and possibilities for transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities in maritime coastal zones, No. 6

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INTRODUCTION

This study, prepared by the Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation, aims to provide an overview of the key issues relating to transfrontier media at local and regional level, to assess their objectives and benefits and to make recommendations on how to promote them. It pays particular attention to relevant political issues, such as pluralism, minority issues, conflict prevention, confidence building and the process of European integration. The study includes several examples of good practice of transfrontier co-operation from internal and external borders of the European Union which provide information of use to practitioners.

The publication was prepared in co-operation with Katja Mahnkopf and edited by Anne Brinkhoff from the Local and Regional Development Planning Ltd. (LRDP, London, Brussels).

The information and analyses are based on:

- a selection of project examples from external and internal border regions in Europe. These were selected with help from the secretariat of the Council of Europe, Circom Regional, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the European Ethnic Broadcasting Association (EEBA), the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the LACE-TAP offices.¹ The work involved telephone consultations and interviews with project managers and the review of existing project documentation;
- desk research, including the review of existing reports and key legislative documents in the field of the media, including European Union Directives and Green Papers;
- consultation with experts from the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Circom Regional and the European Ethnic Broadcasting Association (EEBA).

This study was adopted by the Steering Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) at its 24th meeting in December 1999

¹ LACE-TAP (Technical Assistance and Promotion of Transfrontier Co-operation in relation to the European Union Community Initiative INTERREG IIA). LACE is an AEBR activity funded by the European Union.

I. CLASSIFICATION OF TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

The main forms of local and regional media

By definition local and regional media cover a geographically-restricted area, for example a region, a city or a town. They provide a local target audience with local information on all aspects of life, including politics, business/economics, culture and sport. Local and regional media usually offer a supplementary source of information to the national media.

There are three main forms of local and regional media. These are:

- the press (e.g. newspapers or magazines);
- radio;
- television.

The press

The press is the oldest existing form of local and regional media and exists in two main forms:

- local and regional newspapers; these focus on news, reports and commentaries on local current affairs, politics, culture and sport;
- local and regional magazines, such as city or events magazines; these are more entertainment oriented and focus on cultural events, entertainment calendars and so on.

In western Europe local and regional newspapers and magazines are predominantly funded by advertising and to a lesser extent through sales and subscriptions. A growing number of free publications are also available on the market. Since 1989, state independent local and regional newspapers have also developed in many countries in central and eastern Europe.

Radio and television

A general distinction can be made between private and public broadcasters. Private stations usually operate with income from advertising and to some extent from sponsorship. The majority of public broadcasting services which exist in Europe are funded from a variety of different sources, normally a combination of public revenue (licence fees and/or grants) and private revenue (from advertising and sponsorship). Public broadcasting services financed solely from public funds are the exception at the present time.

Transmission of broadcasting programmes can be based on terrestrial, satellite and cable systems. Digital technology can be used by all three broadcasting systems.¹

¹ Analogue transmission technology uses frequencies which carry analogue signals and are received by aerial. Digital transmission uses high definition digital signals which can be carried by terrestrial, cable and satellite systems.

Local and regional radio

There are a wide range of local and regional radio stations with different objectives and target groups. The most important types of stations are:

- public local radio stations which are part of a national or regional network. These are typically talk-based, focusing on local news, current affairs, community affairs and local sport, i.e. issues of interest to the general public;
- local and regional commercial radio stations which are more music and entertainment oriented but also offer local news and information services;
- local commercial stations which focus on a specific type of music (e.g. classical music, jazz) or which cater for a specific audience (e.g. young people);
- non-commercial local radio stations, at community level, without a public licence. They can serve political interest groups or specific community interests, for example socially excluded people or ethnic minorities. Pirate local radio stations should not be confused with non-commercial local radio stations. A number of non-commercial, or community, local radio stations operate on the basis of a licence properly obtained from the appropriate authorities. However, commercial radio stations might broadcast without first having obtained a licence.

Local and regional television

At present, the following forms of local and regional television can be identified:

- local and regional television stations which are part of public regional or national networks;
- commercial television stations which operate solely at local and regional level;
- non-profit-making private television services which, like community radio, aim to represent and promote the interests of certain social groups or certain communities.
- local/regional programmes or “windows” that are part of the programmes offered by public national/regional broadcasters;
- local/regional programmes or “windows” that are integrated into private national television programmes.

In general, television has changed rapidly since the 1980s, when the advance of satellite and cable technology necessitated changes to broadcasting legislation. With increased frequency capacity available many governments in western Europe have started to liberalise or privatise the national television industry. This process has raised issues such as the protection of public interest (e.g. in areas such as violence, pornography and minority rights) and the need to avoid an over-concentration of ownership which is incompatible with the concept of a pluralistic society. With reference to the latter issue, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation No. R (99) 1, on 19 January 1999, which suggests a number of non-binding measures which member states might take to guarantee and promote pluralism via the media, including at local and regional level.

However, this initiative does not start out from the assumption that media concentrations are necessarily a danger to pluralism as such. For example, an accumulation of interests by one company or one group within a single media sector (a monomedia concentration) or within several sectors (multimedia concentration or diversified media ownership) does not necessarily imply a standardisation of the content of those media. Moreover, certain forms of co-operation or concentration between media, particularly at local and regional level, such as the pooling of services or activities, may contribute to securing pluralism by giving those media the means of achieving economies of scale and dealing with competition.

Over the last few years, digital technology has rapidly been adopted for transmission of information in all forms of media (new media services). Any form of content (images, sound, text and data) can now be made available via any transmission medium, thus breaking down barriers between telecommunication and broadcasting.¹ An example of this is television received via the Internet. At the same time digital television will integrate certain computer functions and thereby offer new services such as teleshopping. Benefits of the new digital technologies and services for local and regional media are manifold and relate in particular to faster and better quality services and a reduction in production costs.

It is worth noting that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe is due to adopt a recommendation on universal access to new communication services. Moreover, the Steering Committee on the Mass Media (CDMM) of the Council of Europe is currently working on a number of issues related to this matter. In particular, work is in progress on the question of self-regulation for the providers of new communication services and self-control for the users of these services, with the aim in particular of preventing the broadcasting of harmful content via the new online services (e.g. violent or pornographic material) from damaging the interests of certain more vulnerable groups such as minors.

In addition, a committee reporting to the CDMM is dealing with the impact of the development of digital broadcasting resources on the regulatory systems at present in force in the media sector, and in particular the broadcasting sector.

II. INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND EUROPEAN LAW GOVERNING TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

Introduction

There is no legally-binding instrument or legislation at European level which relates to transfrontier press. European conventions and legislation related to broadcasting are based on the assumption that both radio and television can and should provide unrestricted services in Europe. The Council of Europe Convention and European Union legislation on transfrontier media therefore aim at a minimum level of co-ordination of national laws and regulations, though individual states may enact stricter laws for broadcasters under their jurisdiction.

This chapter provides an overview of the international regulatory framework which is determined by national legislation but provides the basis on which transfrontier media at local and regional level operates. They cannot however oppose the retransmission and reception of foreign television services on the grounds that they do not obey such stricter regulations, as long as these comply with the rules of the Council of Europe Convention and European Union legislation.

European Union law

European Union treaties

The *Treaty on the European Union* includes several articles which provide the legal basis for the adoption of an audiovisual policy, especially Articles 9, 12, 30 and 31 (free circulation of goods) and 48 to 66 (free movement of workers, right of establishment and free provision of services). In addition, Article 128 promotes culture. Other areas of community policy relevant for the media sector are competition and common economic policy.

¹ This process of convergence challenges existing regulations in terms of ensuring universal access to the new services at affordable costs as well as ensuring effective competition. Both the European Union and national governments have responded to this challenge with Green Papers, e.g. *Regulating Communications: Approaching Convergence in the Information Age*, UK Department of Trade and Industry, July 1998. The government's response was published in June 1999 *Regulating Communications: The Way Ahead*.

The *Treaty of Amsterdam*, signed on 2 October 1997 contains a special protocol confirming the essential role of member states in the organisation and financing of their public radio and television broadcasting systems. In particular, the member states: “consider that public broadcasting services in the member states are linked to the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society as well as the necessity of preserving pluralism in the media”.

