

National Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Strategies

Practical Steps and Indicators



Adopted by the Steering Committee on
Media and Information Society (CDMSI)

**28th Meeting,
Strasbourg,
3-5 December 2025**

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**STEERING COMMITTEE ON MEDIA
AND INFORMATION SOCIETY (CDMSI)**

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Glossary of terms

Action Plan for MIL: A coordinated, multi-year, evidence-based, and adequately resourced strategic plan that defines clear objectives, proposes concrete measures across education, media, and digital sectors, emphasises collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and incorporates robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to adapt to the changing digital environment.

AI Literacy: The skills and competences needed to access information, interrogate sources, critically engage with content, and distinguish high-quality content from false or misleading material in the context of AI-driven systems and AI-generated content. The Council of Europe outlines a threefold approach, structured around three interconnected dimensions: the technological (how AI works and might be developed), the practical (how AI can be used effectively), and the human (the impact of AI on humans, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law).¹

Digital Citizenship: “The capacity to participate actively, continuously and responsibly in communities (local, national, global, online and offline) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural)”² The definition is framed by the concept of the “digital citizen” which the Recommendation defines as a person who: masters the competences for democratic culture to competently and positively engage with evolving digital technologies; participates actively, continuously, and responsibly in social and civic activities; is involved in a process of lifelong learning; and is committed to defending human dignity.

Digital Citizenship Education (DCE): The empowerment of learners of all ages through education or the acquisition of competences for learning and active participation in a digital society to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities online, and to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in cyberspace.³

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1. Council of Europe (2025) *Discussion paper on Draft Recommendation on AI literacy*. DGII/EDU/DCE(2025)01rev.
 2. Council of Europe (2019) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*. Adopted 21 November 2019.
 3. Council of Europe (2025) *Digital citizenship education*.

Disinformation: “Verifiably false, inaccurate or misleading information deliberately created and disseminated to cause harm or pursue economic or political gain by deceiving the public”⁴ Disinformation poses a serious threat to democratic institutions, fuels distrust in the media and information ecosystem, increases societal polarisation, and is intensified by advances in technologies such as AI. MIL plays a vital role in combating disinformation campaigns.

Formal Education Curriculum: Structured educational settings, typically schools, where MIL is strongly recommended for inclusion and integration from primary school onwards. It should be approached in a cross-cutting or interdisciplinary manner across subjects and be a mandatory component, rather than an optional subject, to ensure equitable access to MIL resources.⁵

Hate Speech: Harmful offline and/or online behaviour that national MIL strategies aim to help individuals identify, report, and handle, often targeting vulnerable groups and minorities.⁶ Measures to address hate speech include integrating human rights and digital citizenship education into curricula, promoting critical thinking, and strengthening competences to identify and counter hate speech.

Human-centred Digital Transformation: A vision for digital transformation that prioritises human rights, agency, dignity, and potential at the core of the media and information ecosystem, ensuring that technology serves humanity, rather than the other way around.⁷

Information Disorder: An overarching term encompassing misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. It is identified as a serious threat to

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4. Council of Europe (2022) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on electoral communication and media coverage of election campaigns*.
 5. See also Council of Europe (2019) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*.
 6. The Council of Europe (2022) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech*, point 1.2 defines hate speech as: “all types of expression that incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination, or which denigrate, harass, insult, ridicule, stigmatise or threaten a person or a group of persons, or that justify those actions, on the basis of their real or attributed characteristics such as race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, descent, age, disability, sex, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation”.
 7. See Council of Europe (2017) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Big Data for Culture, Literacy and Democracy*. See also Council of Europe (2017) *Report of the 4th Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitisation: Empowering democracy through culture – Digital tools for culturally competent citizens*.

democratic societies, requiring the urgent implementation of news literacy programmes and curricula.⁸

Informal Education: The lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.).⁹

Internet Intermediaries: Internet intermediaries are “entities that enable, facilitate, or host online communication, interaction, or access to information between users, including services that transmit, route, or store content, or provide platforms for publishing, sharing, or searching for content”.¹⁰ The Council of Europe explicitly calls upon internet intermediaries to actively cooperate with public, social, and private entities to promote and support media literacy, especially in efforts to counter disinformation, hate speech, and harmful online content. They also have a responsibility to provide transparency regarding their policies and algorithmic operations.

Malinformation: This is information, which is based on fact, but removed from its original context in order to mislead, harm, or manipulate. Malinformation often occurs by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere. Some types of hate speech and harassment can fall under the category of mal-information.¹¹

Media and Information Literacy (MIL): A dynamic and multi-dimensional concept that continually evolves in response to technological, social, cultural, and political changes. It is defined as a set of cognitive, technical, and social skills and capacities that empower citizens to effectively access, critically analyse, evaluate, create, reflect on, and act using various forms of media content and information across all channels of communication, including in the context of widespread use of AI.¹² MIL functions as a collective or “umbrella term” that has evolved from distinct fields of media literacy, information literacy, and media education. It is a strategic priority for the Council of Europe,

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8. Wardle, C. and Derakhshan, H. (2017) *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policymaking* (Report DG(2017)09). Council of Europe.
 9. Council of Europe (2010) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*.
 10. Council of Europe (2018) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries*.
 11. Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).
 12. Council of Europe (2022) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4) Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age*. See also Explanatory Memorandum, this document and Council of Europe (2025) *Media Literacy – Freedom of Expression*.

essential for democratic resilience, and regarded as a lifelong learning process relevant to all citizens, both within and outside formal education.

Media and information ecosystem: This is broadly understood to encompass all actors and factors whose interaction allows the media to function and to fulfil their role in society. This ecosystem is characterised by a technologically-mediated and information-rich environment, undergoing a profound structural transformation of the public sphere due to the digitalisation of information and communication technologies and related socio-economic changes.

Misinformation: False information that, unlike disinformation, may not be intentionally shared to cause harm, but still contributes to information disorder.¹³ MIL initiatives aim to help individuals develop resilience against misinformation.

National MIL Strategy: A government-led, comprehensive framework designed for a specific country, integrating broad policy goals, concrete actions, and stakeholder coordination. Its purpose is to promote citizens' competencies in accessing, critically evaluating, creating, and disseminating media and information in an ethical and effective manner, harmonising policies across education, media regulation, digital technology, and civic engagement, and aligning with human rights principles. Strategies should be tailored according to the specific context and informed by a robust evidence base.

National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs): Independent bodies, particularly those with responsibilities in the audiovisual sector, that have a strategic role in leading the advancement of Media and Information Literacy (MIL). They are encouraged to lead, fund, facilitate, and coordinate national MIL networks and initiatives, and should be provided with the necessary scope and resources to promote MIL effectively.

Non-formal Education: Any organised educational activity or programme outside the formal educational setting, aimed at enhancing a range of skills and competencies.¹⁴ Non-formal education in MIL is central to reaching a wider range of society, especially those not in formal education, as well as groups such as seniors, and marginalised and underserved communities.

13. Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).

14. Council of Europe (2010) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*.

Public Service Media (PSM): Publicly established, funded and supported media organisations that play a crucial and distinctive role in fostering diversity, setting quality standards, providing high-quality MIL resources, and promoting social cohesion and diversity of media content. Member states are encouraged to ensure stable and adequate funding for PSM to fulfil this role, which includes developing dedicated MIL programmes, specialist educational content, and collaborating with other stakeholders.¹⁵

Quality Journalism: Journalism characterised by its commitment to truth, fairness, accuracy, independence, transparency, and the public interest. It is recognised as a cornerstone of democracy, vital for disseminating information, providing analysis, acting as a public watchdog, and creating forums for public debate.¹⁶ MIL initiatives are encouraged to promote the skills and knowledge necessary for individuals to recognise and appreciate quality journalism and its distinctive role in maintaining healthy democracies.

Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI): The Council of Europe body under whose terms of reference the *National Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Strategies* document was drafted. The CDMSI is in charge, under the authority of the Council's Committee of Ministers (the leading political body of the Organization) of standards-setting activities as well as of promoting cooperation and common policies among member states, focusing on freedom of expression, privacy, and access to information, as well as media freedom, including on the internet and social media platforms.¹⁷

15. See Council of Europe (2025) *Public service media*.

16. Council of Europe (2022) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age*.

17. See more on the official website of the [CDMSI](#).

Preamble

Introduction

The policy document *National Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Strategies – Practical Steps and Indicators* (hereinafter referred to as “the document”) has been drafted under the terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).¹⁸ The CDMSI, among various activities, addresses aspects of freedom of expression, media, digital governance, and other issues related to the information society. The document offers actionable advice on implementing MIL strategies at the national level, as recommended in various Council of Europe texts. It forms part of a suite of documents developed under the mandate of the CDMSI, as approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which include draft Guidelines on the implications of generative artificial intelligence for freedom of expression, a strategy document to counter disinformation and strengthen information integrity, a draft Recommendation on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users, and a feasibility study on immersive reality applications and their implications for freedom of expression and other rights.¹⁹

Unprecedented changes in the media and information environment, driven by digitalisation, have given rise to significant challenges to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Technological affordances (algorithms, data, information, communication) together with digital platforms acting as gatekeepers have radically altered traditional media business models generating significant political, economic, legal, and social consequences. Disrupted information flows, driven by virality rather accuracy, have contributed to a decline in public trust in both the media and democratic institutions and a negative impact on the quality of journalistic reporting. The pervasive use of algorithmic systems, based on user data, are seen as exerting a considerable impact on public opinion, shaping socio-political discourse, and potentially

18. Council of Europe (2024) *Terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society* (CDMSI).

19. See more information and the full text under the *Terms of Reference 2024-2027* of the CDMSI.

contributing to social polarisation. These trends have been characterised by the Council of Europe as examples of “information disorder”;²⁰ resulting in widespread dissemination of disinformation and misinformation, increased hate speech and other harmful content, and the fragmentation of the public sphere and increased polarisation between separate ‘truth publics’ with parallel realities and narratives.²¹

Media and information literacy (MIL), as recently highlighted in the report of the Council of Europe Secretary-General, *Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe*,²² is a key component of the process of democratic revitalisation. A coordinated and strategic approach to MIL is needed to address these increased challenges faced by all member states for whom the development of national MIL strategies is an urgent priority. MIL has the potential to empower citizens and communities to be more resilient and to thrive in information-rich, digitally driven societies. As such, MIL is closely related to digital citizenship which the Council of Europe promotes as essential for understanding the impact of digital technology on our lives, heightening awareness of both its unprecedented opportunities and new challenges.²³ Indeed, MIL represents an indispensable set of skills and competences that citizens need to manage their access to and use of multiple platforms impacting all aspects of everyday life. Access in this context is not just technical or physical access; it is also cognitive and epistemological with MIL seeking to overcome the many types of digital divides that individuals may experience.

MIL enables individuals to:

- ▶ develop cognitive, technical and social skills and capacities that enable them to effectively access and critically analyse media content and information, including information in the context of widespread use of AI;
- ▶ make informed decisions about the media and information sources they use (both traditional and new digital media) and how to use them;
- ▶ understand the ethical implications of media and information technologies;
- ▶ communicate effectively, including by creating content.

20. Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).

21. Tambini, D. (2020) *Media Freedom, Regulation and Trust at a Time of Information Disorder*. Council of Europe.

22. Council of Europe (2025) *Towards a New Democratic Pact for Europe. Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe 2025*.

23. On 29 September 2025, at the 26th session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, the Ministers of Education declared 2025 as the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education. See more at <https://europeanyear2025.coe.int/>.

MIL has been a strategic priority for the Council of Europe for the past twenty years. Its importance is closely linked to the Council's core mission of promoting and protecting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law across its 46 member states. Guidance regarding MIL is included in many of the Council of Europe's standard-setting instruments aimed at states, policymakers as well as a range of other public and private actors who contribute to policy development in this fast-evolving media and information environment. MIL is regarded as an inherent part of regulation and/or policies in areas such as education and lifelong learning, family, children and youth affairs, media and information society, etc. It is to stakeholders in these and other related areas that this document is addressed with the objective of setting out practical guidance on the development and furtherance of national MIL strategies.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this document is to provide actionable advice to member states in the development or furtherance of their national MIL strategies. This entails embedding MIL within institutional frameworks, enhancing capacity, stakeholder participation and the availability of resources while fostering greater resilience against the wide array of challenges to media independence and freedom, integrity of information and individuals' ability to make informed choices and to participate in an informed and meaningful manner in democratic processes. Drawing on the extensive body of standards and legal instruments adopted by the Council of Europe, as well as other relevant studies and international frameworks, the document sets out practical steps for shaping national policies related to MIL. It highlights essential areas such as policy development and governance, developing an evidence base, integrating MIL across education, promoting partnerships, and ensuring accessibility for all audiences—including vulnerable groups that are often harder to reach with MIL initiatives.

As foreseen by the CDMSI mandate, the purpose of the document is to deliver “practical and actionable guidance on how to enact MIL strategies at a national level”.²⁴ Its scope is informed, in the first instance, by the framework outlined in *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and*

24. Council of Europe (2024) *Terms of reference of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society* (CDMSI).

transparency of media ownership, as well as related Council of Europe guidance,²⁵ specifically addressing media literacy and media education.²⁶ Key elements of this framework recommend that member states should develop and adopt the following measures in their national laws and policies:

- ▶ **Coordinated national media literacy policy** implemented through multi-annual plans involving a wide range of stakeholders;
- ▶ The inclusion of media literacy in **school curricula** at all levels and in **lifelong learning cycles**;
- ▶ **Encouraging media organisations** to promote media literacy through their policies, strategies and activities;
- ▶ Ensuring that **national regulatory authorities** (NRAs) have the scope and resources for the promotion of media literacy.

Following this general approach and considering the combined work of the Council of Europe on this subject (see Appendix 3 for an overview), Part I of the document presents a number of guidelines under five main headings as follows:

- 1. Policy and regulatory frameworks:** This section highlights essential components of effective policy design and governance to support comprehensive national MIL strategies. This includes establishing a high-level strategic vision for MIL at the national level, and adopting a holistic approach to defining MIL and its competencies. Reviewing relevant legislation and regulations to ensure the effective incorporation of MIL is also advised. The importance of an evidence-based approach to needs assessment, long-term planning and sustainable funding are also emphasised.
- 2. Strengthening the evidence base:** A core theme throughout the document is the need to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, for which effective research, monitoring, and evaluation are vital for guiding the development and implementation of national MIL strategies. Strategies should be based on evidence and informed by a thorough needs assessment of key challenges and gaps to be addressed. The need for

25. Relevant recent recommendations include: *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age* and *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on principles for media and communication governance*. Appendix 3 provides a more detailed overview of relevant Council of Europe legal instruments and studies.

