REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS
FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

OUR RIGHTS
OUR FREEDOMS
OUR EUROPE
NOS DROITS
NOS LIBERTÉS
NOTRE EUROPE
1949.2019

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Conference

"Media pluralism – how can we deliver?"

Organised by the Council of Europe
in partnership with the Reporters Without Borders
Strasbourg, France, 19-20 March 2019

Media in all its forms shapes our daily lives more than ever – widely distributed across various, increasingly online platforms, it impacts the way we work and relax, how we inform and educate ourselves, how we engage in civic participation and social life. It seems thus more decisive than ever for all of us to know more about media just like about the food we eat: where it comes from, how it is produced, who sells it, and what the legal benchmarks are. In the quest for a diet of accurate and reliable news, media literacy is often considered the 'silver bullet' in the fight against online disinformation and practically all evil in our information space. But is that really the case? And, if so, why and how exactly?

We will bring together different perspectives and approaches to discuss these and related questions:

- **Impact of media and information literacy** – academics' expertise is crucial in advising policymakers on critical literacy.

- **Media pluralism and regulation – experiences from East and West** – academics and policymakers, notably those from the MENA-region, will share their perspectives and work.

Programme

Tuesday, 19 March

ACADEMIC DIALOGUE ON MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY
PALAIS DE L'EUROPE - ROOM 11 (9H-17H30)

HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE ON MEDIA REGULATION
AND CONCENTRATION OF OWNERSHIP PALAIS DE L'EUROPE - ROOM 5 (14H-17H30)

Wednesday, 20 March

THE CONFERENCE AGORA BUILDING – ROOM G2 (9H30 – 17H30)

Tuesday, 19 March   PALAIS DE L'EUROPE - ROOM 11

ACADEMIC DIALOGUE ON MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY

The search for solutions to "the plagues" of the modern multimedia environment, such as misinformation, disinformation or polarisation of opinions often does not acknowledge the complexity of these phenomena. This academic dialogue aims at mapping the research landscape and developing a future research agenda concerning MIL, with a focus on impact evaluation. Researchers from different parts of the world will discuss whether MIL works and delivers on its vision.

9:00-9:30   **Opening**

- **Olaf Steenfadt**, Project Director, Media Ownership Monitor & Journalism Trust Initiative, Reporters Without Borders
- **Patrick Penninckx**, Head of the Information Society Department, Council of Europe

9:30-10:15   **Academic Perspectives on MIL – an overview**
Moderator: **Lisa-Maria Kretschmer,** Head of Research at Reporters Without Borders

The first session aims at giving a quick overview on research traditions, fields and paradigms in MIL research. We will identify and discuss research gaps. The focus will additionally be on impact evaluation: how do we define academic evidence of successful MIL projects?

- **Sarah Mallat,** Researcher, Institute for Media Research and Training (IMRT), Lebanese American University, Lebanon
- **Dr. Alison Preston,** Head of Media Literacy Research, Ofcom, UK

10:15-11:15   **East meets West – MIL in the MENA region and its particularities**
Moderator: **Sarah Mallat**

MIL deserves the attention of the international community and national governments. The depth of awareness and implementation of MIL initiatives, however, vary from region to region. What is the role and position of MIL in the MENA region? What are the similarities and what are the country specifics? What kind of action is a) needed and b) already underway?

- **Widad Jarbouh,** Researcher, Samir Kassir Foundation, Lebanon
- **Prof. Samy Tayie,** Professor, Head of the Communication Department, Cairo University, Egypt
- **Salma Refass**, North Africa Expert, Public Policy & Political Economy, Le Desk, Morocco
- **Prof. Abdelhamid Nfissi,** Professor of Comparative Linguistics, Communication and Media Studies, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco
- **Prof. Carola Richter,** Professor for International Communication, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany

11:15-11:30   **Coffee break**

11:30-12:45   **Perspectives from the field – Experience sharing**
Moderator: **Sarah Mallat**

Which MIL projects seem to have worked and why? Under which conditions could successful MIL projects be implemented? How was their impact evaluated or how could it be evaluated?

