



Strasbourg, 3 April 2006

MC-S-MD(2006)006

[PDF](#)

**GROUP OF SPECIALISTS ON MEDIA DIVERSITY
(MC-S-MD)**

**3rd meeting
20 and 21 March 2006
Strasbourg, Human Rights Building**

REPORT

Items 1 and 2 of the agenda: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The Group of Specialists on Media Diversity (MC-S-MD) held its third meeting in the Human Rights Building in Strasbourg on 20 and 21 March 2006, and was chaired by Ms Zrinjka Peruško (Croatia).

The agenda was adopted unchanged (cf Appendix II).

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Klute, representing the association *On line/More colour in the media*, to which the CDMC had, at its last meeting, granted observer status with the MC-S-MD and the MC-S-IS.

2. The list of participants is set out in Appendix I.

Item 3 of the agenda: Information on the decisions taken by the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC), the other subordinate bodies and the Committee of Ministers of interest to the MC-S-MD

3. The group took note of the CDMC decisions of interest to it.

The group's attention was drawn to an issue raised in the Kyiv Action Plan which, like a number of other issues, was not covered by the various groups' terms of reference and on which the MC-S-MD had been called on to work: "how different types of media [could] play a part in promoting social cohesion and integrating all communities and generations".

The group noted that the subject was mentioned in the draft recommendation on media diversity and agreed to devote greater attention to it. It also agreed to include the issue in its work whenever possible.

Item 4 of the agenda: Role of the Media Division of the Council of Europe in the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions

4. The group was satisfied to note that, in response to its suggestion, the Committee of Ministers, had, at its meeting on 1 February 2006, adopted Recommendation Rec (2006) 3 inviting the member states of the Council of Europe to ratify, at the earliest opportunity, the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

The MC-S-MD discussed what further action could be taken to contribute, in the media field, to the implementation of the UNESCO convention.

5. One expert drew attention to the importance of independent production to cultural diversity, in particular, diversity of content, pointing to the often high quality of the works of independent producers. He suggested that a select working group be set up to consider measures to provide financial support for this type of production and measures to support the cross-border circulation of independent works.

Many experts endorsed this initiative, pointing out that the group could also examine the economic and legal conditions in which independent producers worked and measures other than financial ones to foster such production.

6. It was therefore decided to set up a select working group composed of the experts from Romania, France and Belgium and the observer expert from the European Union. The Romanian expert said she would shortly be forwarding an initial working paper to the whole group.

Item 5 of the agenda: Examination of a preliminary draft recommendation updating Recommendations No. R (94) 13 on measures to promote media transparency and No. R (99) 1 on measures to promote media pluralism

7. The MC-S-MD examined document MC-S-MD(2006)003, containing a preliminary draft recommendation updating Recommendations No. R (94) 13 on measures to promote media transparency and No. R (99) 1 on measures to promote media pluralism. The draft had been prepared by the select working group set up at its previous meeting.

The MC-S-MD thanked the select group for its work and approved the broad lines of the draft, while pointing out that the title of the section headed “Appendix” should be amended in order to highlight the importance of the recommendations it contained. One expert made the point that measures designed to foster diversity of content could restrict media freedom.

8. The group reviewed the text with a view to making certain changes and making good any omissions, and instructed the select group and the Secretariat to revise the draft along the following lines:

- Preamble

One expert suggested that the recommendation pay greater attention to the Internet. Another expert proposed adding a paragraph on the powers and responsibilities of the regulatory authorities. The group suggested that it be made clearer that the definition of “media” used in the recommendation was a technologically neutral one.

- Measures promoting structural pluralism

The group felt that the section on public service media should be firmer about the need to support existing public service media. Not everyone agreed that new public service media should be set up.

The issue of “must carry” rules and “must offer” obligations and their respective importance was discussed. Several experts highlighted the problems that could arise from obligations of this kind in relation to copyright. It was suggested that these issues be dealt with in the section on interoperability and access regulation.