26. The terms media literacy and media education are used here to distinguish between the outcome of acquiring media skills and the process of education that enables it. See Part II Explanatory memorandum for further discussion of the evolving concept of MIL.

a baseline assessment and continuous updating of policies and programmes is emphasised. Additionally, clear frameworks and indicators are necessary to assess the effectiveness of MIL interventions. Regular reviews of strategies are also crucial to ensure ongoing effectiveness in a dynamic setting.

- 3. Integrating MIL across education:** A key focus of national MIL strategies concerns the effective integration of MIL into all aspects of education, including formal, non-formal, and lifelong learning environments. This part includes reference to specific activities for developing skills and competencies, support for curricular integration, training for educational professionals, and the development of resources and relevant educational infrastructure for various settings.
- 4. Empowerment through engagement:** While integrating MIL into education systems has long been a core part of national strategies, it is crucial to emphasise that MIL is important for all citizens, not just young learners or specific groups of users of media and information services. MIL is relevant to content creators as well as consumers, as well as key groups such as professional journalists and politicians. Therefore, raising awareness and supporting the acquisition of MIL competences are vital to ensure the public is well-informed and capable of participating in a complex and ever-changing digital information landscape. Relevant activities include empowering individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities in the digital realm, enabling them to critically analyse information and media content, and engage with other types of online information, such as content on discussion forums where issues like bullying and discrimination often emerge. Special attention is also recommended to supporting MIL initiatives for vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.
- 5. Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships:** This final part highlights the importance of inclusive processes such as multi-stakeholder mechanisms to engage diverse audiences and promote a collaborative approach to improving MIL. National MIL networks have significant potential to mobilise key sectors, including professional media organisations, both public and private, in support of MIL. The vital role of free, safe and responsible journalism is emphasised. Providing adequate resources and long-term funding is identified as a key priority for effective implementation. Capacity building can also be strengthened through international collaboration, sharing resources, and exchanging best practices.

Part II, the Explanatory memorandum, provides further background to the document, setting out in more detail the context that makes national MIL

strategies especially urgent. It explores further the evolving concept of MIL and emphasises the importance of a human rights-based approach. Specifically, this section highlights the need for adaptive governance within national MIL strategies to address a constantly changing media and information environment where new and emerging challenges must be anticipated. A note on implementation is also included, focusing on the use of suggested indicators to monitor development and progress of national MIL strategies.

The Appendices also provide a summary of indicators and outcomes of national MIL strategies as well as a summary of existing Council of Europe guidance on MIL.

Part I

Guidelines

Policy and regulatory frameworks

Leadership and strategic vision for MIL

The primary responsibility for providing leadership on national MIL strategies lies with member states. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* emphasises that member states should introduce legislative provisions for MIL and establish a coordinated national media and information literacy policy that is multi-stakeholder, well-funded, and integrated into national policies across education, media, and digital governance. Notwithstanding its collaborative and multi-stakeholder nature, a strong commitment from government is essential to initiate, lead, and coordinate MIL initiatives across various ministries (e.g., education, culture, digital affairs, youth), levels (national, regional, local) and other participating stakeholders.

In a survey carried out by CDMSI of member states' current policies and initiatives regarding MIL, many states acknowledge policy ownership as a key issue and that explicit efforts are needed to coordinate the different potential contributors to a topic that by its nature is cross-cutting and interdisciplinary, spanning several areas of ministerial responsibility.²⁷ Leadership approaches vary from centralised systems, inter-ministerial authority vested in a dedicated public entity, leadership by regulatory or sectoral bodies, to decentralised regional systems. Member states note that fragmentation is a significant barrier to further development of MIL.

A high-level strategic vision at the national level is therefore necessary to define and implement a coherent, long-term approach to developing MIL, identifying roles and responsibilities and appropriate governance arrangements.

27. Council of Europe (2025) *National Strategies for MIL Education: A survey of member states* (unpublished), CDMSI.

Comprehensive and coordinated policies for national MIL strategies

Formulating a clear, purpose-driven national MIL strategy that defines media and information literacy, its importance, and the overarching goals for its promotion should be a direct outcome of the strategic vision statement. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age* recommends that member states should “define the promotion of MIL as an explicit aim of their media, information and education policies”.²⁸ A key indicator, therefore, is the adoption and implementation of **a comprehensive, long-term national MIL strategy that sets out objectives, priorities, and a roadmap for implementation and evaluation**, rather than fragmented or reactive measures.

MIL should be explicitly included and integrated into relevant policies on access to information, freedom of expression, education, aspects of media, digitalisation, digital transformation, youth, the elderly, and other related areas.²⁹ As outlined in *Resisting Disinformation: Ten Building Blocks to Strengthen Information Integrity*, **a MIL national strategy should be proactive, comprehensive, coherent, dynamic and tailored to the specific context, aligning with key European and international frameworks and based on solid evidence of key vulnerabilities and needs.**³⁰

Review of legislation and regulation

To establish an effective and robust MIL framework, member states should carefully review and assess their existing legislation to ensure that the legal framing of MIL incorporates key international human rights standards, such as freedom of expression, which includes the right to receive and impart information as guaranteed under Article 10 of the European Convention on

28. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age*, 122, 232. See also *Recommendation CM/Rec(2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment*. This recommends that member states should “develop... a coherent information literacy and training strategy”. In addition, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment* advocates states to “develop and promote coherent strategies” for various MIL aspects.
29. See, for example, Council of Europe (2022) *The digital era? Also my era! - Media and information literacy: a key to ensure seniors' rights to participate in the digital era*.
30. Council of Europe (2025) *Resisting disinformation: ten building blocks to strengthen information integrity*.

Human Rights,³¹ privacy rights, equality and non-discrimination standards. MIL policies should specify and align with relevant ethical frameworks and codes of conduct to emphasise ethical considerations and promote responsible practices by media organisations and digital platforms.³²

A comprehensive assessment of regulatory and legislative measures should **identify where new legislative and/or regulatory mandates may be needed**. This includes evaluating existing laws and strategies related to education, youth, online safety, the elderly, and audiovisual services policy to ensure they actively support MIL. Member states should also evaluate how existing legal frameworks already support or require MIL, identifying gaps in areas such as online safety, data privacy, and platform accountability. The EU's Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) provides one example for incorporating mandates for MIL.³³

Member states should also review their legislation, policies, and practices **to ensure they align with international recommendations and principles for MIL**, reflecting the standards and advice from bodies such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, OSCE, and the European Union. Such reviews should also address changes in the media and information environment, such as media concentration, technological development including that of algorithms, AI tools and generative AI, the dominance of platforms, the increasing presence of media in the online environment, and the rise of new, non-traditional media actors, to ensure the legal framework remains relevant and effective. Legislative reviews should also **be undertaken on a regular and consistent basis, for example, at least every five years** or more frequently as required by new international standards or initiatives.

Defining MIL competences holistically

MIL is a dynamic and multi-dimensional concept that continually evolves in response to technological, social, cultural, and political change. It comprises a set of skills and competencies that empower citizens to make informed choices about the media content and online information they consume, create, and share. This includes understanding how media is

31. Council of Europe (1950) *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (European Convention on Human Rights).
32. See, example, Council of Europe (2007) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on media pluralism and diversity of media content*.
33. European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2010) *Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Codified version)*. OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, pp. 1–24.

owned, operated, and regulated, how information is filtered, disseminated and subject to bias, as well as the ability to assess and evaluate media and information across all channels of communication.³⁴

A national MIL strategy should adopt **a comprehensive and dynamic definition of media and information literacy**. This approach goes beyond simply identifying issues such as disinformation and emphasises the essential skills and competences needed to autonomously and effectively navigate the media and information environment, including AI literacy skills. These include the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, create, reflect on, and act using various forms of media and communication, including platforms, social media and other information and communication spaces. Embracing a broad and flexible approach, leveraging MIL as an “umbrella concept”,³⁵ is therefore essential for equipping citizens with the skills and knowledge needed to address challenges and to engage fully in contemporary political, economic, and social life.³⁶

Special attention should be paid to the developing literacies needed to effectively navigate complex and changing digital environments, including relevant aspects of media literacy, information literacy, computer literacy, digital literacy, and AI literacy. For example, particular focus should be given to the skills required to evaluate how algorithmic systems and AI processes influence content dissemination and user exposure, thereby encouraging transparency and accountability in their design and deployment, as well as effective user empowerment.

Finally, **MIL skills and competences should be aligned with established frameworks** such as the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCD),³⁷ its application to digital citizenship education,³⁸ or the EU’s Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp)³⁹ to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach.

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34. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova*. Chisinau: Council of Europe.
 35. Council of Europe (2025) *Media and information literacy*. See also Part II – Explanatory memorandum.
 36. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy*. Rapporteurs: Martina Chapman and Markus Oermann. Prepared by the Committee of experts on quality journalism in the digital age (MSI-JOQ). Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
 37. Council of Europe (2025) *Reference framework of competences for democratic culture*.
 38. Council of Europe (2022) *Digital citizenship education handbook: Being online, well-being online, rights online*. Council of Europe Education Department.
 39. Vuorikari, R. et al. (2022) *The digital competence framework for citizens with new examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes (DigComp 2.2)*. JRC Science and Policy Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

An action plan for MIL

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 *on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* refers to **operationalisation and implementation of national MIL policy through “annual or multi-year action plans”**.⁴⁰ These should furthermore be supported by “adequate resources for these purposes”. A lack of coherent or effective overarching plans to fund and implement MIL initiatives is one of the potential reasons for current challenges in the information space.⁴¹

Among member states’ responses to the survey on national approaches to MIL, “action plans” were identified as a key mechanism for organising, resourcing, implementing, and evaluating national strategies.⁴² A number of countries pointed to well-established national plans that included MIL as a component:

- ▶ Belgium (Brussels-Wallonia Federation), for example, adopted a media literacy action plan in 2022 with 62 actions across four main priorities.
- ▶ Luxembourg reported that it has had a national strategy in place since 2020. Most recently, its “s’écher.digital” action plan, launched in 2024, includes the promotion of digital skills, including MIL. MIL is also a component of its National Action Plan for Digital Inclusion (2021) and the National Cybersecurity Strategy.
- ▶ Norway’s “National Strategy for a Safe Digital Upbringing” and its associated action plan is designed to strengthen digital competence and includes aspects like source criticism and digital judgment.
- ▶ In the context of Portugal’s Media Action Plan launched in 2024, a new National Plan on Media Literacy was approved in March 2025 and is currently being developed. It sets a national orientation and defines priorities for action within the global challenges that directly involve the media, such as cybersecurity, disinformation, hate speech or artificial intelligence.
- ▶ Serbia’s Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in Serbia (2020-2025) and the Strategy for Digital Skills Development (2020-2024) both aim to promote media and digital literacy and information safety.

40. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

41. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

42. Council of Europe (2025) *National Strategies for MIL Education: A survey of member states* (unpublished), CDMSI.

- ▶ The Republic of Moldova’s Interministerial Plan on Media and Information Literacy (MIL) is a three-year national plan (2024–2026) that details how state institutions will contribute to increasing citizens’ media literacy.⁴³

In accordance with the overall guidance of the Council of Europe, an action plan for MIL should be **a coordinated, multi-year, evidence-based, and adequately resourced framework that defines clear objectives, proposes concrete measures across education, media, and digital sectors, emphasises collaboration among diverse stakeholders, and incorporates robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to adapt to the changing digital environment.** Action plans should clearly identify needs, set targets, assess the requirements for comprehensive, adequately funded, and well-supported implementation, and mobilise the relevant resources.

Steering mechanism

Finally, within the domain of Policy and Regulatory Frameworks, the development of an inclusive national MIL strategy—one that engages a broad range of actors and functions effectively across public and private sectors—necessitates **a comprehensive and multi-faceted governance framework.** This framework should emphasise collaboration and transparency, involving all relevant stakeholders in its development and implementation.

Governments and member states, as the ultimate guarantors of human rights standards, hold the primary responsibility to safeguard and promote a pluralist media and information ecosystem, and the effective enjoyment of individuals right to freedom of expression, including the right to receive and impart information. Other actors and agencies also play a crucial role in governance. **National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs)** have a strategic responsibility in this regard and are encouraged to lead the advancement of media and information literacy, particularly in the audiovisual sector.⁴⁴ **Public Service Media (PSM)** also play a crucial and distinctive role in fostering diversity, setting quality standards, and providing high-quality MIL resources. PSM indeed has the potential to play a leading role in promoting

43. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova.*

44. Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media.* Background Paper, Ministerial Conference, Cyprus, 28-29 May 2020. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

media literacy by virtue of its objectives, mandates, and working methods.⁴⁵ Consequently, member states should ensure stable and adequate funding to enable these institutions to fulfil this role.⁴⁶ **Community and local media** are also widely recognised as key actors in promoting MIL given their objectives and mandates and should be provided with the appropriate legal status, recognition, and support to carry out this function.⁴⁷ **The formal and non-formal education sectors, education professionals, media organisations and civil society groups** are likewise central to the implementation of the national MIL strategy and should be facilitated in contributing to oversight and governance. They are also well-positioned to provide feedback to policy makers on the effectiveness of the MIL strategy and its reception by its associated target groups.

To optimise the involvement of these and other relevant bodies— and following a comprehensive needs assessment (see 5.1 below) — consideration should be given to **establishing a dedicated Task Force to bring together key stakeholders and decision-makers regarding MIL**. A dedicated body such as this can facilitate enhanced coordination and cooperation, avoid “silo-effects” and take collective action to address complex challenges such as disinformation. Such an entity should be inclusive and transparent in nature, comprise a wide range of stakeholders with the appropriate legal status to guarantee their independence, and be adequately resourced to carry out their responsibilities.⁴⁸

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45. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*. See also Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act) (2024), Official Journal of the European Union L 1083, pp. 1–95.
 46. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age*.
 47. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities *Recommendation 498 (2023) Local and regional media: watchdogs of democracy, guardians of community cohesion*. Council of Europe. See also, Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020)
 48. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age*. See also: *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on principles for media and communication governance*.