European Union legislation

The basis of European Union audiovisual law and policy is Directive 89/552/EEC on television without frontiers. The original directive of the Council (89/552/EEC) has been amended by Directive 97/36/EC (19 June 1997) of the Council and the European Parliament. Revision of the Directive on television without frontiers primarily responded to a number of economic developments in the television sector, such as the emergence of teleshopping services or increasing competition between broadcasters in order to acquire exclusive rights to the retransmission of major events (especially sporting events).

The overall objective of the directive is to ensure the principle of free circulation of television programmes through the co-ordination of certain legislative, regulatory and administrative aspects of media law within the member states. It addresses many areas relevant to transfrontier media at local and regional level, including advertising and sponsorship, support for independent producers as well as public order, notably racism and the protection of minors. The directive allows more channels to be created and broadcast. This will be of benefit to local or regional broadcasting since they will be able to share spectrum of larger channels or share spectrum between them.

The directive addresses the issues of protection of minors. According to its provisions, the European Commission prepared a study on advantages and disadvantages of technical devices to enable parental control of television programmes watched by their children. The findings of the study on parental control of television broadcasting were outlined in the Commission’s communication to the Council, COM (1999) 371 Final and the Council of Ministers on 23 November 1999 agreed to the Council’s conclusions.

European Union Green Paper on pluralism and media concentration

Since the mid-1980s European Union member states have introduced legislation on media ownership which has developed in different ways and in some cases caused concentration of the media. Bearing in mind that the concept of pluralism defined as “ensuring diversity of information for the public” is a recognised principle of western democratic systems, the European Commission launched a Green Paper on pluralism and media concentration (COM (92) 480 final) in 1992. It discussed ways to reduce disparities between the various national laws and regulations on ownership within the European Union. The publication of a draft directive by the Commission has been delayed several times due to political sensitivities within European Union member states.

In the context of this study the issue of foreign ownership restrictions and investment is particularly important. The Green Paper highlighted that a number of countries (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, Greece, France, Portugal and Spain and) restrict foreign ownership or investment, some of which refer specifically to local media. In Denmark for example, local radio and television licences are only granted if a majority of members of the board are resident in the locality. France and Greece limit investment of foreigners to 20 and 25 per cent of social capital respectively.

European Union Green Paper on the protection of minors and human dignity

In response to the development of new digital services (pay-per-view, video-on-demand, etc.) and concerns over the social impact of violence and pornography in the media, including internet services, the European Commission issued a Green Paper on the protection of minors and human dignity in audiovisual and information services (COM (96) 483) in 1996. The paper set off a consultation process with the media industry and community organisations. Key recommendations of the paper include the establishment, at national level, of a framework of self-regulation and experiments with new measures for the protection of minors such as technical devices to aid parental control.

Following the Green Paper mentioned above, the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on the development of the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and information services industry through the promotion of national frameworks designed to ensure a comparable and effective level of protection of minors and human dignity, 98/560/EC of 24 September 1998.

Council of Europe conventions

The most important European convention on transfrontier media at local and regional level is the European Convention on Transfrontier Television, which was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 1989. The convention is a legally-binding instrument, which came into effect on 1 May 1993. The convention has now been signed by thirty-four countries and has been ratified by Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Poland, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. It seeks to provide an international framework for the unrestricted circulation of television services. The European Convention on Transfrontier Television provides a definition of European programmes, and addresses key issues such as advertising, sponsorship, the protection of public interest (against racism, violence and pornography) and the protection of minors.

The European convention is amended by a protocol in order to bring it in line with the revised European Union Directive on television without frontiers (see above). The protocol was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 9 September 1998 and opened for signature to the parties to the convention with effect from 1 October 1998.

The protocol will enter into force when all the parties to the convention have accepted it or, alternatively, within a period of two years from the date of its opening for signature (i.e. 1 October 2000), unless any party has entered an objection, in which case the protocol will not enter into force until that party has deposited its instrument of acceptance.

The convention is of direct relevance to local and regional transfrontier television services insofar as, pursuant to Article 3, the instrument applies to all programme services “transmitted or retransmitted by entities or by technical means within the jurisdiction of a party, whether by cable, terrestrial transmitter or satellite, and which can be received, directly or indirectly, in one or more other parties”.

As a result, any local or regional television service transmitting on the territory of a state party to the convention and which can be received in one or more other states parties to the instrument, even unintentionally as a result of simple spill-over, may claim the freedom of reception and retransmission secured by Article 4 of the convention, provided it respects the basic standards laid down in the instrument.

Thus the convention offers a legal framework favourable to the development of transfrontier relations via the television sector. It should be stressed that the rules set forth in Articles 3 and 4 of the present convention will not be changed once the amending protocol comes into force.

Yet, the criteria defined in Article 5 of the convention to determine the competence of the parties with regard to transfrontier television services will be changed and brought into line with those of the revised directive, the principal criterion laid down in the amending protocol being that of establishment. Furthermore, the amending protocol seeks to include in the convention a new Article 24 bis (on abuse of the rights secured in the present convention), which has no equivalent in the revised European directive and which could apply in the case of local or regional transfrontier television services.

III. EUROPEAN LEVEL ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROMOTION OF TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is supporting a number of transfrontier media projects under the Confidence-building Measures Programme. The programme seeks to contribute to the reduction of inter ethnic conflict. Eligible activities include networking and education and training events such as discussion forums and seminars/workshops. Support to independent radio stations and multilingual programmes is also provided under the programme.

As far as general assistance for media professionals is concerned, the Council of Europe put in place a medium-term programme of training in 1991. Until 1998, the programme was limited to the countries of central and eastern Europe.

This programme covers the sectors of the printed press, radio and television. Its purpose is to enable media professionals to acquire certain knowledge and skills in the regulation and functioning of the media in a democratic society (questions relating to the rights and responsibilities of journalists, media regulation and self-regulation), and the question of the media in a market economy (financial management, human resource management, questions of production, sale and purchase of programmes, advertising strategies, etc.).

The programme takes the form of training seminars and workshops organised jointly with a number of professional organisations which have particular skills and experience, such as the International Federation of Journalists, the World Association of Newspapers, the European Broadcasting Union and Circom Regional.

The European Union

The main European Union programmes which support activities in the field of transfrontier media at local and regional level, include:

MEDIA

This programme started in 1990 and is now running in its second phase. MEDIA II started in 1996 with a budget of 310 million ecus and supports audiovisual projects which fall under three categories of activity:

- training (e.g. management, script writing, use of new technologies);
- development (e.g. projects and independent production companies),
- distribution of European productions such as television co-productions.

A successor programme is currently under consideration in the European Commission and a proposal will be made to the Council by the end of 2000.

INTERREG

This is one of the Community initiatives which promotes and supports transfrontier co-operation on the internal and external borders of the European Union. The guidelines adopted for INTERREG IIA (1994-99) include media projects which can now be included in the field of culture.

The main programmes which support transfrontier media co-operation in central and eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of independent states (CIS) are Phare, in particular the Phare Democracy Programme, and Tacis. Both programmes support non-governmental, non-profit-making organisations and the media with a view to promoting a pluralistic and democratic society.

Circom Regional

Circom Regional is the European Association of Regional Television. It was established in 1983 and now includes about 400 regional stations in thirty-eight countries. Circom Regional offers a wide range of information and support services to its members. This includes access to a wide network of regional media professionals, information about funding programmes which support co-productions, a newsletter about current developments in the media industry and a video library of co-productions.

The association plays an active role in the support of transfrontier co-operation. Circom Regional facilitates inter-regional co-operation between regional television stations in Europe through programme exchange and co-productions as well as assistance with transfrontier projects between neighbouring stations. The annual prix Circom Regional is awarded to the best regional television programmes, including transfrontier programmes.

European Ethnic Broadcasting Association

The European Ethnic Broadcasting Association (EEBA) was founded in 1995 with the objective to serve the interests of ethnic minorities in programming, legal and technical fields of productions. The EEBA has initiated a European Charter for Ethnic Broadcasting – National Partnerships – which aims at conflict prevention and gives support to ethnic minorities through inter-regional and transfrontier co-operation. To date the charter has been signed by MTV Hungary, RTS Serbia, NRK Norway, RTV Slovenia and MRT Macedonia. The EEBA publishes a quarterly newsletter, organises seminars and training courses, many of them in conjunction with Circom Regional.