Several delegations said their countries were unfamiliar with the concept of social/community media and suggested finding a more general expression that did not refer to a particular model.

- Measures promoting content diversity

The group was of the opinion that this section of the recommendation should be fleshed out, although care should be taken not to undermine the editorial independence of the media.

A number of experts asked for more account to be taken of the special needs of minority groups.

It was agreed that the paragraph on media responsibility should be reworded in order to make the link between journalists' responsibility and media diversity clearer. The issues of journalists' training and the integration of journalists from minority groups should also be taken into account.

- Media transparency

One expert pointed out that in some countries information on media ownership was not always made public and that the principle of transparency should therefore be forcefully reaffirmed.

The idea of asking the media to provide a certain amount of information about themselves systematically, rather than waiting for an express request from the public before making such information public was endorsed. It was agreed that this measure should be presented as a media education measure and not as a means of assessing the "value" of the information provided by the media.

- Scientific research

One expert asked that this section call for funding for research institutes, which were often in a precarious situation.

Institutes should promote research on the public and, in particular, on the impact of news on the public.

9. In conclusion, it was agreed that the Secretariat and the select working group would produce a revised draft of the recommendation and submit it to all group members before the next meeting of the MC-S-MD.

Item 6 of the agenda:

Examination of the replies to the questionnaire on the implementation by member states of Recommendation (2003) 9 of the Committee of Ministers on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting and follow-up

10. The Secretariat briefly presented document MC-S-MD(2006)005, which contained the replies to the questionnaire on the implementation by member states of Recommendation (2003) 9 of the Committee of Ministers on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting which had reached the Secretariat by 6 March 2006, and the preliminary conclusions that could be drawn.

Overall, the replies to the questionnaire were very different and it was therefore difficult to draw conclusions, particularly in relation to the objective, set out in the MC-S-MD's terms of reference, of "as appropriate, [...] providing further guidance to member States on how to ensure [...] implementation" of the recommendation.

Document MC-S-MD(2006)005 also drew attention to the fact that there were certain specific points in the recommendation in respect of which few states had adopted measures, in particular the preparation of the public for the new digital environment (paragraph d of the appendix to the recommendation, which concerned training courses in the use of digital equipment for persons with specific needs and measures to reduce the cost of decoding and decryption equipment).

Several experts pointed out that this was of particular importance in the light of the last stage of the changeover to digital broadcasting, which would see the end of terrestrial analogue television.

Another expert pointed out that few countries seemed to have taken steps to adapt the public service remit to the digital environment.

11. Stressing the importance of these two points for social cohesion, which was one of its areas of work (see item 3 of the agenda), the group endorsed the idea of compiling some kind of compendium of good practice in member states in connection with these two issues.

Item 7 of the agenda: Other initiatives (to be suggested to the CDMC) to preserve media pluralism

12. The MC-S-MD discussed the possibility of setting up a media observatory (see summary of the discussions on the subject at previous meetings in document MC-S-MD(2006)004).

The group considered that an observatory of media pluralism should be set up under the aegis of the Council of Europe so that the latter would have the information needed to devise a media diversity policy. The group was of the opinion that, in preparing such a project, it was necessary to take account, inter alia, of the Council of Europe's budgetary situation and the fact that there were many research institutes and other bodies at international level and in member states working on similar questions, and that care should therefore be taken to avoid setting up a body that would duplicate their work.

A very large number of experts were in favour of a set-up in the form of a network of national correspondents who could supply data, which would be collated using common methodology. Such an arrangement would entail the appointment of a co-ordinator.

13. The exact purpose of such an observatory was discussed. A number of topics were raised (media ownership; national and transnational concentration; diversity of support; diversity of content; behaviour of the public), but the group agreed that pilot projects on some of these issues should be carried out first.

14. The group then raised the question of the sustainability of such an observatory and how it would be funded. Several experts suggested that its viability should be ensured over an initial five-year period so that its contribution could be assessed. As for funding, some experts thought the member states might consider it worth financing such an observatory, while another expert said that European cities would undoubtedly be keen to host a media observatory and help set it up physically.