Box 1: Policy and regulatory frameworks – Associated indicators

- A high-level strategic vision for MIL is in place at the national level, supported by a coherent, long-term national strategy for implementing and enhancing MIL.
- Lead ministries / agencies at the national level are tasked with the implementation of national MIL strategy.
- National MIL strategy is presented in appropriate public-facing formats and promoted through various channels and media.
- MIL is included as an explicit aim of national media, information and education policies with appropriate legislative recognition of the need to promote MIL at the national level.
- There is a comprehensive legal framework in place providing clear definitions of MIL and identifying/assigning responsibilities for its operationalisation.
- There is evidence of alignment with other key European and international frameworks and standards that address MIL.
- NRAs and equivalent agencies are provided the scope and resources to promote MIL.
- Regulations and policies are regularly reviewed to reflect changes in the media environment and address issues – like media concentration.
- MIL is clearly and holistically defined in the relevant national MIL strategy.
- MIL skills and competencies are clearly outlined and incorporated into relevant educational planning.
- A national programme to operationalise and implement MIL initiatives through annual or multiannual plans.
- Adequate funding and a robust resource framework is in place.
- A dedicated Task Force or equivalent is established to lead new implementation of MIL.
- Other governance or steering mechanisms provide effective and cohesive governance of national MIL strategy.

Strengthening the evidence base

Needs-based assessment to inform national MIL strategy

National MIL strategies should be based on high quality, independent, and ongoing research that actively supports policy development and identifies key issues and priorities for national MIL strategy. Research, monitoring, and evaluation activities provide the necessary evidence and insights to design interventions, measure their impact, and ensure continuous adjustment to a rapidly changing digital environment.⁴⁹

Monitoring the media and information landscape is a crucial aspect of research that should be included as part of national MIL strategies. For example, regular, independent monitoring and assessment of the state of media pluralism in national media markets, based on objective and transparent criteria, is a key recommendation of *CM/Rec (2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*. States are also recommended to regularly publish reports containing comprehensive information and statistics on online hate speech, as well as requests to platforms for content removal.⁵⁰

At the outset, MIL policies and initiatives should be grounded in rigorous and current evidence about users' experiences within the media and information environment. Therefore, member states are encouraged to conduct a comprehensive baseline analysis to understand the current level of awareness, knowledge, and comprehension of MIL at the national level, including detailed studies of audiences' attitudes and behaviours. Considering emerging technologies and new challenges to information quality, particular focus should be placed on how individuals perceive and make choices when engaging with digital media, including awareness of irrationalities, biases, inaccuracies, and falsehoods in the information space. The evidence collected should inform policy decisions, help prioritise resource allocation, and support adaptive policy responses, especially in addressing gaps in implementation.⁵¹

According to member states, most countries acknowledge the importance of robust research to inform and tailor their MIL initiatives, although research practices remain uneven. For example:

49. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*
50. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech.*
51. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova.*

- ▶ The Norwegian Media Authority maps and publishes annual reports on the status of media and information literacy in the Norwegian public.
- ▶ The Swedish Agency for the Media also has a mandate to map activities in the promotion of MIL (2024-2025) and to assess knowledge and skills among the general population (the “MIL Index project”).⁵² A wider survey of MIL among the general population in five Nordic countries was planned for 2025.⁵³ The aim of the Nordic MIL Index was to develop a more comprehensive understanding of MIL across Nordic countries and to deliver a tool that can be used to build knowledge over time.⁵⁴
- ▶ Similarly, the Latvian National Strategy for the Development of the Electronic Media Sector 2023-2027 stipulates that a survey of the level of media literacy in society, including qualitative and quantitative parts, should be carried out at least every two years.⁵⁵
- ▶ In 2025, the Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Moldova commissioned a Media Literacy Barometer to assess media and information consumption as well as perceptions of concepts such as disinformation or information manipulation.⁵⁶

Despite its urgent nature, relatively few countries publish detailed studies on disinformation. Research is vital in this context to understand how disinformation works among specific communities and to inform counter strategies.

- ▶ In France, as part of the EU-funded DE FACTO project, several studies involving journalists, researchers, and educators specifically focus on combating information disorder.⁵⁷

52. See Wagner, M. (2023) *Mapping measures to promote media and information literacy in Sweden*. Media and Learning.

53. See, for example, Schofield, D., Frantzen, V. and Kupiainen, R. (2021). *Towards a Nordic MIL-index: A feasibility study for a Nordic Media and Information Literacy Index*. Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Department of Education and Lifelong Learning.

54. European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) (2024) *Media literacy best practices in the European Union: A handbook of inspirational initiatives*.

55. Lacourt, A. (2024) *Media literacy and the empowerment of users, IRIS Special: Focus on media literacy*. Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe).

56. Council of Europe (2025) *Call for tender: Procurement of services for the first nation-wide Media Literacy Barometer/Baseline analysis in the Republic of Moldova*. (Accessed: 8 October 2025).

57. De Facto Consortium (no date) *De Facto: Des clés pour mieux s’informer* (De Facto: Keys to better inform yourself) [Online]. Available at: <https://defacto-observatoire.fr/> (Accessed: 8 October 2025).

- ▶ In Ukraine, the National Council on Television and Radio Broadcasting plans to conduct research on the media literacy levels of journalists and other media professionals.⁵⁸
- ▶ As part of the European EduMediatest project, Portugal's media regulator (ERC) coordinated an online, interactive survey to assess the media literacy competencies of 2,756 students aged 14–18, focusing on topics including fact-checking and disinformation.⁵⁹

To strengthen the evidence base for countering disinformation, further research should focus on issues of information disorder within countries using consistent methods for comparison. There is a clear need for independent research to guide effective policy-making on misinformation and disinformation. States should financially support university research programmes that examine the spread, prevalence, characteristics, and effects of disinformation, especially on online services and within national contexts. Policies and strategies to combat hate speech should also be evidence-based and incorporate age- and gender-sensitive approaches.

Member states are, therefore, encouraged to adopt a strategic approach, grounded in robust and research-informed evidence as the foundation for their national MIL strategies. As such, research should be systematically integrated into the design and ongoing development of MIL initiatives, incorporating standardised criteria and methods for data collection. Ideally, countries should conduct regular, large-scale, representative national studies on citizens' media habits and media literacy levels, focusing on areas where evidence is weaker or on issues where emerging media literacy needs are emerging, such as in response to AI.

Evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of MIL interventions

Evaluation of existing MIL initiatives is also essential to assess progress and effectiveness of national strategies and action plans, and should be conducted regularly at all levels and by all stakeholders.⁶⁰ A standard framework for evaluation in cross-sector collaboration is needed to compare project outputs and outcomes, enabling the identification of successful

58. CDMSI (2025) *Survey of member states*.

59. ERGA (2024) *Media Literacy Best Practices in the European Union*.

60. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7E of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment; Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*

projects for replication and scaling up.⁶¹ However, as observed in the Council of Europe’s study on supporting quality journalism, a significant challenge is that one-third of MIL projects do not undergo any structured assessment or evaluation.⁶² Even when evaluations are carried out, they are mostly internal. Therefore, further research is needed to measure and compare the outcomes of MIL initiatives.⁶³ The Republic of Moldova’s MIL strategy, for example, proposes exploring the development of a Media Literacy Evaluation Framework and supporting a state-funded, coordinated evaluation and monitoring framework.⁶⁴

Best practice reviews emphasise that monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be systematically integrated into the development of MIL initiatives and that a strategic approach should be adopted, outlining clear MIL objectives, prioritised outcomes, and how and by whom these will be measured.⁶⁵ Evaluation should not only assess success but also identify areas for improvement and facilitate learning from both successes and mistakes.⁶⁶ Evaluation frameworks should also be aligned with relevant European strategies and guidelines for MIL, such as those developed by EDMO on behalf of the European Commission, to ensure consistency with wider efforts in the sector.⁶⁷

Given the complex and multi-dimensional nature of MIL, it is also important that comprehensive metrics are incorporated into evaluation frameworks. As observed by scholars, while tracking participation numbers (e.g., the number of trained individuals, website visitors) is helpful for monitoring programme delivery and scale, over-reliance on these metrics limits understanding of actual comprehension and behavioural change.⁶⁸ Alongside assessing the outcomes of various MIL interventions, it is also important to

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61. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*
 62. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*
 63. The UK regulator, Ofcom, has developed an *Evaluation Toolkit* for media literacy stakeholders and to curate an evidence base on what works.
 64. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova.*
 65. Ecorys (2024) *Media literacy policy study report 2: Google’s media literacy initiatives and partnerships in Europe - a learning review.*
 66. European Broadcasting Union (EBU) (2023). *Public service media: Strengthening media literacy.*
 67. See European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) (2024) *Raising standards: The EDMO guidelines.*
 68. Livingstone, S. (2023) *What’s the best we can expect of media literacy? From protectionism to human rights and flourishing, EDMO Blog*, 19 December.

consider the national media landscape and cultural/political contexts, as these factors influence the specific MIL skills needed and the effectiveness of interventions.⁶⁹

Finally, **to promote transparency, it is essential to widely disseminate the results, lessons learned (including what did not work), and methodologies** through public reports, academic journals, “how-to” guides, and online platforms. A centralised approach to collating, reviewing, and synthesising evaluation data and evidence across programmes and partnerships can further help enhance learning and foster communities of practice.

Adapting to new challenges and technologies

Monitoring the impact of digital transformation and the emerging risk landscape related to MIL is a crucial component of overall research supporting national MIL strategies. In particular, it is essential to evaluate how new digital technologies shape the audiovisual environment – for example, increasing concentration within the media sector, impacting human rights (particularly freedom of expression and privacy), children’s rights and well-being, quality journalism, and the wider public sphere. This involves understanding opportunities, risks, emerging trends, and effectively tailoring policy and resources.⁷⁰

Partnerships with academia are essential for conducting rigorous, independent, and multidisciplinary research on the impact of digital technologies and for providing evidence-based guidance. **Dedicated funding for independent research is also vital in this regard and can contribute to more informed strategies.** Securing access for researchers to data held by internet intermediaries should also be a priority. Internet intermediaries should also ensure transparency in their policies and algorithmic operations.

The rapid speed of technological progress and evolving communication behaviours require that policy frameworks and monitoring methods need to be continually updated. New digital challenges to maintaining information integrity keep emerging, while systems persistently pose additional issues related to transparency and clarity. Particular focus should be placed on critical issues affecting citizens’ ability to access accurate and trustworthy information, such as the influence of algorithmic systems on content distribution and user exposure, the rise of deepfakes and AI-driven disinformation, the migration of disinformation to private messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp,

69. Ecorys (2024).

70. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7E of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment.*

WeChat), and the widespread occurrence of filter bubbles and echo chambers that restrict exposure to diverse viewpoints, thereby contributing to societal polarisation and fragmentation.

Box 2: Strengthening the evidence base – Associated indicators

- The national MIL strategy or a related policy document includes a dedicated, time-bound plan for conducting research, monitoring, and evaluation.
- A comprehensive national baseline analysis on MIL has been conducted and the findings have been published and disseminated.
- Evidence from the national MIL research is demonstrably used to inform the design and review of MIL strategies, guide the targeting of resources, supportive adaptive policy responses to new digital challenges.
- A common, national-level framework for evaluating MIL projects and initiatives is developed and officially adopted.
- Evaluation reports for MIL initiatives include metrics that go beyond simple participation numbers to include assessment of knowledge and skills outcomes, behavioural and attitudinal change.
- All evaluation reports for publicly funded MIL projects are made publicly accessible, detailing methodologies, results, and lessons learned (including what did not work).
- A national research programme or dedicated government body is responsible for conducting regular (e.g., annual) studies on the impact of digital technologies on the media landscape, human rights, and the public sphere.
- A dedicated and transparent funding stream is available to support independent, multidisciplinary research by academic institutions and civil society organizations on the social impact of new technologies.
- The national MIL strategy or related policies are reviewed and updated on a regular basis (e.g., every 3-5 years) to ensure they are responsive to the fast pace of technological change.

Integrating MIL into the formal national curriculum

The inclusion and integration of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into national education curricula is strongly recommended by the Council of Europe.⁷¹ Jointly with the Council of Europe's guidance on implementing digital citizenship education,⁷² national education systems are recognised as being best placed to reach all citizens and to provide the core skills they need to thrive in today's information-rich digital societies and to uphold democratic values. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age* specifically calls for MIL to be integrated in state measures on education for all age groups, as an essential part of school curricula from primary school on.⁷³ **Measures to integrate MIL into the national curriculum should be coordinated with equivalent initiatives to mainstream digital citizenship education.**

The wide-ranging nature of MIL lends itself—as with digital citizenship education—to a **cross-cutting or interdisciplinary approach within the formal education curriculum**,⁷⁴ based on a whole-school, cross-curricular strategy. However, the specific curriculum approach – whether as a separate subject or integrated across the curriculum – is something that is determined by individual member states in response to the specific needs of learners. However, according to some member states, implementing MIL as an optional subject in the curriculum should be avoided as it can lead to a fragmented approach and risks increasing the knowledge gap between those who have access to MIL resources and those who do not.⁷⁵

71. For example, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech*, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism*, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education* and *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment*.
72. Council of Europe (2019) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*.
73. See also Wardle, C. and Derakhshan, H. (2017) *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking* which advocates standardised news literacy curricula to be included at the national level.
74. For example, *Resisting Disinformation: Ten Building Blocks to Strengthen Information Integrity* advocates that MIL should be incorporated in formal education curricula “ideally in a multidisciplinary manner, encouraging interaction and connecting with students’ real-life experiences”.
75. See Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova* where the issue of the “optional nature of the subject Media Education” in the Republic of Moldova is raised which “does not guarantee opportunities for all students to develop media literacy skills”.

Active pedagogies, in line with Council of Europe guidance, should be prioritised. In its recommendation on developing and promoting digital citizenship education, which incorporates the concept of MIL, the Council of Europe advises that learning should be supported through a flexible and dynamic approach. This involves “the need to rethink the role of learning, teaching and assessment in the digital era”.⁷⁶ Recommended methods include blended learning (combining in-class and online components), flipped learning (where learners orient their learning towards their own interests and concerns), and hybrid learning (a combination of face-to-face, blended, and flipped approaches) that embrace user empowerment, diversity in learners’ learning styles and needs, and better prepare them for democratic participation in real life.⁷⁷

Incorporating MIL within informal and non-formal learning

The pervasive, integrated, and lifelong learning approach to MIL advocated by the Council of Europe gives equal emphasis to the teaching of MIL in formal education (i.e., the structured education system that runs from primary to tertiary education) as well as in non-formal education settings and as part of the lifelong learning cycle.⁷⁸ Accordingly, **informal and non-formal learning in relation to MIL should be prioritised, based on its integration as part of a comprehensive, lifelong learning approach, ensuring it extends beyond formal schooling.**⁷⁹ This comprehensive approach ensures that MIL is accessible to all age groups and walks of life, not just children and young people in full-time education.⁸⁰

In this context, informal education is described as the process by which individuals develop skills through daily experiences and influences in their environment, such as family, peer groups, work, play, markets, extracurricular programmes, community-based organisations, museums, libraries, and mass media.⁸¹ Non-formal education refers to any organised educational activity

76. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*

77. *Ibid.* See also, Council of Europe (2025) *Digital citizenship education*, “Resources for Educators”.

78. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.* See also *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy* (2020) and Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media.*

79. *CM/Rec(2018)1.*

80. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

81. Council of Europe (2019) *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*

or programme outside the formal educational setting, aimed at enhancing a range of skills and competencies.⁸²

Informal and non-formal initiatives are crucial for expanding MIL measures to a wider range of society, particularly those not in formal education, seniors, and marginalised and underserved communities.⁸³ Linguistic minorities and economically disadvantaged areas also often have limited access to MIL initiatives, making non-formal avenues vital. Developing effective learning strategies for hard-to-reach populations is an area where collaboration with civil society and providers of non-formal education is highly recommended.⁸⁴

Particular attention is needed for age cohorts such as older people (i.e., over 65s) who are considered potentially underserved by MIL initiatives, despite being a group more likely to be susceptible to or to share disinformation online.⁸⁵ The absence of accessible dissemination networks for this group (in the way that schools may be for younger people) presents an additional challenge.⁸⁶ Other age groups that may be hard-to-reach include working-age adult cohorts (e.g. 35-54) who are often time-poor due to work and caregiving responsibilities. MIL strategies should reflect on how such groups can also be effectively reached.

Strategies for learning in non-formal education settings and in lifelong learning should be supported by professional development for teachers and educators, targeted resources, and implementation plans (see 2.5 below). In this context, collaboration between the civil society sector or community media organisations and the educational sector (schools, universities, adult education) offers significant potential. For example, involving community media in teachers' professional development provides practical experience and exposure to a broader range of communities. Additionally, co-creation of resources with individual communities enhances relevance and likely impact.

82. *Ibid.*

83. For example, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education* explicitly states that its guidelines for promoting digital citizenship education should be implemented in formal, non-formal, and informal education settings. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* emphasises that MIL is essential for people of all ages and from all walks of life.

84. *Resisting disinformation: Ten building blocks to strengthen information integrity.*

85. Council of Europe (2022) *The digital era? Also my era! - Media and information literacy: a key to ensure seniors' rights to participate in the digital era.*

86. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

A comprehensive, multi-dimensional and dynamic approach to MIL skills and competences

MIL encompasses a broad range of cognitive, technical, and social skills necessary for navigating a complex digital information environment.⁸⁷

It is a dynamic concept that continually evolves in response to technological, social, cultural, and political changes, necessitating ongoing skills development and acquisition of new knowledge throughout an individual's life. Therefore, educational strategies for digital literacy and skills should be holistic, dynamic and adaptive.

Core skills and capacities often emphasised in various international standards include the ability **to effectively access, understand, and use** media and digital technologies and services, including AI tools; **to critically analyse and evaluate media content and information** for trustworthiness, reliability, independence, and impartiality, regardless of its source; and **the capacity to create, interpret, and publish content** as well as the ability **to communicate effectively and responsibly**.⁸⁸ Supporting individuals in mastering these skills enables them to make informed and self-determined choices about the media they use, how they use it, and the content they consume, produce, and share in their private, social, and professional lives.⁸⁹

The scope of MIL extends beyond individual skills and competences; it includes a level of understanding about the complexities of the digital environment. This encompasses, among other things, knowledge of how various media are owned, operated, and regulated (or not), as well as how content is funded (e.g., private ownership, public funding, advertising, sponsorship). It also involves an understanding of how digital services, including social media and other online platforms, function, and how and why algorithms and AI can influence information, content selection, visibility, behaviour patterns, and the diversity of content and views to which users are exposed.⁹⁰ This, in turn, calls for fostering greater awareness of how platform design choices shape the ways in which users access, process, and evaluate information. Additionally, MIL includes an understanding of the role of independent and pluralist media, and private as well as public service media,

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

89. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

90. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

in a healthy democratic society.⁹¹ Understanding rights and responsibilities regarding data, privacy, online interaction, engagement with information and issues of environmental sustainability and impact when using digital media services are further aspects of this social knowledge.

MIL competences also embody a strong social and ethical dimension that directly contributes to digital citizenship and democratic participation.⁹² Digital citizenship, as elaborated by the Council of Europe, includes understanding the ethical implications of media and new technologies, recognising and managing inappropriate online behaviour and developing resilience against misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech.⁹³ Developing skills for active participation in the public sphere, including expressing opinions, responding to others, and engaging effectively in democratic processes, is a further aspect emphasised by the Council of Europe.⁹⁴

Building on each of these elements, **it is essential that national strategies adopt and promote a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach to MIL and digital literacy**, integrating critical thinking, technical skills, and civic understanding, with an awareness of AI-driven content, to empower all citizens to navigate and participate responsibly in the evolving digital public sphere.

Recognising that the environment in which MIL is situated continues to evolve, **MIL programmes should aim to foster inclusion and intercultural understanding.**⁹⁵ They should support empathy-based comprehension of people's assessment and decision-making processes when engaging with digital platforms and media, including awareness of irrationalities, biases, inaccuracies, and falsehoods. This is especially important concerning questions related to gender equality, migration, minorities and groups in vulnerable situations.

91. Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: supporting marginalised groups through community media*.

92. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*.

93. Huddleston, T., O'Neill, B. & Styslavská-Doliwa, O. (2024) *Contextualising competences for democratic culture in Digital Citizenship Education: A guidance document*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

94. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy*.

95. As advised for instance in *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech* advises member states to support educational and cultural programmes for the public that promote equality, critical thinking, and intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Also, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 on developing and promoting digital citizenship education* highlights that the digital environment provides an important platform for intercultural dialogue through social media.

Adequate training for education professionals in both the formal and non-formal sectors

Council of Europe legal instruments consistently emphasise the critical need for proper **training for education professionals in both formal and non-formal sectors concerning MIL**.⁹⁶

Its guidance has long recognised that part of the response to potentially harmful online content involves providing training to young people and their educators on the positive and responsible use of digital technology.⁹⁷ Teachers and education professionals are considered key facilitators of MIL and need to be supported and empowered to carry out this important role. Professionals in education are broadly defined to include teachers, early childhood care professionals, school psychologists, pedagogues, librarians, teaching assistants, and tutors, all of whom require appropriate initial and ongoing training.⁹⁸

The Parliamentary Assembly's Resolution on Media Education in the New Media Environment (2019) acknowledged that teachers and education professionals require more support and training, as initial or in-service training in media literacy is often not provided or updated sufficiently.⁹⁹ Training should allow professionals to expand their knowledge, teaching practices, qualifications, and digital and critical media skills.¹⁰⁰ Training should be comprehensive, covering the competent use of digital tools and technologies, critical analytical skills needed to evaluate media content and information, and the application of communication skills to promote citizenship and creativity.

As noted in various Council of Europe legal instruments, specific attention should be given to:

- ▶ Understanding **how online infrastructure and the digital economy function**, and how technology shapes media choices.¹⁰¹

96. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7E of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment, Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech, PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment.*

97. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment.*

98. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*

99. *PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment.*

100. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.*

101. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

- ▶ Awareness of **irrationalities, biases, inaccuracies, and falsehoods** in media and information.¹⁰²
- ▶ The **ethical implications** of media and digital technologies.¹⁰³
- ▶ The **power of algorithms and Artificial Intelligence (AI)** to shape content and user experience.¹⁰⁴
- ▶ Recognising online risks and dangers as well as managing **inappropriate online behaviour, hate speech, disinformation, and misinformation**.¹⁰⁵
- ▶ **Fact-checking** and source verification skills.¹⁰⁶
- ▶ Understanding and managing **personal data and privacy online**.¹⁰⁷

Providing adequate initial and in-service training for teachers involved in MIL education is essential for an effective national MIL strategy.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, training for professionals in non-formal and informal learning settings is equally important if a lifelong learning approach is to reach broader segments of society, including seniors and marginalised communities who may not be in formal education.¹⁰⁹

“Train the trainer” initiatives have also been identified as an effective way to deliver professional development in MIL to enhance the skills of community

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102. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy*.
 103. *CM/Rec(2022)4*. See also *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on principles for media and communication governance* which advocates for the use of “professional journalistic and ethical standards” in content obligations. *CM/Rec(2019)10* also argues that learning related to digital technologies should focus on their “technical, creative and ethical uses”.
 104. Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017) *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking*.
 105. *PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment; Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment; Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech*.
 106. *CM/Rec(2022)4*; Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).
 107. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression*.
 108. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7E of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment*.
 109. *PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment; Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*.

trainers and leaders.¹¹⁰ Existing learning networks outside formal education, such as those supported by libraries, are especially relevant in this context. Civil society organisations and community media also play a significant role in providing diverse learning opportunities, especially in informal and non-formal settings. Their sustained involvement in teachers' MIL education should therefore be supported with state backing.¹¹¹

Need for a diverse range of educational resources and materials

Creating and curating high-quality, age-appropriate educational materials, lesson plans, and digital resources for teachers and learners is essential for successful MIL implementation. Developing current, high-quality educational resources is time-consuming and costly; however, the lack of available materials is often cited as a challenge in MIL curriculum education. Reports from member states mention unequal access or insufficient resources as barriers to curriculum implementation, as well as difficulties in adapting or tailoring materials to the national context.¹¹²

Supporting the development of educational resources and materials is, therefore, a crucial aspect to consider in a national MIL strategy. A central repository that collects, curates, and aggregates high-quality resources provides potential for effective dissemination and sharing of materials. A centralised approach to curating resources also offers opportunities for setting standards and evaluating quality. Several national initiatives, mentioned by member states, provide online spaces for MIL information and resources. These include Klicksafe (Germany),¹¹³ AEM's national portal of ML projects (Croatia),¹¹⁴ NEPLP's media literacy platform (Latvia),¹¹⁵ and EduCAC (Spain).¹¹⁶ CLEMI's contribution to MIL resources in France is widely recognised, supporting the production, distribution, and promotion of educational resources, as well as the organisation of educational activities (such as

110. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova* cites a number of examples of train the trainer initiatives utilising existing learning networks.

111. Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media; Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

112. CDMSI (2025) Survey of member states.

113. *klicksafe.de: The EU initiative for more safety on the net.*

114. *Medijska pismenost.*

115. *Media literacy in Latvia: the Ministry of Culture's 6 strands - Media and Learning Association.*

116. For more details see Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova.*

Press and Media Week in Schools). Additionally, it provides resources on digital parenting and fosters European and international cooperation in MIL.¹¹⁷ In Italy, the collection and cataloguing of the main measures, initiatives and best practices in the field of digital and media literacy, are carried out by the Authority for Communications (AGCOM) through the Coordination platform on digital and media literacy.

The Council of Europe has encouraged media organisations to support the development of educational resources and materials as part of their overall commitment to MIL.¹¹⁸ PSM – and other media organisations which deliver public service content – play an important role in providing relevant and reliable educational resources for different age groups.¹¹⁹ **PSM are accordingly encouraged to produce dedicated MIL programmes for TV, radio, or online and to provide specialist educational content for children and young people, using diverse techniques like online video news services for mobile devices.**¹²⁰

As an example, “Pills against disinformation” is a successful programme broadcast by the Italian PSM RAI, which has so far reached over 850 million users. It forms part of the media literacy activity in which the Italian PSM has been engaged for several years, in partnership with universities, media outlets and fact checking organisations.¹²¹

NRAs also play a key role in supporting the development and dissemination of educational resources.¹²² NRAs often facilitate national MIL networks, launch awareness initiatives, and administer funding for MIL initiatives. Some examples cited by member states include:¹²³

- ▶ In Austria, the RTR-GmbH operates an information portal for MIL initiatives.
- ▶ Croatia’s Agency for Electronic Media (AEM) co-finances MIL projects for universities and NGOs, including educational materials.

117. [Accueil | CLEMI](#).

118. [PACE Resolution 2314 \(2019\) Media education in the new media environment](#).

119. EBU (2023) [Public service media: strengthening media literacy](#). See also [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2007\)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet](#).

120. [PACE Resolution 2314 \(2019\) Media education in the new media environment](#).

121. See <https://www.raiplay.it/programmi/pillolecontroladisinformazione>

122. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership](#).

123. CDMSI (2025) Survey of member states. See also ERGA (2024) [Media literacy best practices in the European Union. A handbook of inspirational initiatives by audiovisual media regulators](#).

- ▶ Arcom, the French regulatory authority for audiovisual and digital media, develops educational resources, builds partnerships, and offers training programmes to teachers, trainers, and students. It carries out its own media literacy initiatives, such as educational resources on freedom of expression, gender equality, and copyright issues. It also co-develops educational resources with other institutions, including kits for teachers on media representation, freedom of speech, and digital citizenship.
- ▶ The Georgian National Communications Commission (ComCom) supports various platforms and projects in MIL. It offers teacher training programmes, and operates the Media Academy, which includes Media School, Media Lab, and Media Criticism. It also provides funding for MIL activities from its budget.
- ▶ Hungary's National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) created and operates the "Magic Valley Media Literacy Education Centres" which provide free programmes for students aged 9 to 16. NMHH also launched "Media Toolhouse", an online resource for teachers, and the "Partner School Programme" offering professional and financial support for media literacy sessions in schools.
- ▶ Italy's Authority for Communications (AGCOM) is responsible for monitoring the promotional activity of media literacy. It approved a policy on digital citizenship training programs and, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Merit and its Regional Communications Committees (CORECOM), supports digital citizenship training programmes in lower and upper secondary schools.
- ▶ Ireland's Coimisiún na Meán facilitates and funds Media Literacy Ireland (MLI), a national network that promotes MIL activities, through conferences, training, and awareness initiatives. Coimisiún na Meán also operates the Sound & Vision Broadcasting Funding Scheme, which can fund educational programmes on media literacy.
- ▶ The Swedish Agency for the Media is permanently tasked with coordinating the work on media and information literacy in Sweden and reporting on measures taken. It promotes MIL by coordinating a national network of actors (MIK Sweden), providing a digital knowledge bank, and carrying out measurements of knowledge and skills in the population (MIL Index project).