IV. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Overview

This section examines several examples of good practice in transfrontier co-operation in the field of media at local and regional level covering the areas of printed press, radio and television. A brief summary of each of the examples is given below.

Printed Press

German-Polish Press Club (D/PL), public – funded by public subsidies through the German Centre for Political Education;

Dreiland-Zeitung (D/CH/F), private – financed through advertisement, sales and subscription fees;

Connexion Intermedia Savoie/Vallée d'Aoste, (F/I), private – transfrontier co-operation between *La Vie Nouvelle* – *L'hebdo de Savoie* and *Courrier de la Vallée d'Aoste*.

Radio

Radio Euregio (NL/D), public – funded by public broadcasting stations Radio/TV Oost and Omroep Gederland (NL) and WDR Studio Münster and NDR Studio Osnabrück (Germany);

Radio Pomerania (D/PL), public – funded by the German regional public broadcaster NDR 1 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Polish public local radio station Polskie Radio Szczecin;

Sami Radio (SF/N/S), public – funded by national broadcasting companies in Finland (YLE), Norway (NRK) and Sweden (SR);

Euregio-Media (D/B/NL), public – funded by the European Commission – a network of four public radio broadcasters in the Euroregion Maas-Rhein: Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Studio Aachen (D), the German programme of Belgischer Rundfunk in Eupen (B), the French programme of Radio-télévision belge de la Communauté française in Liège and the Vlaamse Radio en Televisie in Hasselt (B).

Television

EUROLOK (D/PL/CZ) private – independent local TV stations;

HierHer (D/DK) public – NDR Kiel (D), TV Syd (DK);

Zemplen TV (SK/H/Ukraine) public – funded by the Council of Europe (Confidence-building Measures Programme) – co-operation between the Hungarian regional public television station Zemplen”, Ukrainian local public TV “Munkacs TV” and the Slovak radio station “KIKS” Michalovce;

Baltic Media Centre (DK) public – funded by the Danish Government, Council of Europe (Confidence-building Measures Programme) and the European Commission (Democracy programme);

Balkan TV Magazine, public – a network of national public service broadcasters RTV Serbia, Bulgarian TV, Turkey TRT, Macedonian MKRTV, Albanian TV, Romania RTV, Greece ERT-3, RTV Montenegro and Teleradio Moldova;

North-South Media Projects (IRL/UK), public – funded by the Central Community Relation Unit of the Northern Ireland Office, Radio and Television (RTE), Ulster Television (UTV), the Independent Newspapers, the American-Ireland Fund and the European Union Peace and Reconciliation Programme;

Alps-Danube-Adriatic TV Magazine, public – involves about thirty regional TV public broadcasting stations from nine countries: Austria, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland;

Citoyenneté transfrontalière (B/F), public/private – co-operation between Walloon TV station NO-TELE (B) and C9 Television (F).

Transfrontier projects in the field of the press

“Against stereotypes” – German-Polish Press Club (D/PL)

The German-Polish Press Club “Against stereotypes” was set up in 1994 by the German-Polish Society Brandenburg e.V. The press club is managed by the German-Polish Society Brandenburg in Potsdam and the director of European Affairs in the Euroregion Pomerania in Stettin. The overall objective of the club is to eradicate existing stereotypes in the German and Polish press by strengthening networking and co-operation between German and Polish journalists. Its activities are non-commercial and include the organisation of seminars and events for journalists from both sides of the border which provide the opportunity to discuss current political affairs and exchange opinions. Particular emphasis is placed on the critical review of the mutual press coverage in both countries.

The club publishes its own informative magazine called *Trans Odra* which is targeted at journalists as well as at local decision-makers involved in transfrontier co-operation. *Trans Odra* provides news on social developments in both countries as well as producing reports on transfrontier activities and projects. Most issues of *Trans Odra* are published in German although some special editions have been bilingual.

The Press Club has encountered financial problems as it relies exclusively on public subsidies. Funding is provided by the Centre for Political Education and limited technical assistance support from the Ministry of Economy, Enterprises and Technology in Brandenburg. Despite these financial difficulties the club plans to open two small press cafes in Stettin and in Slubice (PL) which will be hosted by the European Academy and the *Collegium Polonium* respectively. The cafes will provide permanent meeting points for journalists, and are expected to offer telephone and fax services.

Dreiland-Zeitung (D/F/CH)

The *Dreiland-Zeitung* is a weekly colour transfrontier newspaper which targets an audience in the tri-national border region of north-west Switzerland (CH), South Baden (D) and Upper Alsace (F). The paper was founded in 1991 in Basle. The paper’s objective is to provide local information to people who live and work in the tri-national border region. The paper is published as a weekly supplement to the *Basler Zeitung* which has a circulation of 130 000 and is sold in the Basle region. A small part of the publication is subscribed to by readers in South Baden (D) and Upper Alsace (F). The paper is produced in both German and French. It provides news, reports and commentaries as well as a cultural events calendar for the tri-national border region. Regular transfrontier topics include the tri-national airport Basle-Mulhouse-Freiburg and commuter issues. In addition, transfrontier issues are covered regularly through reports on the activities of political bodies which promote transfrontier co-operation in the border region, including the RegioTriRhena and the Oberrhein-Konferenz, established between Germany, France and Switzerland.

The *Dreiland-Zeitung* has five permanent editors who are German and Swiss, as well as French freelance support. They have an office in each of the three countries. The decision to set up three offices was partly due to legal problems encountered in France as French legislation stipulates that access to information, particularly from public authorities, is only possible when based in a registered office within France. An advantage of this decentralised office structure is to allow staff to stay close to their home. While the majority of the staff is based in Basle (CH), one person is based in Freiburg (D) and another one in Mulhouse (F). A permanent secretariat is located in Basle. The secretariat has three employees which provide administrative and technical support for journalists and the editorial board.

As part of the *Basler Zeitung* the paper is financed largely through advertisements and to some extent by sales in the Basle region and subscription fees in South Baden and Upper Alsace. Advertisements are commissioned by enterprises on all three sides of the border, which suggests a high level of market integration in the transfrontier area.

Connexion Intermedia Savoie – Vallée d'Aoste (F/I)

This is a transfrontier initiative between two private undertakings: *La Vie Nouvelle–L'hebdo de Savoie* and *Courrier de la Vallée d'Aoste*. It seeks to establish a link through the Internet between the two journals in order to exchange news and create links with various databases.

The objective is to increase knowledge of services and opportunities in border zones, notably in the domain of university and post-university education, professional training, culture and entertainment and transport. It is also envisaged that surveys and colloquies on transfrontier information will be undertaken.

The project is financed by INTERREG II. The local and regional authorities do not participate financially in the project but give political support to it.

Transfrontier projects in the field of radio

Euregio (D/NL) “Radio and television without borders”

The Euregio includes the Dutch-German areas between the Rhine, the Ems and the Ijssel, and is one of the most integrated transfrontier regions in Europe. Since 1993, this transfrontier region and its 1.6 million people have benefited from their own radio service – Radio Euregio. Radio Euregio is produced and managed by two Dutch broadcasters (Radio Oost/TV Oost and Omroep Gelderland) and two German stations (WDR Studio Münster and NDR Studio Osnabrück).

Prior to the start of any co-operation between the four radio stations, editors and journalists had to develop an awareness of transfrontier issues which would enable them to identify relevant news, information and stories. To date, after five years, news and reports from both sides of the border have become part of daily broadcasting. Moreover, editors are aware of the increasing demand by the audience to provide information from both sides of the border. This relates especially to information services, for example traffic news and cultural or entertainment events, as well as consumer affairs. The type of information demanded serves to indicate the advanced economic and social integration of the transfrontier region.

In practical terms, co-operation between the radio stations takes place on two levels. First, there is a daily exchange of news which is screened, selected and fed into in the respective programmes. Secondly, the four stations produce a weekly magazine covering consumer affairs, current developments in the transfrontier region, activities of the Euregio as well as cultural and sports events and travel tips. The editors have a weekly meeting to exchange reports and news for the magazine. Each editor then chooses from the news and report pool. The length (5 to 30 minutes) and content of the magazine varies according to each station. Euregio radio was initially funded through INTERREG I. Since 1996, however, the programme has been financed by public broadcasting stations in the border region which is a good indicator of the success of the co-operation.