- **Hortense Lac,** Researcher, Al Khatt, Tunisia
- **Maria Valecic,** Program Manager, GONG, Croatia
- **Dr. Asja Rokša-Zubčević,** Head of Division of Audiovisual services and international cooperation in broadcasting, Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Buthayna Alsemeiri,** Media Development Center, Birzeit University
- **Mouna Midsak,** Political Science professional, reporter, Tunisia

12:45-14:00   **Lunch**

14:00-15:00   **What is the relation between mis- and disinformation and critical digital literacy?**
Moderator: **Sarah Mallat**

Robust digital literacy skills and competencies are becoming a vital weapon for a media user in the face of growing amount of misinformation and disinformation, but what skills should the user acquire, and how should the curricula be created to suit the needs of different age groups? This session focus on digital literacy and looks at what is new compared to traditional media. As knowledge on consumption habits is vital to identify MIL needs and develop project ideas, another guiding question is: what do we know and what do we need to know about online news/media consumption?

- **Dr. Alison Preston,** Head of Media Literacy Research, Ofcom, UK
- **Dr. Maria Sourbati,** Senior Lecturer, University of Brighton, UK
- **Hortense Lac,** Researcher, Al Khatt, Tunisia
- **Prof. Abdelhamid Nfissi,** Professor of Comparative Linguistics, Communication and Media Studies, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez, Morocco
- **Alton Grizzle,** Programme specialist at the Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO (via videoconferencing)

15:00-16:00   **Working Group 1: What are the challenges and how can we move towards solutions?**
Moderator: **Dr. Alison Preston**

As the media literacy umbrella grows, so too does the definition of "effectiveness." Is media literacy about instilling confidence, about prompting behaviour change, or about creating new practices of media creation? Each possible goal implies a different method of evaluation. This session focuses on goal setting in an ever changing media environment. We will discuss general recommendations and conceptual details, e.g. MIL and social inclusion, privacy, etc.

Working Group 2: How do you measure the impact of MIL projects?
Moderator: **Prof. Samy Tayie**

Although media literacy has the potential to alter outcomes in various fields, measurement of media literacy remains a critical challenge – and consequently is measurement of impact of MIL projects. This working group discusses

- development/refinement of logical frameworks/ indicators
- evaluation methods and their advantages/ limits

16:00-16:15   **Coffee Break**

16:15-17:00   **Working Groups continue**

17:00-17:30   **Wrap Up Working Groups**

How do we address the stakeholders? Preparing messages/ input for Wednesday's conference

17:30-18:00   **Conclusions and closing remarks**

18:30   **Dinner**

Tuesday, 19 March   PALAIS DE L'EUROPE - ROOM 5

HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE ON MEDIA REGULATION AND CONCENTRATION OF OWNERSHIP

High-level regulatory exchange, best-practices and approaches in legislation on a) MIL and b) media pluralism and concentration control in general; gathering of politicians, government officials, regulators and NGO/CSO representatives working in this field. MED-MENA region-focused event with the participation of governmental officials of Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon.

Moderator **Jean-François Furnémont**, Founder and associate at Wagner-Hatfield

14:00-14:15	**Opening**

- **Patrick Penninckx**, Head of the Information Society Department, Council of Europe
- **Olaf Steenfadt**, Project Director, Media Ownership Monitor & Journalism Trust Initiative, Reporters Without Borders

14:15-15.15	**Regulating the regulators: Legal aspects of media pluralism and concentration control**

This session is targeted towards members of regulating bodies and political representatives to discuss the challenges in media regulation accountability. It is aimed at identifying the level of autonomy and independence of regulating bodies, hence their influence on the media sector. Guiding questions are: how can regulatory bodies contribute to renewing the general trust in the media sector? Do regulators have sufficient competences and powers in their respective national legislation to effectively perform their role of ensuring media pluralism, especially in this age of convergence?