The development of digital learning platforms and open educational resources, such as interactive tutorials and adaptive modules, is also encouraged. EduMediaTest, part-financed by the European Commission, is an example of an interactive tool to evaluate and improve media literacy for

students. The use of video games as both a pedagogical tool and a foundation for a positive, inclusive, and effective video game culture has also been extensively explored by the Council of Europe.¹²⁴

Box 3: Integrating MIL across education – Associated indicators

- MIL is included as a curricular learning objective at various levels of the national educational system. Relevant measures might include:
 - The percentage of schools that have integrated MIL as a cross-cutting theme;
 - The percentage of subjects within the national curriculum that include specific learning outcomes or competencies related to MIL;
 - The percentage of primary and secondary schools where MIL is a mandatory component of the curriculum, rather than an optional subject.
- The availability of teacher training programmes and professional development opportunities offered annually that focus on MIL-specific teaching methods and digital citizenship education.
- The availability and number of MIL-focused non-formal education programmes and workshops offered annually by a variety of organisations (e.g., libraries, CSOs, museums).
- Availability of non-formal MIL programmes specifically designed to target hard-to-reach populations, including linguistic minorities, economically disadvantaged communities, and seniors.
- Availability of a publicly accessible registry or database of non-formal MIL initiatives, including details on target audiences, programme content, and contact information.
- Availability of a national MIL competency framework that defines core skills.
- Availability of a national-level assessment or survey tool to measure citizens' MIL skills.
- Percentage of teachers and non-formal educators who have received professional development training on all key dimensions of the comprehensive MIL framework.

124. Council of Europe (2025) [Videogame Culture](#). (Accessed: 8 October 2025).

- Availability of specialised training modules for educators on topics such as AI-driven content, algorithms, and the ethical implications of digital media.
- Availability of a central online repository or portal for MIL educational resources, accessible to teachers, students, and the general public.
- Availability of a diverse range of resource formats, including traditional lesson plans, interactive digital platforms, video games, podcasts, and online tutorials.
- Existence of a framework or set of standards for evaluating the quality, accuracy, and pedagogical effectiveness of MIL educational resources.

Empowerment through engagement

Targeted awareness initiatives

Public awareness activities are a vital component of the national MIL strategy to empower citizens and foster a culture of democracy. Engaging individuals through targeted communications is a first step in imparting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are central to MIL. Raising awareness is important, for example, in identifying and countering disinformation, hate speech, and other information disorders. Greater understanding of what disinformation entails helps individuals critically evaluate sources, verify facts, recognise manipulative and biased narratives, and combat false or misleading information, disinformation, malinformation, and propaganda.¹²⁵ This includes understanding persuasive techniques and building resilience against the tactics, strategies, and methods used by disinformation actors, while building the skills needed to act as informed users of diverse media.¹²⁶

Raising awareness is also vital for fostering citizenship in the digital environment and a prerequisite for informed participation in political and other sectors of public life. Awareness initiatives, for example, help citizens understand the democratic system, encourage involvement in decision-making, and promote a culture of respect and mutual understanding.¹²⁷ Awareness initiatives can foster respect for human rights, democratic values, freedom of expression, and online privacy. By increasing public trust in institutions and media processes, these activities can encourage individuals to engage actively and responsibly in social and civic life.

Awareness activities should also prioritise how to mitigate identified information risks, such as those related to key areas that affect citizens' everyday lives such as health, education, consumer protection or electoral processes. They should also incorporate prior learning and feedback on what has worked well and less well and be tailored to specific local contexts or needs.¹²⁸

125. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*

126. *Resisting disinformation: Ten building blocks to strengthen information integrity*; see also Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).

127. Council of Europe (2018) *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: Volume 1 – Context, concepts and model.*

128. Ecorys (2024).

Raising awareness regarding ecological sustainability in the context of digital transformation is a further crucial message which MIL should promote. The Council of Europe primarily addresses this theme by integrating environmental considerations with its core mandate of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment (2025), for example, highlights that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights.¹²⁹ It has also issued guidance to help policy makers and educators connect sustainability learning with democratic participation and human rights by using the RFCDC's competence model. Education for sustainable development in this context has a powerful connection with MIL and digital citizenship, equipping learners to think critically, act responsibly, and participate sustainably in their use of digital technologies.¹³⁰

More generally, **awareness measures should also inform individuals on online safety and how to identify, report, and handle harmful content such as violence, hate speech, cyberbullying, and various forms of discrimination.**¹³¹ This includes clear information on harmful behaviour and reporting mechanisms, as well as available redress options, complaint procedures, hotlines, and support services when their rights are infringed.¹³²

Assessing and measuring the impact of initiatives in order to strengthen future projects is also important. This should involve going beyond reach and engagement metrics to assess outcomes, behavioural changes and the practical, positive benefits in people's lives. For example, this may involve collecting data on the ability to identify misinformation techniques and narratives, confidence in detecting false information, or changes in consumption or sharing behaviours.¹³³

Fostering strong collaboration among key national stakeholders in the development and implementation of awareness initiatives, involving, for example, government bodies, educational institutions, civil society groups, parents' organisations, media entities, and private sector partners, presents an important opportunity for collective ownership and responsibility.

129. Council of Europe (2025) *Council of Europe strategy on the environment: United around our values for people and the planet.*

130. Council of Europe (2025) *Guidance on applying the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).*

131. See Council of Europe (2025) *Draft Recommendation CM/Rec(20XX)XX of the Committee of Ministers to member States on online safety and empowerment of content creators and users.*

132. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*

133. Livingstone, S. (2023) *What's the best we can expect of media literacy? From protectionism to human rights and flourishing, EDMO Blog.*

Adopting co-design methods for initiatives and resources with stakeholders enhances the authenticity of awareness campaign messaging and increases its potential impact. Including input from different policy areas like welfare, integration, poverty reduction, work, justice, and culture, as well as media and education, in the development of awareness messages also helps to prevent fragmentation and promotes knowledge sharing.

Effective awareness-raising, as demonstrated by the experiences of various member states, **uses a wide range of educational and outreach formats to engage different demographics and learning styles.**¹³⁴ Common approaches include organising conferences, seminars, and interactive workshops for the general public, educators, parents, and specific groups such as seniors or public officials. Annual events and campaigns, like Safer Internet Day, Global Media and Information Literacy Week, and Media Education Weeks, offer valuable focal points for awareness efforts. Many countries also utilise these events to launch and promote educational resources, including handbooks, guides, leaflets, dedicated MIL platforms and online materials, targeting groups from children to businesses. Furthermore, creating dedicated radio and television programmes, podcasts, and media content produced by students encourages experiential learning and reaches wider audiences.

Community-based initiatives and “Media Literacy for All”

Council of Europe legal instruments emphasise that media and information literacy is a lifelong learning process essential for all individuals, regardless of age, background, or social group.¹³⁵ Accordingly, responsibility for MIL extends beyond the educational sector and is shared by all stakeholders capable of reaching citizens of all age groups, thereby helping to establish new networks for disseminating MIL knowledge and skills.

As highlighted in the Council of Europe’s study, *Media Literacy for All*, **community media offers considerable potential for supporting local communities in accessing and developing the skills to create their own communication channels that meet their specific needs and foster participation**

134. CDMSI (2025) Survey of member states.

135. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age; Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education; Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

in the public sphere.¹³⁶ This includes promoting the direct empowerment and participation of communities that may be underrepresented in public debate. Experience in practical media production also helps individuals develop a critical understanding of media production, how content is created and edited, and how to distinguish between different types of content information. Member states are encouraged to support the establishment and operation of minority, regional, local, and not-for-profit community media, including by providing financial mechanisms to promote their development.

Community-based initiatives, especially through community media, are recognised for their unique ability to support marginalised groups.

Such initiatives provide vital support for non-formal and informal learning across various platforms and civil society contexts, including libraries, museums, youth organisations, and adult education settings. These initiatives often leverage local networks and direct engagement to meet specific needs within diverse communities.

Public libraries are consistently highlighted as significant actors in fostering MIL and act as key intermediaries and educators in MIL efforts.

Many member states reported that libraries frequently serve as local hubs for MIL initiatives, organising numerous online and in-person seminars, workshops, and specific MIL programmes for various age groups, including seniors and adults, thereby promoting lifelong learning and digital inclusion.¹³⁷ Libraries play a pivotal role in distributing MIL resources, such as educational booklets, posters, and brochures, to schools and the wider public. Examples of libraries involved in broader public engagement efforts include Finland’s “Media Literacy Week” and “Finnish Game Week” which involve various organisations in promoting positive gaming culture through MIL. The Italian Ministry of Culture has introduced MIL services in public libraries, thereby making MIL education accessible to users and emphasising the vital role of public libraries in promoting cultural growth and improving digital literacy. In Sweden, libraries actively participate in “MIK bibliotekscenter/MIL library centres,” which provide training and online tools for librarians, teachers, and homes on diverse MIL topics. Librarians often integrate MIL support into existing services, such as IT support workshops for older people or during one-to-one interactions with patrons seeking assistance with information searches. Examples include Latvia’s “Media Literacy Masters” and “With Wisdom in Media Literacy” projects, which target seniors in regional libraries.

136. Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media*.

137. CDMSI (2025) Survey of member states.

Portugal's National Public Library Strategy specifically lists MIL as a key focus within its "Skills for Life" resources.

MIL learning opportunities should also be tailored to local needs and delivered where people already are. For MIL outreach to be inclusive and comprehensive, it is important that resources and messaging are appropriately adapted, tailoring the tone, content, and format of resources to resonate with specific audiences. Engaging intermediaries and locally based organisations that are already embedded within communities can be an effective way to reach vulnerable and underserved groups. An inclusive approach to MIL outreach also acknowledges that learning opportunities can take various forms, such as resources, awareness-raising initiatives, events, and training programmes, and can be undertaken by a single organisation or in collaboration with other stakeholders.

Seldom-heard, vulnerable and marginalised groups, including seniors

Council of Europe guidance emphasises the importance of media and information literacy for seldom-heard, vulnerable, and marginalised groups. A key task of a national MIL framework, therefore, is to develop specific strategies that target hard-to-reach populations who may be more vulnerable to mis/disinformation or online harms. As many member states have reported, reaching adult audiences or individual groups that may be under-represented, vulnerable, or marginalised is challenging, especially since mainstream methods, such as delivering MIL education through schools, may be less effective.

Populations that may be vulnerable encompass a broad range of groups, such as children and young people, the elderly, individuals with hearing and visual disabilities, minority groups (cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and sexual), and social categories facing discrimination, such as women and girls, immigrants and refugees.¹³⁸ The importance of prioritising MIL for such underserved communities arises from the increased risks they face as well as their limited access to current or traditional support methods. Greater awareness of MIL also plays an important role in reducing digital divides and skills gaps, enabling key groups like the elderly to access, understand, and use for their benefit digital technologies and services. Accordingly, MIL seeks

138. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age; Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

to enhance their competence and resilience against harmful content and misinformation, foster critical thinking to evaluate diverse sources of information and identify manipulation, promote inclusion and participation in public debate, and ultimately protect their human rights and dignity online, especially regarding privacy, discrimination, and hate speech.

Seniors are specifically identified by the Council of Europe as being underserved by MIL initiatives and often more vulnerable to disinformation due to lower levels of digital literacy and limited familiarity with verification practices.¹³⁹ A significant obstacle to reaching older cohorts is the lack of readily available dissemination networks, such as those provided by schools for reaching younger people.¹⁴⁰

Persons with disabilities (including hearing, visual, cognitive, and other physical disabilities) also face potential exclusion due to technological barriers and require specific measures to improve access to digital technologies and services.¹⁴¹ Their access to and understanding of online services (e.g., search engines, social networks) may also require specific consideration.¹⁴²

Vulnerable groups also include often under-represented or misrepresented minorities in mainstream media, as well as immigrants, refugees, and linguistic minorities. These groups are also frequently the targets of hate speech and discrimination and may have less access to MIL measures.¹⁴³

Targeted measures to address key issues, e.g., freedom of information, threats to journalists, hate speech, disinformation, discrimination including gender-based discrimination and violence, bullying and radicalisation

It is important that national MIL strategies identify and address the various issues faced by vulnerable groups and minorities, such as hate speech, disinformation and discrimination, and develop specific measures and initiatives in response.

139. Council of Europe (2022) *The digital era? Also my era! - Media and information literacy: a key to ensure seniors' rights to participate in the digital era.*

140. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

141. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment.*

142. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)3 of the Committee of Ministers of Ministers on the protection of human rights with regard to search engines.*

143. *Resisting disinformation: Ten building blocks to strengthen information integrity.*

The vulnerability of women and girls to online harms, for example, is a notable feature of Council of Europe MIL guidance.¹⁴⁴ Women, especially women who are public figures or who belong to groups facing intersectional discrimination, are often victims of online harassment, bullying, intimidation, and stalking, which can result in physical or sexual abuse, reflecting unacceptable expressions of inequality. Stereotypical portrayals in media are also a frequently expressed concern.¹⁴⁵ MIL should raise awareness of redress and reporting mechanisms, support users in understanding and addressing harmful content and online behaviours, while promoting awareness of rights, responsible and respectful usage, and countering sexism and gender-based stereotypes.¹⁴⁶

Addressing the specific discrimination faced by women and girls requires **MIL measures that prioritise gender equality in media content, portrayal, and accessibility.** A growing concern in this context is the emergence of the so-called “manosphere”, a loosely connected network of online communities that promote misogynistic worldviews and hostile narratives against women, with incel-related violence already under security scrutiny. Information on existing safeguards and remedies, as well as the availability of specific, technical support in case of need, should be promoted and include a gender equality perspective. Stakeholders should be provided with comprehensive training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, including competences to address gender-based violence.