Co-operation between the four broadcasters has been increased to produce joint television programmes. In 1994, TV Oost and the WDR Münster co-produced six programmes covering a typical family's life in the Euregio. The programme was broadcast in its original language with subtitles in German and Dutch. More programmes by all four partners followed in 1996 and include topics such as neighbourhoods, differences in society, language, school and education, and transfrontier activities.

Difficulties in day-to-day co-operation are predominantly linked to the language barrier. Whereas German is widely understood on the Dutch side of the border, Dutch interviews are less likely to be understood and listened to on the German side of the border and therefore need to be translated. In addition to supporting the social and economic integration of the transfrontier region, the project has had tangible economic benefits such as the creation of four jobs, one in each of the radio stations. It also provides placements for German and Dutch students who study journalism and have an interest in European integration.

Radio Pomerania (D/PL)

Radio Pomerania is a monthly radio magazine which is jointly produced by the German regional public broadcaster NDR 1 Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Polish local public radio station *Polskie Radio Szczecin*. The programme is broadcast in the German districts of Uckermark and Barnim and the city of Szczecin in Poland. Co-operation between the two radio broadcasters started in 1997 based on existing personal contacts between a German editor in the local NDR Vorpommern studio and a Polish editor in Szczecin, and has since developed gradually. Radio Pomerania involves an exchange of local news items and both studios produce reports for inclusion in magazines produced in the partner region, i.e. *German-Polish Border Stories* and *Europe Magazine*. Radio Pomerania sees its key objective in the contribution to a better understanding between German and Polish people and the promotion of good neighbourliness. It provides services such as information on cultural events and traffic news at border crossings, includes interviews and live discussions on issues and topics of interests for the transfrontier region and is an important platform for the Euroregion Pomerania. Although jointly produced, the programme is broadcast at different times partly due to the lack of a sufficient frequency structure. NDR broadcasts on a Wednesday evening in German. Polskie Radio Szczecin broadcasts the programme on a Sunday afternoon in Polish. Joint reports are translated in the corresponding language.

The programme is jointly planned and produced by one German and one Polish editor. The two radio stations signed an agreement in July 1997 outlining the responsibilities of each of the partners, in particular, financial management. The Polish side provides the studio for the production of the programmes, while the German side covers the costs of the German and Polish editors as well as the travel costs for the German editor. The German project partner receives funding through INTERREG IIA, while co-financing from the Polish partner is given in kind through contributions to the provision of the production facilities.

The main challenges for the project have been technical as until very recently there were no technical facilities to transmit reports across the border. The editors had to drive across the border and physically exchange tapes. Against this background and in co-operation with the Euroregion Pomerania the project idea for a joint radio programme was developed. Radio Pomerania was launched in March 1998. Former technical problems have now been solved since information and finalised reports are now transmitted via ISDN lines.

Sami Radio (N/SF/S)

The Sami people are an ethnic minority resident in Norway, Finland, Sweden and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Bound by their respective broadcasting laws the national broadcasting companies in Finland (YLE), Norway (NRK) and Sweden (SR) all provide Sami radio and television services. The overall objectives of all Sami radio and television stations is to raise the profile of the Sami language, culture and identity as well as to promote respect and tolerance between the majority population and the ethnic groups in the three countries. However, despite this favourable regulatory environment each of the three Sami radio stations has different resources (notably as concerns personnel and financial resources). The differences in management structures as well as resource allocation also have an effect on the scope for co-operation between the Sami stations.

With the introduction of digital audio broadcasting (DAB), the three Sami radio stations are now planning to establish a full service Internordic Sami radio channel by January 1999. It is envisaged that one editorial centre for news, culture, sport and music will be set up, to be located in Norway. The individual Sami radio stations are expected to become production units having responsibility for separate areas, e.g. sport or culture. Further plans envisage the introduction of daily Sami TV broadcasting and the setting up of a Sami news bulletin on the Internet. The latter would be in English with the objective to bring current Sami issues to the attention of the wider world.

Euregio-Media (D/B/NL)

Euregio-Media is a radio news agency, which started in the Euroregion Maas-Rhein (D/B/NL) in February 1997. The objective of the agency is to serve as an information network between four public radio broadcasters in the Euregio Maas-Rhein: Westdeutsche Rundfunk, Studio Aachen (D), the German programme of Belgischer Rundfunk in Eupen (B), the French programme of radio-television belge de la communauté française in Liège and the Vlaamse Radio en Televisie in Hasselt (B).

Before 1992 there had been little co-operation between public radio broadcasters in the Euregio. Occasionally, information was exchanged or an editor was asked to write a programme contribution in the respective language. There was a lack of co-operation for a number of reasons; there was no understanding that the audience on all three sides of the border would be interested in transfrontier information and programmes; there was a degree of competition between the broadcasters and no awareness of common interests; finally, with three of the languages (German, French and Flemish) there was a clear language barrier to overcome.

With support from the Euregio Maas-Rhein, the plan for regular and institutionalised co-operation was developed in 1996. The initial plan aimed at bringing together public radio broadcasters from all five partner regions in the Euregio Maas-Rhein. However, the broadcasting station in the Dutch province of Limburg decided against institutionalised co-operation because of differences in the composition and role of the programme management committees.

The directors of the four participating stations have signed a formal contract, which obliges them to exchange news on a daily basis. With the establishment of the news agency it was decided that participation is open to print media as well as commercial radio stations. However, the involvement of private stations has been impeded by the fact that a commercially-run station is unlikely to pass on or share exclusive news.

The project is financed with European Union INTERREG IIA contributions (50 per cent), Euregio funding (30 per cent) and partner funding (20 per cent) and the partners have a joint bank account. Located in Eupen (B), the operational management lies with the Belgium broadcaster on behalf of all other partners. The news agency employs three editors who speak and understand all three languages to fulfil the language requirements in the region.

Euregio-Media provides a range of different services. The agency receives and collects news from all four partner areas. News is screened and after a selection process edited, translated and the texts sent on to the respective broadcasters. Moreover the agency provides information on events in the Euregio and delivers reports upon request by individual partners. Since summer 1998 Euregio-Media has started producing its own radio programmes which are offered to all partners. The four partners are currently planning to extend their media co-operation to television. Co-ordination of a weekly television magazine is also envisaged.

Transfrontier projects in the field of television

EUROLOK (D/PL/CZ)

EUROLOK is a three-year multinational media project, which started in 1996. The project promotes the establishment of a European network of local television stations in the Czech, German and Polish border region. The overall objective of the network is to maintain and develop democratic structures and contribute to media pluralism through active support for local independent TV stations. Planned network activities include exchange of experiences, co-ordinating programme exchange and provision of professional training.

The project has been developed by the German media co-operative Audioscop, in close co-operation with four Euroregions, namely Erzgebirge/Krusnohori (D/CZ), Neiße (D/PL), Elbe/Labe (D/CZ) and Egrensis (D/CZ). The initiative for co-operation was developed as a response to common interest. In all three border regions there are a considerable number of small local television stations, run by committed individuals and/or technicians who often lack technical skills and have limited financial resources. Co-operation was set up to create financial and technical benefits (economies of scale and scope) and is often based on the feeling of closer proximity to counterparts across the border than to the national television stations.

The project co-ordinators have organised an international TV competition the “Grand Prix Lokal” which promoted the projects as well as transfrontier media projects in general. Participants were local TV producers as well as authors from the Euroregions in Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. The competition took place in Görlitz (D) in October 1998. Future plans focus on the improvement of professional skills through training, notably the establishment of a European Institute of Media Culture. This institute is hoping to provide a specific training system for journalists and production staff in regional media which will ensure high quality programmes and thereby help to maintain competitive and independent local and regional media companies.

HierHer – TV Programme (D/DK)

HierHer is a transfrontier television news bulletin broadcast in the German/Danish border region of Schleswig/Sonderjylland. The programme is co-produced by the Danish TV Syd based in Kolding and the German NDR3 in Kiel. TV Syd is part of the TV2 network based in Odense which consists of one national public service station and eight independent regional stations. NDR3 in Kiel is part of the regional public service network NDR, which runs several stations in northern Germany with its main station in Hamburg.