- **Abdel Hadi Mahfouz**, President of the National Audiovisual Council (CNA, Lebanon)
- **Nouri Lajmi**, President of the High Independent Authority for Audiovisual Communications (HAICA, Tunisia)

15.15-16.00	**Media Literacy as a regulatory topic: empowerment vs. protection?**

There is an increasingly prevalent view that in a converged environment it is important that policymakers and regulators provide people with the appropriate tools to protect themselves and to exercise effective choice when accessing media. As a result, media literacy is now widely seen as an essential tool to complement statutory regulation. Which are the responsibilities that different media regulators have in this field? How did those roles evolve over time? Will the agenda of empowerment replace protection approach?

- **Maria Donde**, Director of International Content Policy, Ofcom (United Kingdom)
- **El Mahdi Aroussi Idrissi**, Director of the Department of Legal Studies, High Authority of Audiovisual Communication (HACA, Morocco)
- **Ghassan Moukheiber**, former member of the Lebanese Parliament, member of the Reform and Change Bloc (2002-2018), author of a proposed media law and author of the Access to Information Act

16:00-16:15	**Coffee break**

16:15-17:30 **Preventing Online Concentration - How to regulate Internet Service Providers and ensure net neutrality**

The prospect of regulating online platforms has recently gained a strange confluence of support from different stakeholders. They all agree that web platforms have too often misused their power over the way that news travels. Tech giants could extent their market position with implications such as competition distortion, violations of antitrust rules, search engine manipulation etc. This leads to questions such as: How should the ISPs be regulated? How to address the oligopoly of tech giants and their impact on net neutrality? Should national regulators be addressing that, or does the nature of these companies and internet itself require supranational jurisdiction to deal with these concerns effectively?

- **Ali Amar**, Publishing Director, Le Desk (Morocco)

- **Monia Ben Hamadi**, Editor-in-Chief, Inkyfada (Tunisia)

17:30-18:00 **Conclusions and closing remarks**

- **Jean-François Furnémont**, Founder and associate at Wagner-Hatfield

18:30 **Dinner**

Wednesday, 20 March   AGORA BUILDING – ROOM G2

THE CONFERENCE "MEDIA PLURALISM – HOW CAN WE DELIVER?"

8:45-9:30   **Registration, welcome coffee**

9:30-10:00   **Welcome and opening of the conference**

- **Dr. Michael Rediske**, President of Reporters Without Borders International

- **Jan Kleijssen,** Director of Information Society and Action against Crime
  at Council of Europe

Morning session: Media pluralism through regulation

10:00-11:10   **Media regulation 2.0: economic, technological and political threats to media pluralism in the aftermath of digitalisation**
Moderator: **Patrick Penninck,** Head of Information Society Department, Council of Europe

This session will explore the advent of the digital society, its impact on the nature and function of media and implications for media pluralism. We live in a growing participatory media culture, where the roles of makers and users are becoming blurred and technology companies own and manage the most important platforms for the distribution of media content. The enormous volume of information on offer often comes at the expense of credibility, and personalised selection and recommendation of content may adversely affect the variety of our media consumption. These challenges are coupled with media consolidation which exacerbates the trend of the narrowing sources of news, allowing a few powerful players to significantly shape public opinion. How do we revert to the path of media pluralism, are there needs for new regulation and what other approaches may work?