Member states should adopt legal frameworks to prohibit discrimination on grounds of gender, sexist hate speech and gender-based violence within the media.¹⁴⁷ Awareness-raising initiatives on combating gender stereotypes should also be developed. Media organisations are encouraged to promote balanced participation of women and men and to ensure a “fair gender portrayal and participation in the news”.¹⁴⁸ Promoting gender-sensitive MIL should be a priority, equipping young people with the skills to

144. See, for example, Council of Europe (2016). *Encouraging the participation of the private sector and the media in the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence: Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention: A collection of papers.* See also *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism.*

145. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*

146. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media.*

147. See Council of Europe (2011, Article 17). *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).*

148. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

critically evaluate media representations of gender equality issues.¹⁴⁹ Supporting women politicians, many of whom exit politics, or don't enter politics because of online sexism and violence is one such key issue. Support for women journalists to address discrimination and online harassment is another vital measure.¹⁵⁰

PSM has a specific obligation to promote social cohesion and to focus on “content created by and for such groups, and on their access to, as well as their presence and portrayal in, public service media”.¹⁵¹ PSM should raise awareness of diverse opinions by offering these groups opportunities to access and share information, express themselves, and exchange ideas. Similarly, community, local, and minority media play a crucial role in enabling MIL measures and fostering intercultural dialogue. It is also important to provide training for journalists on best practices in reporting fairly on minorities of all kinds. Key issues relevant to national MIL strategy include the availability of MIL resources in minority languages, the involvement of minority groups in MIL initiatives, including in their own languages, MIL training for minority schools, teachers, and addressing specific needs related to the cultural or other background of minority communities.

A key component in addressing hate speech is the integration of human rights and digital citizenship education into MIL curricula across all levels of education, from pre-primary and primary through to higher education.¹⁵² This should include specific measures to encourage critical thinking, promote equality and intercultural dialogue, and strengthen competencies to identify and counter hate speech. Adequate training for teachers and education professionals on topics such as discrimination, racism, and bullying is also essential. Awareness of anti-discrimination measures and policies against incitement to hatred and violence should be promoted, providing clear information on harmful behaviour, accessible reporting mechanisms, and support for victims.¹⁵³ There should be a clear focus on the

149. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media; Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism.*

150. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

151. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)2 on media pluralism and diversity of media content* states that member states should encourage public service media to actively promote social cohesion and integrate all communities and social groups.

152. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech.*

153. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7E of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment.*

need for transparency and human rights standards in online spaces, with human oversight of the content moderation process and regular human rights impact assessments.¹⁵⁴ Additionally, effective support mechanisms, including psychological, medical, and legal assistance, should be available and clearly communicated for individuals targeted by hate speech, with an age- and gender-sensitive approach.

Media organisations and quality journalism, in fulfilling their public watchdog role in democratic societies, can make an important contribution to combating hate speech “by exposing, reporting on, criticising and condemning hate speech, as well as by providing channels and forums for counter-speech and contributing more broadly to pluralism and societal cohesion”.¹⁵⁵

Box 4: Empowerment through engagement – Associated indicators

- Reach and engagement metrics for national awareness initiatives are collected and updated on a regular basis.
- Measures for assessing knowledge and confidence of citizens regarding MIL have been developed and tested.
- Changes in behaviour as a result of MIL initiatives are regularly assessed.
- Involvement of stakeholders, diverse demographics or specific target groups contributing to awareness initiatives.
- Qualitative assessment or feedback on how well MIL resources meet the needs of specific, diverse audiences.
- Existence of MIL programmes or initiatives specifically designed for and tailored to the needs of women and girls and groups who are discriminated against, seldom-heard or in vulnerable positions.
- Qualitative and quantitative data on the presence and voice of marginalised groups in online and offline public discourse.
- Surveys of citizens, including specific vulnerable groups, on their ability to understand the role of journalism in a democracy, recognise quality journalism and identify/respond to online harassment, hate speech, bullying, and stereotypical portrayals.

154. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech.*

155. *Ibid.*

Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships

Comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach

The Council of Europe considers a multi-stakeholder approach to media and information literacy to be fundamental.¹⁵⁶ Challenges such as disinformation, misinformation and hate speech are inherently complex, such that no single entity can effectively tackle them alone. More broadly, from the perspective of upholding rights, there is a shared responsibility between relevant public and private stakeholders to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights in the digital environment.¹⁵⁷ This includes ensuring that digital technologies support freedom of expression rather than curtail it.¹⁵⁸ Multi-stakeholder cooperation is also crucial for designing and implementing effective policy frameworks and processes, allowing for regular consultation, evaluation, and adaptation to evolving challenges. **A clearly articulated and transparent multi-stakeholder governance framework is therefore essential for national MIL strategy to be inclusive, relevant to people's experiences and fit-for-purpose in terms of implementation.**

To promote MIL effectively, strategies must reach all age groups and diverse segments of society, including vulnerable and marginalised communities who may be underserved by traditional approaches. This requires leveraging the collective networks and expertise of various actors.¹⁵⁹ Working in partnership is considered a key aspect of successful delivery of MIL initiatives, with ongoing dynamic collaborations between government, civil society organisations, media companies, technology platforms, academic institutions, and industry serving as a hallmark of effective MIL implementation. However, collaborative partnerships on their own are not sufficient. Such partnerships need to be supported by a distinctive collaborative culture, which is characterised by specific communication features and values such as respect, listening, and caring.

156. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment* advises member states to engage all relevant stakeholders to implement their obligations regarding the rights of the child in the digital environment. See also the CDMSI, Council of Europe (2023) *Guidance Note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform design solutions in a human rights compliant manner.*

157. *CM/Rec(2018)7.*

158. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression.*

159. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

Key stakeholders whose collaboration is essential for effective MIL implementation include:

- ▶ **National, regional, and local authorities, ministries** (e.g., education, culture, youth, and older persons), and **independent regulatory bodies** (e.g., media regulatory authorities and data protection authorities).¹⁶⁰
- ▶ **Educational institutions**, including schools, universities, teachers, educators, parents, and learners of all ages (children, young people, and older adults).
- ▶ **Civil society**, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), parents' associations, teachers' and educators' associations, youth movements, seniors' associations, trade unions, human rights organisations, and community groups (e.g., public libraries).
- ▶ **Media organisations**, including public service media, commercial media, community media, local media, newsrooms, journalists, publishers, and professional associations/unions, as well as self-regulatory bodies.
- ▶ **Private sector enterprises**, online platforms, social networks, search engines, video-sharing services, telecommunications companies, and advertisers.
- ▶ **Academia and the research community** encompassing universities, experts, and research institutions.

Multi-stakeholder forum or network representing all relevant sectors and groups

Establishing a suitable mechanism to successfully engage all relevant stakeholders is an essential component of national MIL strategy. **The Council of Europe has highlighted the importance of national media literacy networks for this purpose.**¹⁶¹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 *on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*, for example, states that a key strategy for member states in promoting media literacy is to support the creation of a “co-ordinated national media literacy network comprising a wide range of stakeholders”, or to further develop such a network if one

160. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment.*

161. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership, PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) on Media education in the new media environment, Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

already exists.¹⁶² **The establishment and operationalisation of a national MIL Network**, with appropriate governance and adequate resourcing, that is inclusive of all relevant stakeholder groups, is therefore a strong indicator of an effective national MIL strategy.

Member states should actively support and fund the development of such national networks to facilitate cross-sector communication and collaboration and to map current MIL interventions and target groups. For example, in relation to the development of a national MIL strategy in the Republic of Moldova, the Council of Europe has advised mapping or identifying relevant actors by **compiling a list of key stakeholders and conducting consultations to gauge interest in a national media literacy network**.¹⁶³ It also proposes building a **National Knowledge Base** that would include a regularly updated overview of key MIL stakeholders in the country with their respective areas of interest, expertise and experience. It also recommends that the mapping of tools, resources and stakeholders is updated every 6 months.

The aim of effective communication across the MIL community should also be prioritised and should include mechanisms to overcome silo-effects and facilitate information sharing among MIL stakeholders. This may involve developing mechanisms for knowledge exchange, creating a stakeholder database, a comprehensive record of existing MIL interventions and producing regular updates or newsletters. For outreach and user engagement activities, it recommends building on the existing map of MIL stakeholders to include MIL tools, resources, events and awareness initiatives.¹⁶⁴

According to survey responses from member states, several countries have established various forms of MIL networks, platforms, or coordinating bodies to advance national MIL strategy. Media Literacy Ireland (MLI), the MIK Sweden network, Mediawijs (i.e., the Flemish Knowledge Centre for Media Literacy), and Georgia's National Media Literacy Platform are among some of the examples cited.¹⁶⁵ Examples such as these suggest **that a formal, nationally mandated body or network is crucial for effective MIL implementation, greater efficiency and overcoming fragmentation**.

The European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) has observed that NRAs are well-positioned to support national networks

162. [CM/Rec\(2018\)1](#).

163. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova*.

164. *Ibid.*

165. Council of Europe (2025) National Strategies for MIL Education: A survey of member states (unpublished), CDMSI.

by funding, facilitating and/or coordinating their operation. It notes that national media literacy networks with NRA support have been established in Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, among others.¹⁶⁶

Effective coordination mechanisms, such as regular structured meetings, working groups and a clear division of labour between partners, are further relevant aspects. Importantly, adequate funding and long-term investment to sustain such networks are identified by many respondents as a key issue.

The Council of Europe has also encouraged **the active exchange and promotion of positive practices through relevant international forums for collaboration and knowledge exchange**.¹⁶⁷ International collaboration facilitates the exchange of good practices, pedagogical innovations, and educational resources.¹⁶⁸ MIL reinforcement can be strengthened through international cooperation and aligning standards, definitions and methodologies, as illustrated by calls to create a standardised news literacy curriculum in countering disinformation.¹⁶⁹ Challenges such as hate speech and disinformation are cross-border issues requiring structured, sustained international cooperation mechanisms to coordinate responses and share best practices.¹⁷⁰ Existing examples include the European Commission's Media Literacy Expert Group,¹⁷¹ EPRA's Media Literacy Taskforce (EMIL)¹⁷² and the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO),¹⁷³ which foster coordination, learning, networking, and partnerships among media regulators, fact-checkers, and researchers across Europe.

The involvement of professional media organisations and the private sector

Professional media organisations, including those from the private sector, have a significant and distinctive role to play in the context of national MIL strategy. As creators and publishers of media content and

166. ERGA (2024) *Media Literacy Best Practices in the European Union. A handbook of inspirational initiatives by audiovisual media regulators*.

167. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*.

168. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*.

169. See, for example, Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).

170. *Resisting disinformation: Ten building blocks to strengthen information integrity*.

171. European Commission (2025) *Media Literacy Expert Group*.

172. EPRA's Media Literacy Taskforce (EMIL) (2023) *EMIL Press File: A community for all media literacy actors* [Information Document]. European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA).

173. <https://edmo.eu/>

information, professional media organisations are central to the issues that MIL seeks to address and often possess the resources, expertise, and reach to significantly impact public understanding. Support for MIL by media organisations can therefore be powerful and impactful, both for users and media professionals. As with all other examples of stakeholder involvement, **transparency and adherence to MIL’s objectives and learning outcomes is paramount, particularly when perceived conflicts of interest arise from the participation of professional media bodies.**

A number of Council of Europe recommendations explicitly call on the media industry to support MIL. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* recommends that that states should encourage all media, without interfering with their editorial independence, to promote media literacy through policies, strategies and activities.¹⁷⁴ It also recommends that states promote media literacy through support schemes for media, specifically highlighting the roles of public service media (PSM) and community media.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age likewise underscores the critical role that professional media play in collaborating with a range of other sectors to create and promote MIL initiatives aimed at helping citizens recognise and develop resilience to disinformation. It also advises that states, media, and other MIL stakeholders should be prepared to lead on, participate in, and fund MIL projects on a long-term basis. Furthermore, it suggests that specific media literacy programmes are needed for newsrooms to promote collaboration, community building, and audience engagement. Media organisations are also encouraged to develop new formats to promote discussion and invest in online audience/comments moderation to enhance critical engagement.

The role of public service media organisations in supporting inclusive approaches to MIL education has already been mentioned (see 3.5 above). The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) specifically calls on PSM to **include the duty to provide media literacy in its mission, combat the digital divide, and ensure online safety for young audiences, allocating necessary resources for media education initiatives.**¹⁷⁵ PSM is also called on to develop media literacy projects independently and in cooperation with other stakeholders, including community or private media

174. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

175. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2006)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment.*

organisations, newspapers, civil society, and internet intermediaries. It also highlights specific opportunities available to PSM, such as delivering online video news services appealing to young audiences, developing focused programmes offering guidance to teachers on interpreting and decoding content and providing in-house training to journalists and other media professionals on topics like ethics and quality journalism.

Private sector organisations are encouraged to consider the crucial importance of media literacy and develop specialised programmes for young audiences, fostering cooperation with PSM and other media types.¹⁷⁶ At the same time, professional bodies and organisations in the media sector are generally recommended to develop professional training that focuses on legal, digital, ethical, verification/fact-checking, and security dimensions.

Internet intermediaries are explicitly called upon to actively cooperate with public, social, and private entities to support and promote media literacy.¹⁷⁷ This includes efforts to combat disinformation, hate speech, and harmful online content and conduct by developing suitable MIL programmes and tools for educational settings and journalist training. More specifically, online platforms and other relevant internet intermediaries, especially those benefiting significantly from the distribution of news, are encouraged to recognise their responsibility to make meaningful financial and other contributions to media publishers or public entities.¹⁷⁸ These contributions should include supporting the development and promotion of MIL initiatives.

There is a specific responsibility on internet intermediaries to facilitate a better understanding of how the digital ecosystem and wider data economy operate, as well as how technology, particularly algorithms, influences media choices and information.¹⁷⁹ Intermediaries are urged to provide clear and precise information regarding their policies, particularly concerning content removal, recommendations, amplification, and distribution, related complaint mechanisms for users, and to disclose how their algorithmic systems process data and impact freedom of expression.¹⁸⁰ Regarding personal data management, intermediaries should clearly inform users about the data their algorithmic systems process, including purposes and

176. *Ibid.*

177. *Ibid.*

178. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

179. *Ibid.*

180. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression.*

potential outcomes, and allow users to control their data and opt out of profiling.¹⁸¹ This transparency is a key element of an organisation's commitment to MIL, empowering users to make informed decisions and understand the implications of personalised search results and content feeds.¹⁸²

The role of quality journalism

Journalism and high-quality news content play a crucial role within the Council of Europe's approach to MIL. Journalism is recognised as a cornerstone of democracy, and is vital for disseminating information, providing analysis, acting as a public watchdog, and creating forums for public debate.¹⁸³ MIL seeks to help citizens understand this vital role and the overall functioning of news media in society.¹⁸⁴

According to the Council of Europe, quality journalism is characterised by its commitment to truth, fairness, accuracy, independence, transparency, and the public interest. It is regarded as essential for the health of democracies.¹⁸⁵ MIL initiatives are encouraged to promote the skills and knowledge necessary for individuals to recognise and appreciate quality journalism and its distinctive role in contributing to the health of democracies.