The idea of co-operation between the two stations developed in 1994. Promoted by the Danish Regional Authority, Amt of Sonderjylland, which provided information and advice on transfrontier projects and funding opportunities, the managing director of TV Syd and the responsible editors of NDR3 drew up a preliminary plan for a Danish-German regional news programme for the borderland.

The programme HierHer is bilingual partly because the audience in the border region includes a Danish minority of about 70 000 people in Germany and a German minority in Denmark. It focuses on everyday life on both sides of the border and provides news and information as well as entertaining reports. All contributions are in the respective mother tongue and subtitles are required accordingly. The programme is jointly produced by a Danish-German camera team.

The production of the programme has encountered several technical and financial difficulties. The absence of a direct transmission link between the two stations means that production is expensive and more time and human resources need to be invested. The normal production procedure involves editing by the NDR in Kiel or Hamburg and a car delivery of a tape to Kolding. The tape then needs to be delivered to Odense where it is subtitled and returned to Kolding. Occasionally pictures or news flashes are transmitted via ISDN lines directly which results in high transmission costs. There is still a

lack of a transfrontier telecom pricing policy since Deutsche Telecom and Tele Denmark have their respective national pricing policies. This implies that a newsflash will be transmitted via a number of links (Kiel-Hamburg-Copenhagen-Odense-Kolding) on a long and expensive route instead of going the direct and much shorter way of 200 km between Kolding and Kiel. In view of these difficulties the two stations are planning to create a direct link via satellite between Kolding and Kiel.

The joint production has identified a number of issues and requirements which are relevant and important to successful transfrontier media projects in general. Most importantly, project managers pointed out that in this field of co-operation the need for a common language is not only necessary to manage the co-operation process, but it is an essential part of the nature of co-operation. In the case of HierHer communication takes place largely in German as most of the Danish journalists speak German, and occasionally in English. An understanding and tolerance of different approaches to journalism, differences in work ethic and culture is another important prerequisite for co-operation. Another important aspect is the ability to accommodate and manage differences in resources and production capacities between the partners. In the case of HierHer, NDR Kiel has more staff and financial resources than the small TV Syd. To some extent this is outweighed by the fact that TV Syd is more advanced in its use of digital technology thus allowing for more cost-effective means of production.

HierHer has been very successful and has had a number of economic and socio-economic benefits. Firstly, the magazine has introduced new production methods and improved professional skills. Secondly, research has shown that the television audience has increased in regions where the programme is on air. This suggests that there is considerable interest among the population in the border region in finding out about the way of life of their neighbours on the other side of the border. Thirdly, some of the programme materials are now being used as teaching materials in local schools on both sides of the border. The success of the programme was acknowledged through the 1997 "prix Circom Regional" for the best transfrontier media project.

Zemplen Television (SK/H/UKR)

The Carpathian Basin is a geographic region which covers the border regions between Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine. The region is home to various nationalities and ethnic minorities, including Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Roma. Zemplen Television is a Hungarian regional public television station established in 1986 by the Hungarian local authorities of Satoraljaujhely and Sarospatak. In addition to its local public service role Zemplen TV is committed to promoting tolerance and confidence building among the various ethnic groups in the Zemplen region. With the approval of its own frequency in 1995 Zemplen TV was able to widen the scope of its activities in the Carpathian Basin. Over the last three years, the station has had a co-operative agreement with a local public TV station in the Ukraine, Muncacs TV, and a Slovak radio station, KIKS.

Zemplen TV and KIKS produce an educational programme called "Visiting Neighbours". The programme provides information on events on both sides of the border and focuses on economic, social and cultural issues related to ethnic minorities in the border region. The programme is broadcast weekly in Slovakian, Ukrainian, German, Romani and Hungarian. Co-operation consists of a regular exchange of information as well as features which are integrated into programmes. Twice a year a joint programme is produced. Co-operation between the Ukrainian TV stations Munkacs focus on reports covering the Hungarian minority in the Ukraine. Zemplen Television has been financially supported by the Council of Europe. Operating costs are covered by the local governments of Satoraljaujhely and Sarospatak and there is also some national government support.

The activities of Zemlen TV illustrate that transfrontier cultural co-operation can precede and facilitate other forms of transfrontier co-operation. Zemlen Television has a co-operative agreement with the Carpathian Border Region Economic Development (CBDE) Associations which involves enterprise agencies from Hungary, Slovakia and the Ukraine. The agreement commits the station to operate as a communication channel between and for the enterprise agencies as well as to produce and broadcast economic programmes on a three-month basis in Ukrainian, Slovakian and Hungarian.

Baltic Media Centre

The Baltic Media Centre is an independent non-profit-making foundation, which operates a media network and promotes media co-operation within the Baltic Sea region. The centre was founded in 1993 and is located on the Danish island of Bornholm. The centre is primarily financed by the Danish government but also receives funding from a number of international sources including the Council of Europe and the European Commission (e.g. through the Democracy Programme). While the western media have to pay for services provided, free assistance is given to eastern European countries.

The centre's overall objective is to support the political and economic autonomy of the media in the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Poland and the St Petersburg/Kaliningrad region in Russia with a view to strengthening the development of a pluralistic and democratic society. The centre facilitates the exchange of experiences and best practice as well as co-operation between countries in central and eastern Europe and between these countries and the European Union member states. The Media Centre offers a wide range of services, including training, support for co-production, legal advice and provision of information.

Strategic planning in the centre takes into account its transfrontier nature. The centre has established an International Board of Expert Advisers to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Baltic Media Centre correspond with the interest and needs of the neighbouring partner. The board represents the three Baltic States, Poland and St Petersburg, but can be expanded to include other partners. Representatives come from public television and radio, private radio and television stations as well as the national associations for independent producers. The overall management of the Media Centre lies with the Board of Directors which includes representatives from Danish media institutions and the European Broadcasting Union.

The centre receives a percentage of the revenue made by sales from the co-productions which it supports. Moreover, the regional offices are organised as joint stock companies and it is hoped that their productions will generate further income in the near future.

Over the last five years, the Baltic Centre has tried to improve its work, particularly in the field of exchange of experience and training, as well as through facilitating and producing co-productions. For this purpose the centre has established a decentralised media network in the Baltic Sea region. This involves regional antenna offices and regional training and co-productions units in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The opening of a further antenna is planned for St Petersburg.

Balkan TV Magazine

The Balkan TV magazine is a two-monthly television magazine covering current affairs in the Balkan region. The magazine was initiated by the Macedonian MKRTV in 1994 and is the first example of a transfrontier media project between Balkan public service broadcasting organisations. Founding members of the magazine were the national public service broadcasters RTV Serbia, Bulgarian TV, Turkey TRT, Macedonian MKRTV, Albanian TV and Romania RTV. Since then the circle of members has expanded to ten organisations and now also includes Greece ERT-3, RTV Montenegro and Teleradio Moldova.

The Balkan TV Magazine has been up and running since 1994, producing six programmes a year, which run from between forty-five to sixty minutes. Topics include youth and employment, inter-cultural marriages, cultural values, medial achievements, social protection for young people, alternative tourism, the fight against drugs and environmental protection. The topics are chosen on grounds of common interest and pay particular attention to promoting tolerance and mutual understanding in the Balkan region. They also seek to present special topics, offering solutions and presenting transfrontier projects between individual countries.

Editorial responsibility for the magazine lies with a consortium consisting of representatives from all member organisations. Members meet every three months, each time in a different country, in order to decide on the themes for future magazines and their design. Each television station prepares a five-minute magazine contribution which is sent to the station responsible for final editing and delivery to all other stations. The role of executive producer rotates. The smooth production of the magazine and its operational management are the responsibility of a co-ordinator who is appointed by the consortium for a one-year period. Each magazine contribution is prepared in the contributor's native language but scripts are provided in English. The programmes are broadcast individually by each station with English subtitles; this is partly due to the fact that the Balkan Magazine wants to promote the linguistic diversity of the Balkan region. Furthermore, this system guarantees the involvement of all stations on equal terms as some stations do not have the technology and cannot cover the high costs of dubbing programmes. Funding for the Balkan TV Magazine comes from individual public broadcasting stations.