15. In view of the fact that it intended set up the observatory in the form of a network calling on existing bodies and to make sure it was as suited as possible to meeting actual European needs, the group decided that a preparatory conference of all the parties concerned should be held. The conference would provide an opportunity to ascertain whether member states and prospective correspondents were willing to embark on such an undertaking, settle a number of practical matters, such as how the network should be organised and how the correspondents should be chosen, and what its precise terms of reference would be, agree on a common methodology and discuss the funding of the observatory. All these matters could be discussed in workshops during the conference.

16. Replying to a question from the Chair, the observer expert from the European Union said that, in connection with its work on the revision of the “Television without Frontiers” Directive, the Commission was looking into the question of media pluralism. Work by Commission departments analysing media pluralism issues and taking stock of the subject would be published the following month. A study on the subject was also to be commissioned from an expert. All this work was to be discussed with the EU member states. The Commission had no intention, at any rate for the time being, of setting up a media observatory. The Commission’s work to which the EU observer had just referred would be submitted to the MC-S-MD for comment, and the Commission would, where appropriate, draw on the MC-S-MD’s work.

17. In conclusion, the MC-S-MD instructed the Secretariat to prepare a document for the CDMC setting out the group’s strategy for setting up a media observatory. **MC-S-MD members were asked to provide the Secretariat by mid-April with a list of institutions that could be invited to the conference to be held prior to the establishment of the observatory.**

Item 8 of the agenda:

Other business

18. None.

Item 9 of the agenda:

Date of next meeting

19. The next meeting of the MC-S-MD would take place in Strasbourg on 21 and 22 September 2006.

* * *

Appendix I

List of participants

I. MEMBER STATES/ETATS MEMBRES

Belgium/Belgique

Mme Muriel COLOT, Attaché, Service général de l'audiovisuel et des multimédias, Communauté française, BRUXELLES

Bulgaria/Bulgarie

Mme Nina VENOVA, Bulgarian Telegraph Agency, Editor of LIK magazine, SOFIA

M. Svetlozar Kirilov IVANOV, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, SOFIA

Croatia/Croatie

Ms Zrinjka PERUŠKO, Head of the Department for Culture and Communication, Institute for International Relations, ZAGREB

France

M. Frédéric DEROIN, Adjoint au Chef du bureau des affaires européennes et internationales, Services du Premier Ministre, Direction du développement des médias, PARIS

Greece/Grèce

Mme Maria GIANNAKAKI, Attachée de Presse, Représentation Permanente de la Grèce auprès du Conseil de l'Europe, Bureau de Presse et de Communication, STRASBOURG

Latvia/Lettonie

Mr Ilmārs ŠLĀPINS, Advisor on Culture and Humanities to the President of Ministers, State Chancellery, RĪGA

Lithuania/Lituanie

Ms Audrone NUGARAITE, Director, Institute of Journalism, Vilnius University, VILNIUS

Norway/Norvège

Mr Lars BRUSTAD, Assistant Director General, Department of Media and Copyright, Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, OSLO

Poland/Pologne

Mr Pawel STEPKA, Senior Inspector, National Broadcasting Council, WARSAW

Portugal

M. Agostinho PISSARREIRA, Instituto da Comunicação Social, LISBOA

Romania/Roumanie

Ms Elly-Ana TARNACOP-MOGA, Conseillère d'intégration européenne, Ministère de la Culture et des Cultes, BUCAREST

Russian Federation/Fédération de Russie

<Apologised/Excusée>

Mrs Elena VARTANOVA, Deputy Dean For Research, Professor, Faculty Of Journalism, Moscow State University, MOSCOW

Spain/Espagne

Mr Francisco Javier BARTOLOME ZOFIO, Head of Sector, Secretary of State for Telel and the Information Society, Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, MADRID

Switzerland/Suisse

M. Jacques FAVRE, Chargé de cours à l'Université de Fribourg, VALLORBE

“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”/ « L'ex-République yougoslave de Macédoine »