As outlined by the Council of Europe, it is essential to foster an appreciation of newspaper reading and quality journalism, especially for younger learners who will have less exposure, starting from the earliest school years. For example, in Italy, the Department for Information and Publishing of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers funds schools of every type and age group to subscribe to one or more daily newspapers, periodicals and scientific journals, in traditional or digital format. In addition, several meetings in schools have been organised by the Department in partnership with newspapers and periodicals, during which conversations took place with students about the importance of reliable, trustworthy news and the role of news media operating under editorial responsibility and of the journalistic profession.

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181. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*
 182. CDMSI Council of Europe (2023) *Guidance Note on countering the spread of online mis- and disinformation through fact-checking and platform-design solutions in a human-rights compliant manner.*
 183. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*
 184. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*
 185. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

The growing control of internet intermediaries over information flows, the prevalence of “filter bubbles” or “echo chambers”¹⁸⁶ and the threat to traditional media business models caused by the shift of advertising revenue to online platforms¹⁸⁷ have precipitated a crisis for journalism. Moreover, the increasing hostility towards journalism, evidenced by alerts and reports of the *Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists* – including judicial, political and physical attacks – has prompted the Council of Europe to raise awareness about the importance of safeguarding journalists and their right to report the news freely and without fear.¹⁸⁸ “Journalists Matter”, the Council of Europe campaign for the safety of journalists, is an initiative aiming to promote media freedom and protect journalists from violence, threats, and harassment while performing their duties.¹⁸⁹ With reference to this crucial area, the Council of Europe has identified a significant gap in existing MIL programmes regarding the promotion of skills related to understanding how media is funded, regulated, and distributed, as well as how social and search platforms operate, which are essential for quality journalism in the digital age.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, much relevant data held by online platforms is rarely shared with independent researchers, hindering access to much-needed information for both MIL education and effective policy-making.¹⁹¹

It is essential, therefore, that national MIL strategies promote greater understanding of the role of media and quality journalism in upholding democracy and democratic values. National MIL programmes should include educational content about the role and function of journalism in democracy, media ownership, organisation, and financing to help learners critically evaluate information and understand influences on content production and dissemination. MIL initiatives should explicitly promote the

186. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

187. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on principles for media and communication governance.*

188. See also Clark, M. & Horsley, W. (2020) *A mission to inform: Journalists at risk speak out*, Council of Europe. Clark, M. & Grech, A. (2017) *Journalists under pressure: Unwarranted interference, fear and self-censorship in Europe*, Council of Europe Publishing. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors.*

189. Council of Europe (2025) *Journalists Matter: Council of Europe campaign for the safety of journalists.*

190. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

191. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression.*

skills and knowledge required to recognise and value quality journalism.¹⁹² Quality journalism should also be a key component of national strategies to counter the growing threats from disinformation and online propaganda campaigns.

Box 5: Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships – Associated indicators

- A national or regional MIL task force or committee has been established with representatives from all key stakeholder groups (government, NRAs, private sector, civil society, media, academia, educational institutions).
- A transparent and well-defined governance structure for national MIL strategy is in place, outlining roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes for all collaborating parties.
- A National Knowledge Base or similar central repository exists, providing a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of MIL stakeholders, interventions, and resources.
- There is a national multi-stakeholder MIL network, platform, or coordinating body with a clear mandate and governance structure.
- Stakeholder groups engage in regular and dynamic collaborations to develop and deliver MIL initiatives as measured by the number of joint initiatives delivered annually.
- A transparent process exists for identifying and mitigating potential conflicts of interest, particularly with private sector and professional media organisations.
- Professional media organisations, including public service media (PSM) and private media, have adopted and publicly documented a formal policy or strategy for promoting media and information literacy.
- Media organisations produce and broadcast/publish dedicated content aimed at increasing media literacy (e.g., news segments on fact-checking, explainers on journalistic ethics, documentaries on the media ecosystem).
- Internet intermediaries and media organisations contribute to MIL research and education by providing access to anonymised data or publishing insights into platform trends and content consumption.

192. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

- National MIL strategies and initiatives explicitly include educational content that helps citizens recognize and value quality journalism while national curricula include learning outcomes dedicated to the role of journalism in democracy.
- MIL strategies include a focus on raising public awareness about the importance of safeguarding journalists and their right to report freely while quality journalism is a central component of national strategies to counter disinformation and online propaganda.

Part II

Explanatory memorandum

This section provides further background on the central role of MIL in addressing contemporary societal challenges, explains why it is crucial to develop a national strategy to support its advancement, and explores the ongoing evolution of the concept itself.

The context for national MIL strategies

Safeguarding human rights and democratic principles within the developing media and information landscape is a fundamental aspect of the Council of Europe's approach to media and the information society. Under the authority of the Committee of Ministers, the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) oversees activities related to setting standards and promoting cooperation and common policies among member states, focusing on freedom of expression, privacy, and access to information, particularly on the internet and social media platforms. A recurring theme is the vital role of media pluralism, transparency, and quality journalism in fostering an informed citizenry and robust public debate, alongside the need to combat hate speech and disinformation. In this context, the Council of Europe has consistently highlighted the importance of MIL and related concepts such as digital citizenship as essential elements for democratic societies, human rights, and citizen empowerment in the evolving media and information environment.

In assigning the task of developing guidance for national MIL strategies to the CDMSI, the Committee of Ministers has stressed the importance of MIL as a crucial response by the Council of Europe and its member states to the complex challenges posed by the digital environment. Democratic processes and institutions face unprecedented challenges, with disinformation fuelling distrust in the media and increasing societal polarisation in an ever more complex landscape. These risks are heightened by the rapid evolution of technologies—particularly Artificial Intelligence—which is changing how information is created, shared, and consumed. Since 2017, the Council of Europe, while acknowledging the many potential benefits that digital transformation brings, has issued warnings about the serious threat to democratic societies from disinformation and the spread of false information

intentionally shared to cause harm. The undermining of media freedom, as well as threats to journalists and journalistic processes, all contribute to eroding trust and weakening media institutions, leading to hostile public discourse, societal polarisation, and disengagement.

Against this background, the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Reykjavík on 16 and 17 May 2023, reaffirmed the Council of Europe's vision to promote greater unity among member states in safeguarding and realising shared ideals and principles. This includes a commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights as “ultimate guarantors” of human rights. The Reykjavík Declaration emphasises the Council of Europe's “prominent role in international standard-setting on freedom of expression and related issues such as media freedom, access to information and combating hate speech and disinformation, including the instrumentalisation of history, in particular in the light of the increasing impact of digital technologies on these issues”.¹⁹³ The Declaration also highlights the vital importance of free, independent, pluralist, and diverse media as a cornerstone of a democratic society, committing to continue “collective efforts for the safety of journalists and other media actors”.

Building on this milestone, the Secretary-General's 2025 report on the New Democratic Pact marks a significant development.¹⁹⁴ The Pact aims to revitalise and safeguard democracy across its member states amidst widespread geopolitical and democratic challenges. As the Secretary-General observes, Europe “faces a perfect storm – war, shifting geopolitics, democratic backsliding, rising impunity, climate crisis, disinformation, rapid technological change and a retreat from cooperation into nationalism and protectionism”. This environment threatens “to undo the peace, stability and hard-won progress the Council of Europe has helped deliver across an entire continent over the past 75 years”.¹⁹⁵

Disinformation, according to the New Democratic Pact, thrives in weak media environments and worsens the spread of misleading content, often AI-generated, affecting electoral and other democratic processes and encouraging societal polarisation. As a result, MIL plays a vital role in the initiative and is an essential tool to combat disinformation campaigns, helping to build resilience against disinformation and algorithmically-driven polarisation while promoting a positive use of social media and digital spaces. Key to this

193. Council of Europe (2023) *United around our values – Reykjavík Declaration*.

194. Council of Europe (2025) *Towards a new Democratic Pact for Europe: Report of the Secretary General*.

195. *Ibid.*

effort is raising awareness about the dangers of information disorder and the amplification of disinformation.

Actions to advance the New Democratic Pact involve addressing a broad spectrum of issues, including the role of (social) media, misinformation and disinformation, media freedom, freedom of expression, media integrity, literacy, and transparency. Inclusivity and engaging diverse groups, from mature audiences to various minorities, are also key priorities. Furthermore, public service media (PSM) and local and community media are emphasised for their vital role in strengthening democracy. Each of these aspects also warrants careful consideration when developing effective national MIL strategies, which is discussed further in the following sections.

The New Democratic Pact refers explicitly to MIL within the pillar “Learning and Practising Democracy”. This pillar emphasises facilitating both formal and non-formal education to equip European citizens, especially young people, with the skills and critical thinking needed for active participation in democracy. The report notes that MIL is vital in addressing the “bubble” effect created by digital spaces and the spread of disinformation. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of promoting media and digital literacy, alongside civic education, as key strategies for empowering young people to engage meaningfully in democratic processes. These elements are essential for fostering a deeper understanding of and commitment to democratic values among young people.¹⁹⁶

MIL also plays a significant role in the Pact’s pillar on “Protecting Democracy” by combatting disinformation and maintaining the integrity of public debate. This ensures that citizens have access to accurate and reliable information within a free and diverse media environment. In this context, promoting quality journalism, supported and encouraged by MIL, serves as an essential counter-narrative to disinformation and is a crucial element of the Council of Europe’s support for media freedom.

Defining national MIL strategy

Building on UNESCO’s MIL policy and strategy guidelines, a national MIL strategy may be described as a government-led, comprehensive framework that integrates broad policy goals, concrete actions, and stakeholder coordination to cultivate citizens’ competencies in accessing, critically evaluating, creating, and disseminating media and information in an ethical and effective

196. *Ibid*, p.11.

manner.¹⁹⁷ It harmonises policies across education, media regulation, digital technology, and civic engagement, ensuring alignment with human rights principles, such as freedom of expression and access to information.¹⁹⁸

The document uses the plural term “national MIL *strategies*” to refer to the collective body of strategies developed across various countries, rather than a single “national MIL *strategy*” which denotes the individual, whole-of-government framework adopted by each country. In this sense, national MIL strategies reflect the shared responsibility of all Council of Europe member states to design and implement their frameworks in line with common democratic standards. While each member state is encouraged to develop a strategy tailored to and adapted for its specific context, the Council of Europe regards national MIL strategies as a collective policy priority across Europe. This distinction underscores both the diversity of national approaches and the need for coordinated progress among member states.

The main aim of national MIL strategies, as a whole, is to strengthen democratic societies by promoting an informed and resilient citizenry—an essential element of functioning democracies that relies on widespread democratic engagement and participation in public and political life. Such strategies are vital for enhancing media pluralism and the quality of media content and information, which are, in turn, crucial for safeguarding democratic societies and encouraging strong public discourse. Therefore, national MIL strategies should be viewed as a fundamental element of democratic resilience for all member states.

From this perspective, the overarching purposes of an individual national MIL strategy may be said to:

- ▶ **Empower individuals to effectively access and critically analyse content they encounter through the media, online or through interaction with AI systems,**¹⁹⁹ and to support the acquisition of the cognitive, technical, and social skills necessary for this process;
- ▶ **Enable citizens to make informed decisions** about the media they use, how they use it, as well as the information and media content they

197. Grizzle, A., Moore, P., Dezuanni, M., Asthana, S., Wilson, C., Banda, F. & Onumah, C. (2013) *Media and information literacy: policy and strategy guidelines*. Edited by A. Grizzle and M. C. Torras Calvo. Paris, France: UNESCO.

198. Council of Europe (2025) *Media Literacy*.

199. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*.

- create themselves and disseminate – thereby avoiding that citizens innocently post hate speech expressions or other harmful content;²⁰⁰
- ▶ **Safeguard fundamental public interest objectives** in the digital environment, such as freedom of expression and access to information, media pluralism, cultural diversity, and the protection of minors and human dignity;²⁰¹
 - ▶ **Facilitate the identification and countering of disinformation and misinformation** through a critical understanding of how digital services operate, and how technology and algorithms can influence content choices and diversity of views;²⁰²
 - ▶ **Promote trust in evidence-based news sources and quality journalism**,²⁰³ involving an understanding of how media is produced, funded, and regulated, and valuing its role as a public watchdog in democratic societies;²⁰⁴
 - ▶ **Help citizens manage online safety and security**²⁰⁵ through awareness, safety skills and effective use of safety technologies;
 - ▶ **Facilitate democratic engagement and informed participation in political life**, including promoting critical debate and wider democratic participation of all communities and generations;²⁰⁶
 - ▶ **Foster a culture of respect and mutual understanding** supported by skills of digital citizenship and competences of democratic culture;²⁰⁷
 - ▶ **Bridge fragmentation, reduce social and political alienation**, and promote the development of active citizenship and civil society.²⁰⁸

200. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

201. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the remit of public service media in the information society.*

202. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.*

203. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age.*

204. Council of Europe (2020) *Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy.*

205. Chapman, M. (2024) *Assessment paper: Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova*; *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment.*

206. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the remit of public service media in the information society.*

207. *Ibid.*

208. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2013)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on gender equality and media.*

National MIL strategies, in this context, serve as comprehensive, cohesive and dynamic long-term frameworks designed to equip individuals with the skills and competencies needed to navigate, understand, and effectively engage in a complex and evolving media and information environment. A policy framework can be described as a structured system of principles, guidelines, and tools that offer an organised approach to formulating, implementing, and assessing public policies.²⁰⁹ The need for a coordinated approach to national MIL strategy has been emphasised in several recent Council of Europe legal instruments.

For example, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership* advocates for a comprehensive media literacy (MIL) framework and a coordinated national approach involving networks with a diverse range of stakeholders, supported by multi-annual plans. Similarly, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism* in the digital age advises that states explicitly include the promotion of MIL as a goal in their media, information, and education policies, and allocate adequate resources to MIL. It also urges strategic coordination at the national level, based on dedicated policy development, implementation, and evaluation of MIL initiatives (3.1.4).