Over the years, co-operation between the stations has been extended to cover other areas or broadcasting. In 1997, for example, the Balkan Music Magazine was set up by the consortium which includes the best video clips of the most popular bands in the Balkan region. The music magazine is broadcast every two months and alternated with the Balkan TV Magazine. There are also future plans to develop a sports magazine. Another example is the first meeting of public broadcasters of Balkan countries in Greece in June 1998, which was initiated largely by the consortium.

Co-operation North – North-South media projects (IRL/NI)

Co-operation North is a non-profit-making organisation which promotes social and cultural co-operation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Established in 1979, Co-operation North runs a series of programmes to promote transfrontier co-operation between the peoples of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, covering a broad spectrum such as youth education, economic development (SME, agriculture, tourism), media and peace and reconciliation.

With its media programme, Co-operation North seeks to create better understanding between journalists from the North and the South and to combat prejudices. The programme is funded by the Central Community Relation Unit of the Northern Ireland Office, Radio and Television Eire (RTE), Ulster Television (UTV) the Independent Newspapers, the American-Ireland Fund and the European Union Peace and Reconciliation Programme. Its overall objective is to contribute to a press and media coverage which avoids misconceptions and consequently stereotypical labelling and bias in relation to their counterparts on the other side of the border thus contributing to a better understanding between the people of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Activities include a bi-annual North-South Media Conference, conferences for students of journalism and a series of "working dinners" for feature writers.

The programme developed and is managed by Co-operation North with advice from an independent Media Group, comprising approximately eleven journalists from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Alps-Danube-Adriatic TV Magazine

Alps-Danube-Adriatic is the oldest regional transfrontier media co-operation in central Europe. Running since 1982, co-operation today officially involves about thirty regional television public broadcasting stations from nine countries: Austria, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland. The objective of the partnership has been to transcend and overcome political boundaries by focusing on subjects, which are of common interest for the people in the Central European region.

The media partnership was stimulated by the foundation of the Alps-Adria Working Community (I/A/SLO/HU/D) in 1978, which promotes regional transfrontier co-operation. The founding members of the Alps-Danube-Adriatic partnership were regional TV studios of the Austrian Broadcasting Stations in Styria, Carinthia and Upper Austria, former Yugoslavian TV studios in Ljubljana (Slovenia), Zagreb (Croatia) and RAI's regional studios in Trieste and Venice.

Particularly in the early years and before the political changes of 1989 media co-operation was not without its problems. The founding members operated in very different political and socio-economic systems. Austria was a neutral state, Italy a NATO member and the Republics of Yugoslavia non-aligned. Hungary, from which two television stations joined shortly after 1982, belonged to the Warsaw Pact. Because the partner stations operated in governmental systems which took different approaches to the media and freedom of speech a critical coverage of current affairs was not possible. Co-operation has succeeded because programmes have focused on non-political topics of mutual interest covering traditions, culture, family life, travel and nature.

There is no written agreement between the partners, and this has helped to avoid legal problems. Instead co-operation is based on a "gentleman's agreement". Each station produces reports and programme contributions at its own cost. A joint editorial conference, which meets every two months, selects programme contributions and edits final programmes. The partners are obliged to broadcast the programmes as agreed albeit with different styles of presentation and in the respective language.

Prior and especially following the changes in 1989 the co-operation initiative aimed at widening its circle of members, involving difficulties in some cases. Attempts to involve regional TV stations from Slovakia and the Czech Republic did not succeed. This was partly due to a less developed technical infrastructure and media technology in the respective countries. Moreover Slovak and Czech editors had financial difficulties to attend the editorial conferences. The partnership on its part recognised that an ever-widening circle of member posed certain risks to the regional identity of the partnership.

Citoyenneté transfrontalière (B/F)

Citoyenneté transfrontalière is a transfrontier television project carried out by the Walloon TV station NO-TELE (B) and C9 Television (F). The project involves the production of sixteen televised discussions between pupils on both sides of the French-Belgian border. The main objective of the project is to promote the idea of European citizenship among young people (11-20 years) by increasing their knowledge of and interest in the everyday life on the other side of the border.

Each of the sixteen programmes covers a different theme (my community, the environment, exclusion, citizenship in schools, etc.) and involves different schools and age groups. The discussion between pupils is enabled through a satellite link between two respective schools.

The project receives funding from the Walloon regional government and the European Union Initiative INTERREG IIA. The television stations have built transfrontier project teams, which are responsible for the production and editing of the programmes. The programmes are broadcast simultaneously by the two TV stations.

V. Conclusions

Benefits arising from transfrontier media at local and regional level

The examples presented in the previous section show that the benefits of transfrontier co-operation in local and regional media are cross-sectoral and ensue from two key sets of objectives. They are:

- political objectives, for example, the facilitation of a pluralistic society based on the principle of democracy and equal opportunities, and, in a transfrontier context, the promotion of good neighbourliness; and the promotion and support of the transfrontier co-operation process in line with the process of European integration;
- tangible economic objectives, for example job creation and the promotion and application of economies of scale and scope in production methods.

In line with the above-mentioned objectives, several benefits can be identified which are presented below.

The main political benefits are twofold and relate to the promotion of pluralist and democratic societies in Europe, and to supporting the process of European integration. As the examples given above show, transfrontier co-operation can have a major impact on the development of democratic society, particularly in the countries of central and eastern Europe, for example through the exchange of experience, assistance and advice to media institutions in the partner countries, dealing with journalistic skills and methods as well as helping to strengthen existing institutions. Transfrontier co-operation can be an important medium for facilitating and promoting the interests of ethnic minority groups in border regions (e.g. Sami Radio), for example through special programmes or programmes in specific languages which cater for the need of a wider, dispersed audience. In addition, programmes dealing with issues which affect ethnic minorities might be an important “eye opener” to users of local radio, television or the written press.

In line with other transfrontier actions such as cultural activities, transfrontier co-operation in media is an important medium for achieving practical multisectoral integration of a transfrontier region. The provision of local information of relevance and importance to the local population is not only crucial in practical transfrontier co-operation (e.g. knowledge about the transfrontier labour market, about cultural/tourism events, about business conditions) but it also facilitates mutual understanding and awareness of the existence of neighbouring communities, creating the “spiritual precondition” needed for co-operation.

Economic benefits arising from transfrontier co-operation in the media include:

- reduced costs for programme production as a result of the exchange of news items or co-productions (economies of scale);
- the provision of training opportunities and/or the creation of jobs (e.g. Euregio);
- generation of new advertising and sponsorship revenues which includes businesses and/or organisations on the neighbouring side of the border. In the long term, information about goods and services in the neighbouring region is likely to stimulate intra-European trade, particularly with the introduction of a single European currency (e.g. the development of a transfrontier advertising market around Basle);
- economy of scope through exchange of experience, training, skills development leading to improved and more competitive local media which are better equipped to encounter the trend towards concentration in the media industry.

Economic disadvantages:

- Attention should be paid, however, to the fact that some radio stations make use of their (transfrontier) geographical coverage as a means to evade more restrictive advertising legislation on the other side of the border (especially concerning advertisements for alcohol). This phenomenon is aggravated by the fact that those radio stations which belong to a network offer reduced fees for advertisement and distort competition which might have a negative effect on local and regional radio stations on the other side of the border which do not belong to a network.

Other, more indirect socio-economic benefits relate to the scope of the media in the empowerment and capacity building of local people; this is an important element of local democracy and subsidiarity. Also, transfrontier media can facilitate transfrontier co-operation in other sectors, for example in economic development through coverage of co-operation activities in local businesses (e.g. Zemplen TV).

Problems in developing transfrontier co-operation in the media

Based on consultations with journalists, editors, and project managers, and desk research, a number of problems and obstacles have been identified which affect the development and implementation of transfrontier media at local and regional level.

Two obstacles of a more general nature have been identified by many project managers. The first are communication problems created by the different languages used. In contrast to some areas of co-operation (e.g. the environment, business) where language is a minor part of the process of co-operation, the media rely on the understanding and appreciation of language. Secondly, the understanding of the partner's approach to journalism, differences in work ethic/customs and administrative structures are potential obstacles to successful co-operation.