Mr Janko NIKOLOVSKI, Head of Media Sector of the Agency of Information, Agency of Information SKOPJE

Turkey/Turquie

<Apologised/Excusée>

Ms Zeynep Arzu DEMIREL, Expert, International Relations Department, Radio and Television Supreme Council, ANKARA

United Kingdom/Royaume-Uni

<Apologised/Excusé>

Mr Mark FERRERO, Head of Creative Industries, Department for Culture, LONDON

OTHER PARTICIPANTS/AUTRES PARTICIPANTS**Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe/Assemblée Parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe****Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe/Congrès des Pouvoirs Locaux et Régionaux du Conseil de l'Europe****European Audiovisual Observatory/Observatoire européen de l'Audiovisuel****European Commission/Commission européenne**

Mr Adam WATSON BROWN, Principal Administrator, Unit A1: Audiovisual & Media Policies; Digital Rights, Task Force for Co-ordination of Media Affairs, DG Information Society Media, European Commission, BRUSSELS

II. OSERVERS WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE/OBSERVATEURS AUPRES DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Canada

Mme Andrée N. LACASSE, Conseillère en politiques, Relation internationale & rayonnement, Patrimoine canadien

M. Jean RIOPEL, Canadian Embassy, Brussels

Holy See/Saint-Siège

Abbé Gerardo Dante VENEZIANI, Mission permanente du Saint Siège, STRASBOURG

III. OSERVERS WITH THE MC-S-MD/OBSERVATEURS AU SEIN DU MC-S-MD

UNESCO

[Apologised/excusé(e)]

European Broadcasting Union/Union Européenne de Radio-Télévision

Mme Nathalie PIASKOWSKI, Union Européenne de Radio-Télévision, BRUXELLES

Association of Commercial Television in Europe/Association des Télévisions commerciales européennes

Ms Monika Magyar, Chargée d'Affaires Européennes, Association of Commercial Television in Europe BRUXELLES

European Federation of Journalists/Fédération européenne des Journalistes

M. Philippe LERUTH, Journaliste, Vice-président FEJ, Membre du comité de direction de l'AJP-AGJPB, BRUSSELS

European Newspaper Publishers' Association/Association européenne des Editeurs de Journaux

Ms Margaret BORIBON, Administrator, European Newspaper Publishers' Association, BRUSSELS

European Internet Service Providers' Association/Association européenne des Fournisseurs de Services Internet

European Internet Services Providers Association (EuroISPA)

<Apologised/excuse>

M. Richard NASH, Secretary General, EuroISPA, BRUSSELS

IV. SECRETARIAT

Mr Jan MALINOWSKI, Head of the Media Division, Directorate General of Human Rights - DG II/ Chef de la Division Media, Direction Générale des Droits de l'Homme - DG II

Ms Charlotte de BROUTELLES, Secretary to the MM-S-MD, Administrative Officer, Media Division, Directorate General of Human Rights - DG II/ Secrétaire du MM-S-MD, Administratrice, Division Media, Direction Générale des Droits de l'Homme - DG II

V. INTERPRETERS/INTERPRETES

Mme Barbara GRUT
Mme Rémy JAIN
Mme Anne CHENAIS

* * *

Appendix II**Agenda**

1. **Opening of the meeting**
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
3. **Information on the decisions taken by the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC), the other subordinate bodies and the Committee of Ministers which are of interest to the MC-S-MD**
4. **Role of the Media Division of the Council of Europe in the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions**
5. **Examination of a preliminary draft Recommendation updating Recommendations No. R (94) 13 on measures to promote media transparency and No. R (99) 1 on measures to promote media pluralism**
6. **Examination of the replies to the questionnaire on the implementation by member states of Recommendation (2003) 9 of the Committee of Ministers on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting and follow-up**
7. **Other initiatives (to suggest to the CDMC) to preserve media pluralism**
8. **Other business**
9. **Date of next meeting**