- **Nouri Lajmi**, President of the High Independent Authority for Audio-visual Communication, HAICA, Tunisia

- **Prof. Carola Richter,** Professor for International Communication, FU Berlin

- **Maria Donde,** Head of International Content Policy, Ofcom

- **Dr. Tarlach McGonagle,** Senior researcher/lecturer, Institute for Information Law, Amsterdam

11:10-11:30   **Coffee break**

11:30-12:40   **Media ownership transparency and control: why they matter, what needs to be done, and by whom**
Moderator: **Léa Chamboncel**, Public Affairs and Campaigns Consultant, OCYMS CANO & Co

Traditional concerns over the concentration of media power in too few hands did not disappear because of the new channels of media distribution. In this digital, networked world, where media is predominantly consumed through social networks and mobile apps, it is as important as ever to know who produces the content, if the audience is to be able to evaluate the credibility of information and their sources. This information is also indispensable for media regulators' ability to curb excessive media concentration that limits the public's exposure to diverse viewpoints, thus diminishing the democratic potential of the media. This session will explore how the existing media laws, regulations and policies regulating media ownership and control can be applied to the new media environment in the face of a continuous process of media consolidation and the rise of the online platforms. What challenges lie ahead for the legislature with consideration of different national realities, what steps should be taken by the national media regulators, what other initiatives are underway?

- **Dr. Rachael Craufurd Smith**, Reader at the University of Edinburgh

- **Magdalena Dovleva Davidovska,** Head of Strategic Planning and Authors' Rights Department, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services of North-Macedonia

- **Olaf Steenfadt,** Project Director, Media Ownership Monitor & Journalism Trust Initiative, Reporters Without Borders

12:40-14:10 Lunch

Afternoon session: media pluralism through education

14:10-15:20 Understanding media: the impact of media literacy on media consumption and public opinion
Moderator: **Clothilde Le Coz**, Regional Project Director, Media Ownership Monitor, Reporters Without Borders

Media literacy is widely acknowledged to foster understanding, critical analysis, evaluation, use and creation of media content, so much so that some treat is as the panacea for all evils of modern multimedia environment, while others warn that it cannot possibly fulfil such expectations. What do we know about the actual impact of media literacy on users' media habits? This session will analyse the results of academic research, as well as feedback from the field, and provide guidance on how to maximise the benefits and potential of media literacy. It will furthermore identify research gaps and challenges awaiting policy makers, educators and the research community, but also solutions outlined in the current research, policy and practice to enable people of all ages to engage meaningfully with the media, to understand their messages and the underlying motives, and to diversify individuals' exposure to different views.

- **Prof. Abdelhamid Nfissi**, Comparative Linguistics, Communication and Media Studies, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez

- **Craig Matasick**, Policy Analyst, Public Governance Directorate, OECD

- **David Friggieri**, Audiovisual and Media Services Policy Unit, DG Communications Networks, Content and Technology, European Commission

- **Prof. Samie Tayie**, Head of Communication Department, Cairo University

15:20-15:30 Short coffee break

15:30-16:40 Digital literacy: education against disinformation
Moderator: **Emmanuelle Machet**, Head of EPRA Secretariat

How capable are we of critical reflection towards media content? Do we check for authors' names, links, citations, spelling or grammatical errors? Do we recognise bias and deception? Are we aware to what extent media images construct our understanding of the world - or indeed create confusion - and are we capable of critically reflecting on media representations? Robust digital literacy skills and competencies are becoming a vital weapon for a media user in the face of growing amount of misinformation and disinformation, but what skills should the user acquire, and how should the curricula be created to suit the needs of different age groups? This session will look into different ways of developing critical thinking, including through an enhanced awareness of the threat posed by information disorder. Who is well placed to educate people about the different techniques used to spread disinformation, but also about the damage it can cause to democracy by inflaming divisions and undermining trust in institutions?

- **Dr Maria Sourbati**, Senior Lecturer, University of Brighton

- **Tom Law**, Director of Campaigns and Communications, Ethical Journalism Network

- **Dr. Asja Rokša-Zubčević**, Head of Division of Audiovisual services and international cooperation in broadcasting, Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

- **Monia Ben Hamadi**, Editor in Chief, Al Khatt, Tunisia

16:45-17:00   **Closing remarks**

- **Jean-François Furnémont**, Conference's rapporteur,
  Founder and associate at Wagner-Hatfield