Other problems have been divided in four main categories of "issues":

- political issues;
- legal issues;
- financial issues;
- technical issues.

Political issues

Lack of awareness of the importance of transfrontier co-operation in the media and hence a lack of political support appears to be a key problem and can take on different forms.

The examples of Radio Euregio and HierHer underline the key role which Euroregions as well as local and regional authorities can play in providing political support as well as in facilitating access to funding;

Transfrontier co-operation at local and regional level is linked to the existence of independent and competent local and regional media. This, in turn, requires a favourable regulatory framework. Many local, regional and national authorities in the European Union have acknowledged that the media industry is an important key to future sustainable employment. They are consequently adapting their policies, laws and tax regulations to attract investment in media industries. The focus, however, is often on large media co-operations. Local and regional development strategies need to balance the interests of small and large media companies.

A large number of co-operation and assistance projects are carried out by the Council of Europe, in the countries of central and eastern Europe, in order to ensure that a system of media regulation which respects the requirements of a democratic society is set in place and can operate.

In particular, missions providing legislative expertise have been organised in most of these countries to set such a system in place, both for the press sector and for the broadcasting sector. The emphasis in this context is placed on transforming state broadcasting services into genuine, independent public broadcasting services and on the establishment of independent regulatory authorities for the private broadcasting sector.

Beyond the standards improved by the legal framework as such, the question of applying it on a day-to-day basis arises. In this connection, the Council of Europe organises conferences and seminars designed to raise awareness among political decision-makers, civil servants and judges, in the countries of central and eastern Europe.

Support for ethnic minorities and transfrontier media projects serving their interests varies, while political and financial support for Sami radio and television programmes in Sweden, Finland and Norway is confirmed in the appropriate legislation, this is not the case in all the central and eastern European countries.

Transfrontier co-operation between central and eastern European media as well as the western media requires similar democratic rights for media at local and regional level. In some central and eastern European countries, the political independence of national broadcasting media as well as the possibility to create independent radio and TV at local and regional level still needs to be ensured by appropriate broadcasting laws.

Legal issues

Several of the examples mentioned in section 4 have highlighted differences in legal provisions and administrative procedures within the European Union as well as between the European Union and central and eastern Europe which restrict transfrontier co-operation of media at local and regional level. These relate in particular to:

- difficulties in participating in TV programme production and programme exchange due to differences in licensing and programme content regulation;
- difficulties in accessing and gathering of information because of a lack of residency in a country, as for example in France. As the example of the *Dreiland-Zeitung* illustrates, this can be overcome by opening an office in the relevant country, but this solution leads to an increase in production costs;
- whilst differences between national regulatory frameworks can curb the development of transfrontier co-operation in the media field, particularly with regard to programme production, it can be observed that the European Convention on Transfrontier Television and the revised directive on television without frontiers provide a legal framework, which facilitates the free movement of television services across frontiers, including local or regional services. Moreover, resolutions adopted at ministerial conferences furnish additional guidelines;¹
- as regards the issue of ethnic minorities two other Council of Europe legal instruments are relevant here, namely the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

¹ One pertinent resolution concerns the future of public service broadcasting, adopted at the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Communications Policy (Prague, December 1994). The states taking part in the conference undertook to maintain and develop, at political level, a public service broadcasting system whose functions should meet certain requirements set down in the resolution.

(ETS No. 148) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157). The legislation in a number of states already includes clauses, which permit minority groups, and particularly ethnic groups, to communicate and receive information via the broadcasting media. This comes about, in particular, by way of the particular obligations placed on public service broadcasters either by the law or by charters, conventions or contracts.

Financial issues

Financial issues mostly relate to the lack of funding for small and medium-sized media companies, particularly in a situation where there is a trend to concentration in the industry. Key findings of the examples include:

- the struggle to receive financial support. There is a particular need to have initial funding support. Some of the above examples (e.g. Euregio) have shown that public broadcasters are prepared to continue to finance transfrontier projects, if the audience figures justify the use of public licence fees. In the case of independent local and regional broadcasters initial funding of transfrontier co-operation can help to achieve the self-financing of projects. As the Baltic Centre demonstrates co-productions can reduce production costs and can even generate a revenue on their own;
- independent local and regional media are dependent on advertising and sponsorship. Increasing competition squeezes the advertising budgets of independent local and regional media. As the examples of the small TV companies in the Czech Republic and the German state of Saxony show there is an increasing trend to use programmes from national TV companies due to lack of professional skills as well as limited financial budgets.

Targeting transfrontier advertising and sponsorship is one way of overcoming financial shortcomings. The development of a transfrontier advertising market can be observed in more economically-integrated border regions, such as in the catchment area of the *Basler Zeitung* (D/CH/F). There are also attempts to establish a transfrontier advertising association between local cable television companies on the Czech-German border which is hoped to improve their chances to attract advertising and sponsorship.

Successful and long-term co-operation requires the right match of partners. Co-operation between public service broadcasters and private stations needs to address the issue of different interests, namely public and commercial. Within each co-operative project partners need to accommodate and manage differences in human and financial resources as well as production capacities. As the example of HierHer has shown the use of digital technology allows for more cost-effective methods of production.

Technical issues

Technical problems affecting transfrontier co-operation relate to differences and/or the absence of technologies within national and regional media organisations. Examples are:

- A shortage of transmission time on national broadcasting networks and lack of co-ordination of frequencies between countries which can impinge on transfrontier co-operation. While the development of digital technology is bound to increase the capacity of national and international networks, there is the need to co-ordinate frequencies on an international basis.
- The problems of the international co-ordination of frequencies, normally fall within the ambit of the International Broadcasting Union, which is competent to draw up frequency allocation schedules at international level. Nonetheless, some problems may result from the manner in which the national authorities responsible for managing and allocating the frequency spectrum apply these schedules and oversee observance of the conditions laid down for the use of frequencies.
- Difficulties linked to the distribution of newspapers across the border, mainly due to the absence of transfrontier publishing and distribution networks. The absence of a transfrontier press distribution network may explain, at least partly, that most publishing companies focus on national and regional markets and *vice versa*. This situation is also the result of companies' economic strategies, dictated by what they regard as an interesting market for them, particularly bearing in mind the linguistic and cultural fragmentation of the countries or zones in which they operate. In future years, the development of online newspaper publishing could help to enable publishers overcome the problems posed by the absence of physical press distribution networks, also in frontier zones.
- A fast and cost-effective exchange of information and communication is vital to any media production. Transfrontier broadcasting projects suffer from the lack of direct links and transmission methods, which engenders time delays and high production costs. The establishment of direct links via satellite or digital technology is one way to overcome these obstacles. The cost efficient use of telecom lines and ISDN lines across borders requires a harmonisation of national telecom pricing policies (e.g. HierHer and Radio Pomerania).
- The process of modernisation of local and regional media in some of the central and eastern European countries is affected by a lack of professional skills and outdated technical equipment and lack of financial resources. The establishment of training and co-production centres is one way of offering services to a wider group of professionals (Baltic Media Centre).
- The digitalisation of print and broadcast media and networks is opening up more efficient and cost-effective production methods. At the same time, however, digital technologies pose major challenges for the media. Firstly, these new technologies require substantial investments which may not necessarily be available to public broadcasters, especially in central and eastern Europe, as well as small local and regional newspapers or broadcasting companies. Secondly, new technologies require new skills and therefore training. There is a risk that the failure to allow local and regional media access to and use of these future technologies will further undermine their position in the market.

VI. GUIDELINES RELATED TO THE PROMOTION OF TRANSFRONTIER MEDIA AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL

This report shows that many transfrontier media projects at local and regional level exist in European transfrontier regions and they have generated considerable political and socio-economic benefits for people living in the region. Transfrontier co-operation between media at local and regional level can be actively encouraged in several areas and our recommendations focus on three fields in particular:

- the regulatory and policy framework;
- transfer and exchange of information and expertise;
- financing strategies.

The regulatory and policy framework

- The transfrontier co-operation of the media is of particular importance for ethnic minorities. The interests of these minorities could be safeguarded by appropriate national broadcasting laws and agreements between public service providers which aim at supporting ethnic minorities through transfrontier co-operation.
- Measures have to be taken to facilitate transfrontier investment and programme participation.
- The access of local and regional media to the new digital services has to be ensured.
- Co-operation between national regulatory authorities should be promoted, in order to create greater harmony between national regulations. Such collaboration should also be encouraged with regard to the granting of authorisation and surveillance of broadcasters.

Information transfer and exchange of information and expertise

- Public awareness of the benefits of transfrontier media co-operation at local and regional level needs to be raised. National governments as well as local and regional authorities and organisations involved in transfrontier co-operation can assist this by organising regular conferences and seminars which involve journalists as well as local decision-makers in border regions.
- An increasing number of initiatives should focus on an exchange of experience and expertise between western journalists as well as between eastern and western European journalists. Training seminars are especially useful for improving professional skills and contributing to the modernisation of central and eastern European countries.
- Networking and contact facilitation needs to be promoted. Press clubs as well as media centres or agencies with databases can help to find partners for co-productions as well as joint projects.
- Specific training programmes should assist local and regional media in the use of new digital production technologies which help to facilitate transfrontier media co-operation.

Funding strategies

- Local and regional development strategies in border regions should integrate and promote local and regional as well as transfrontier media projects through their tax and funding policies.

- Funding of transfrontier projects needs to be made available in the start-up phase. In the field of the press, a number of European states have set in place systems of direct or indirect financial support, mainly in the form of grants and/or tax advantages, designed to support certain press organs (the quality press, cultural press and minority press), particularly in view of the tendency towards concentration in this sector. This example could be followed by other countries where such a system of financial support is lacking.
- In addition to public funds there is a need to widen the scope of the supply of finances to the private sector. Loans from banks may be more readily available for local and regional media companies if financial risks are shared between the public and private sector. Guarantees provided by local regional and local authorities would help to offer loans to transfrontier co-productions. In the long term transfrontier media projects at local and regional level should aim at becoming commercially viable, for example through the establishment of a news or programme exchange agency, sale of co-productions or income from transfrontier advertising and sponsorship.

APPENDIX I

Extract from Study No. 5: Examples of good practice of transfrontier co-operation concerning members of ethnic groups residing on the territory of several states

The use of the media by national minorities for broadcasting information concerning them

In the *Land* of Burgenland (Austria), the regional branch of the Austrian radio and television company ORF has a special editorial staff for minorities and has broadcast, for more than twenty years, a forty-minute daily radio programme in the evening for the Burgenland Croats. The news at 1 p.m. is also read in Croatian. Every Sunday ethnic Hungarians are provided with a weekly radio programme and the ORF broadcasts a television programme in Croatian including Croatian affairs, which is edited by the Burgenland staff for minorities. A thirty-minute television programme for the Hungarian-speaking population is produced four times a year. The radio and television programmes of Hungary can be received in the Burgenland without any difficulty, in the same way that the Austrian programmes from the Burgenland can be received in neighbouring regions.

The two television channels and the three radio channels of the ORF of Austria are transmitted by the South Tirol broadcasting agency (Rundfunkanstalt Südtirol), and there is a good quality reception in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano-Bozen (Italy). A thirty-minute television programme and several radio programmes in the *Land* of Tirol (Austria) deal with regional affairs including Bolzano-Bozen every weekday. Under the Autonomy Statute of the Region of Trentino – Alto Adige (Italy), the reception of radio and television programmes in the German and Ladin languages in Bolzano-Bozen is guaranteed. It is also planned to broadcast the German programmes of the third channel of the Italian radio and television company RAI to the Tirol and Vorarlberg regions (Austria).

Newspapers, magazines and books in Turkish, Armenian and other foreign languages are distributed in Bulgaria. The daily *Continent*, published in Sofia (Bulgaria), is distributed in “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Recently, there have been some complaints that the newspapers of ethnic Bulgarians in Serbia are not issued.

Ethnic Germans in northern Bohemia (Czech Republic) have some broadcasting time on Radio Lusatia (Luzice) and on RCL Liberec. Other requests from minorities have not been made. The Slovak minority in Czech border districts can receive the radio and television channels of Slovakia, and German and Polish minorities living in the respective border regions have similar possibilities with respect to channels from Germany and Poland.

A joint Sami radio programme is broadcast to regions in Finland, Norway and Sweden. In each country, the radio is part of the national broadcasting corporation and hence financed. Individual Sami radio stations have been co-operating since the 1950s. Currently, almost all programmes which are produced in Sami can be received throughout the Sami regions, irrespective of where the programme actually originates. Finland’s Sami radio stations do not have television programmes, although this has been proposed. Sami television programmes are produced for the national network via co-operation between Nordic states.

In the *arrondissement* of Bayonne in the Aquitaine region in south-east France, the “FR3 TV Pays-basque” branch of the national television channel FRANCE 3 broadcasts in the Basque language. It is envisaged to extend the service to the whole Basque region in France by a studio located at the Bayonne Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Basque television channel EUSKAL TELEBISTAK of Spain intends to broadcast a programme in French with an installation of Radio EUSKADI in Bayonne.

Television channels and some German radio stations can be received in the border area of the Alsace-Lorraine region (France) and *vice versa*. The television channel ARTE, which focuses on French-German cultural issues, can also be mentioned. The possibilities of using the Low German language in regional media in the *Land* of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany) are currently contemplated.

The German-speaking population at Sopron (Hungary) is informed through separate newspaper columns and television programmes in the German language. An exchange between the television programmes from the Burgenland (Austria) and Hungary serves also in this respect. At Szentgotthard (Hungary), a newspaper is published in the Slovenian language. A newspaper in the Slovakian language is published at Komárom (Hungary), and the local television is open to all national minorities.

The Autonomous Region of the Aosta Valley (Italy) sponsors a programme in the French language for pupils with the Italian broadcasting company RAI. The RAI branch for the Region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Italy) also produces programmes in the Slovene language and its programmes can be received across the border. An *ad hoc* convention between the press agency ANSA and the regional administration of Friuli-Venezia Giulia fosters the broadcasting of news concerning the ALPS ADRIA working community and the Italian-Slovenian co-operation in general. Governmental authorities of Italy and Slovenia recognised the importance of the broadcasting of Radio-Telepodistria for the Italian-speaking population in Slovenia and Croatia.

In Poland, local newspapers publish reports regarding ethnic groups, sometimes even in the respective minority language, and some receive municipal support. The Ministry of Culture and Art sponsors fifteen periodicals, which are published in the language of national minorities or bilingually, and further minority publications are currently in the starting process. For instance, the ethnic Belarussian minority publishes the bilingual monthly paper *Czasopis* sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Art. National minorities have also access to state radio programmes. Local radio stations in regions with minorities broadcast certain programmes in the respective minority language, such as the Lithuanian and Belarussian radio programmes of the Polish radio station at Białystok. National minority issues are dealt with in special television programmes.

In many districts in Slovakia, national minorities have the opportunity to use public address systems for the dissemination of information. The Slovak radio at Presov (Bardejov district, Slovakia) and in the Dunajská Streda district also broadcasts for minorities. In the municipal journal *Senecan* of Senec (Bratislava-Viedek district, Slovakia), national minorities can publish columns and articles. A bilingual weekly newspaper called *Komárnanské listy-Komáromi Lapok* is distributed at Komárno (Slovakia). The weekly papers *Nográdi szo* and *Gömöri hírlap* are published in Hungarian and distributed in the districts of Lucenec and Rimavská Sobota (Slovakia) respectively. A monthly bilingual Slovak-Hungarian journal is offered in the sub-district of Tornal'á (Slovakia). The town of Sturovo (Nové Zámky district, Slovakia) publishes jointly with the town of Ostrihom (Hungary) a journal reporting about issues on both sides of the common border. Once every two weeks, the town Rožňava (Slovakia) publishes the bilingual newspaper *Rožňavské noviny-Rozsnyói ujság*, in which articles are written to 35 per cent in Hungarian. The monthly *Kurier Karpatski* published by PUW Roxana Krosno appears in the Hungarian, Polish, Slovak and Ukraine languages in the Svidník district (Slovakia). Most border regions of Slovakia can receive television channels from abroad.

APPENDIX II

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