From the perspective of children's rights, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 on Guidelines to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment* advises that states establish a comprehensive strategic national approach to improve coordination and policy coherence across all aspects of children's rights in the digital space. Meanwhile, the *Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2314 (2019) on Media education in the new media environment* specifically urges that member states "develop a co-ordinated national media literacy policy", emphasising its importance for a structured, comprehensive, and multi-stakeholder approach to media and information literacy at the national level.²¹⁰

The central features of national MIL strategies, as set out in these and other Council of Europe legal instruments, promote a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and multi-stakeholder approach involving all relevant actors, including governments, media organisations (public service, commercial, and community media), civil society, educational institutions, parents, teachers, and internet intermediaries. They should be carried out through annual or multi-year action plans with adequate resources to meet the set objectives

209. See Sabatier, P. A. & Weible, C. M. (Eds.) (2014). *Theories of the Policy Process* (3rd ed.). Westview Press.

210. *PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment*.

and be evidence-based, drawing on rigorous, independent research to identify knowledge gaps, understand target audiences, and assess the effectiveness of interventions.

As a strategic response to urgent societal challenges, MIL is not only an educational priority but also a vital aspect of democratic resilience. Therefore, MIL should be regarded as a lifelong learning process relevant to all citizens both within and outside formal education. As technologies and media forms continue to develop, new skills are constantly needed—making MIL applicable to everyone, from early education through to adulthood. This necessitates a whole-of-society approach involving schools, governments, industry, and civil society to enable citizens to participate fully and ethically in an increasingly complex and digitally mediated world.

In summary, national MIL strategies should be regarded as a long-term investment requiring sustained commitment and support—including funding—from all stakeholders. At the same time, while MIL plays an important role, it should not be regarded as a standalone solution for the complex issues it seeks to address; rather, it forms part of a broader, holistic approach that must continuously evolve in response to technological and societal change. Ultimately, national MIL strategies should aim to strengthen trust in the media and information environment through transparency regarding the aims, scope, and resources of MIL interventions.

The evolving concept of MIL

The development of the concept of MIL has a long and complex history that lies beyond the scope of the current document. In broad terms, MIL emerged from three distinct but related fields of practice and scholarship: media literacy (skills for critically analysing and creating media), information literacy (skills for locating, evaluating, and using information), and media education (the teaching and learning about media—its forms, content, technologies, and social influence). Over time, MIL has come to function as an umbrella term that has evolved—from academic, professional and pedagogical roots—into a field of public policy, driven by the need to address the significant impact of digital transformation, including the social harms associated with information disorders.

For media literacy scholars, the concept of “literacy” within the framework of MIL has evolved far beyond its traditional association with reading, writing, and understanding printed texts to encompass the ability to engage with various media forms and participate in social processes shaped by

media and information technologies.²¹¹ Historically, new models of literacy have emerged in response to different stages of communication development: from the era of mass communication and electronic media to the rise of digital media and the information society. Each stage has introduced its own skills, knowledge, and competencies. As such, MIL should be regarded as a broad, dynamic, and constantly evolving concept — encompassing access, critical understanding, creative use, and active participation across an ever-changing media, information, and communication landscape.²¹²

UNESCO's central role in shaping the concept of MIL is well documented. Starting with the 1982 Grünwald Declaration, which formalised the field of media education and emphasised its implications for education systems, subsequent initiatives have notably broadened its scope and importance to wider sectors. For example, the 1999 UNESCO Vienna conference, "Educating for the Media and the Digital Age", no longer referred only to press, cinema, radio, and television, but also to "words, signs, sounds, as well as still and moving images" used as a vehicle *by all kinds of technology*.²¹³ From 2007, UNESCO proposed Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as a composite concept to reflect blended competency needs in the digital age (information access, critical evaluation, content creation, and rights such as freedom of expression and access to information).²¹⁴ Significantly, UNESCO's promotion of MIL as a fundamental right for every citizen, essential for democracy, highlights MIL as "a nexus of human rights of which literacy is a primary right".²¹⁵

MIL is similarly a strategic priority for the European Union, which has integrated it into legislation, education and youth policies and strategies to counter disinformation. In 2007, the European Commission adopted a

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211. Pérez-Tornero, J.M. (2007) *Study on the current trends and approaches to Media Literacy in Europe*. Autonomous University of Barcelona.
 212. Drawing on the foundational definition published in the report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy in 1993 which defined media literacy as "the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes". See P. Aufderheide (1998) "Media Literacy: A Report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy Aspen" in R. Kubey (ed.), *Media Literacy in the Information Age: Current Perspectives*, pp. 79–86.
 213. Krucsay, S. (ed.) (1999) *Educating for the Media and the Digital Age: Proceedings of the International Conference, Vienna, 18-20 April 1999*. Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs; Austrian National Commission for UNESCO.
 214. Beger, G. (2019) "Whither MIL: Thoughts for the Road Ahead" in U. Carlsson (Ed.), *Understanding Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the Digital Age: A Question of Democracy*, pp. 11–24, Nordicom, UNESCO International Clearinghouse for Children, Youth and Media.
 215. UNESCO (2017) *Media and Information Literacy, a critical approach to literacy in the digital world*.

definition of media literacy as “the capacity to access, analyse and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages... and to communicate competently using the media available on a personal basis”.²¹⁶ This definition explicitly covers all media, including traditional and new digital technologies, and emphasises its role in increasing awareness, filtering perceptions, shaping culture, and empowering citizens with critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills for informed consumption and production of information. The revised Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AVMSD) (2018) explicitly requires EU Member States to promote media literacy and to regularly report on their efforts.²¹⁷ It also obliges video-sharing platforms to provide media literacy tools and enhance users’ awareness of them. In February 2023, the European Commission issued Media Literacy Guidelines to support Member States in reporting on media literacy and sharing best practices.²¹⁸ The European Democracy Action Plan²¹⁹ and the Media and Audiovisual Action Plan²²⁰ also include media literacy as a pillar for countering disinformation. Under the 2022 Code of Practice on Disinformation,²²¹ major online platforms and other signatories have committed to strengthening media literacy and critical thinking. On 13 February 2025, the Commission and the European Board for Digital Services endorsed the official integration of the voluntary Code of Practice on Disinformation into the framework of the Digital Services Act (DSA).²²²

MIL, as promoted by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Union, is best understood as an overarching framework that equips citizens with a broad set of skills for the digital age. These include the ability to access, evaluate, create, and share information and media across diverse formats and platforms. Importantly, MIL is not limited to functional digital skills; it also entails critical thinking, the capacity to use, analyse and interpret media, and

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216. European Commission (2007) *A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment* (COM(2007) 833 final).
 217. European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2010) *Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (Codified version)*. OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, pp. 1–24.
 218. European Commission (2023) *Media Literacy Guidelines*.
 219. European Commission (2020) *European democracy action plan* (COM/2020/790 final). Publications Office of the European Union.
 220. European Commission (2020) *Europe’s media in the digital decade: An action plan to support recovery and transformation* (COM/2020/784 final) [Media and Audiovisual Action Plan]. Publications Office of the European Union.
 221. European Commission (2022) *2022 Code of practice on disinformation*. Publications Office of the European Union.
 222. European Commission (2025) *The Code of conduct on disinformation*.

ethical engagement within information environments. By recognising that media messages are constructed and often biased, MIL prepares citizens to question, contextualise, and contribute responsibly to today's complex information flows.²²³

A defining feature of MIL is its composite and multi-dimensional nature, which makes it challenging to delineate and to measure. It brings together technical, cognitive, civic, social, and ethical competencies, overlapping with related literacies such as digital literacy, information literacy, and cultural literacy. These literacies share a “family resemblance”, to draw on Wittgenstein's characterisation, highlighting the inherent difficulty of defining terms such as these.²²⁴ As such, MIL should be regarded as forming a cluster of inter-related and overlapping practices rather than one definitive skillset.²²⁵ For example, evaluating the credibility of a news article (media literacy) intersects with searching for and synthesising information across sources (information literacy), while recognising sponsored posts and algorithmic influence online combines elements of media and digital literacy. MIL is therefore best viewed as a flexible network of interdependent skills that vary with context, user, and purpose.²²⁶

A final point to note is that MIL, as framed by international organisations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and the European Union, is mainly a policy-oriented framework designed to equip citizens with the skills needed to navigate complex media and information environments. This contrasts with media education—or media literacy education—which, rooted in traditions in cultural and critical pedagogy, has historically focused on enabling learners to critically analyse media texts, practices, and institutions, most often within formal education settings and higher education contexts. While MIL and media education are closely connected, their differing orientations highlight both potential tensions and areas of complementarity.

For instance, media education, rooted in critical pedagogy and cultural studies, tends to emphasise the social, political, and ideological aspects of

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223. UNESCO (2013) *Global media and information literacy assessment framework: Country readiness and competencies*; Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) *Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media*.
 224. Wittgenstein, L. (2009) *Philosophical investigations* (G. E. M. Anscombe, P. M. S. Hacker & J. Schulte, Trans., 4th ed.), Wiley-Blackwell (Original work published 1953). See also Fox, C. (2010). Wittgenstein on family resemblance in K. D. Jolley (ed.), *Wittgenstein: Key Concepts*, pp. 51–62, Acumen Publishing; Cambridge Core.
 225. Livingstone, S. (ed.) (2011) *Media literacy: Ambitions, policies and measures*, COST IS0906 Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies. Brussels, Belgium.
 226. Pérez-Tornero, J. M., & Tayie, S. (2012) *Teacher training in media education: Curriculum and international experiences*, Nordicom.

the media and information environment. It highlights issues of power, representation, and identity, and frequently positions learners as active agents capable of challenging media industries and dominant discourses.²²⁷

MIL, by contrast, has primarily evolved as a policy instrument, shaped by governments' needs to address pressing societal challenges, such as mis and disinformation, online safety, and digital skills gaps. This policy orientation has often emphasised digital literacy skills—such as accessing and evaluating information, using digital tools—and measurable outcomes, which some argue may risk diminishing the critical and reflective ethos central to traditional media education.

Despite these apparent tensions, MIL as a policy domain and media education share the common goal of fostering critical engagement with the media and information environment, empowering citizens to participate meaningfully in the digital sphere. Within the context of national MIL strategies, both approaches are essential and should be viewed as complementary pathways toward the same objective, interdependent and mutually reinforcing rather than competing paradigms.

Humanism and a human-centred digital transformation

Humanism and a vision of a human-centred digital transformation are key distinctive features of MIL, reflected in both its policy applications and the values underpinning media education. The urgent need to prioritise and promote a human rights-based approach to digital transformation has been a major factor in integrating MIL into public policy. Despite the many varying definitions of MIL, a human-centred perspective remains a consistent thread across its different iterations, highlighting the importance of human agency, dignity, and potential at the heart of the media and information ecosystem. This focus is central to the ethos of MIL – both as a policy framework and in media education – rooted in its fundamental aim to support individuals in their diverse practices of communicating and constructing meaning through diverse media.²²⁸

From the outset, both media education and MIL policy have aimed to shift the focus from media audiences as passive recipients of information to

227. Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007) Critical media literacy is not an option. *Learning Inquiry*, 1(1), 59–69. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11519-007-0004-2>

228. Meaning-making understood in the constructivist sense introduced by Hall by which audiences interpret, negotiate, and construct meaning from media texts. Hall, S. (1980) "Encoding/decoding" in *Culture, Media, Language*, pp. 128–138, London: Routledge.

active, engaged participants in society. This aligns with a humanistic emphasis on individual agency and critical autonomy in which users can be facilitated to critically evaluate, challenge, and create media for their own purposes of self-expression, self-realisation and active participation in society.²²⁹ The critical pedagogy underpinning media literacy education, for example, is founded on a holistic educational philosophy that seeks to cultivate cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical competencies that contribute to the development of an individual's all round capacities, not just the transmission of knowledge or the acquisition of skills. Within the framework of lifelong learning, MIL advances human-centred goals of self-actualisation by providing people with the tools to navigate the media and information landscape, helping them pursue knowledge, nurture creativity, and engage with others in meaningful ways.

More broadly, MIL challenges the claims of technological determinism that portray individuals as powerless in the face of media and information technologies. Instead, it asserts that technologies are extensions of human communication and meaning-making capacities, and that humans are—and should be—responsible for guiding how these technologies are developed and used. MIL empowers individuals and societies to critically examine opaque information processes, including the functioning of algorithms, and the business models and power structures underpinning media platforms, based on the principle that technology should serve humanity, not the reverse.²³⁰

The UN Global Digital Compact, adopted at the Summit of the Future in 2024, exemplifies a significant international agreement that has as its centre a human-focused approach to digital transformation.²³¹ The Compact clearly states that, grounded in international law including international human rights law, all human rights — civil, political, economic, social, and cultural — must be respected, protected, and promoted both online and offline.

UNESCO, in its publications on MIL, frequently refers to a “new humanism”, an approach that adapts traditional humanist values to the challenges of the

229. Buckingham, D. (2006) Defining digital literacy – What do young people need to know about digital media? *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*, 1(4), 263–277.

230. As set out in *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Big Data for culture, literacy and democracy*. See also Council of Europe (2017) *Report of the 4th Council of Europe platform exchange on culture and digitisation: Empowering democracy through culture – Digital tools for culturally competent citizens*.

231. United Nations (2024) *Global Digital Compact*, UN Summit of the Future.

digital age.²³² For instance, it emphasises the importance of ethical considerations, such as responsible content creation, respect for privacy, and the fight against hate speech. It also aims to bridge cultural divides by promoting an understanding of diverse media codes, narratives, and perspectives, thereby encouraging intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Specifically, with regard to media literacy, a new humanism is “committed to the goal of counteracting the depersonalising effects of mass technology” and fostering a form of citizenship in which individuals are both bearers of universal rights and responsibilities.²³³

The European Union has also made a human-centred digital transformation a key part of its digital policy.²³⁴ Focusing on human rights and the need for trustworthy, transparent, and accountable use of digital technologies, the EU’s ambitious legislative and innovation programme aims to ensure “that technology works for the people, digital economies are fair and inclusive, and our societies are open, democratic and sustainable”.²³⁵

From the perspective of the Council of Europe, MIL is inextricably linked with human rights and fully aligned with its core mission of upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law. MIL is considered an essential enabler and a precondition for the effective exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights in the digital environment, such as the right to engage, choose information, participate in dialogic communication, and access quality content.

In brief, key fundamental rights addressed include:

- ▶ The **right to freedom of expression and information** (Article 10 ECHR) in which MIL is crucial for individuals to be able to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas without interference;²³⁶
- ▶ **The right to education** (Article 2 of Protocol No.1 ECHR) where MIL is explicitly recognised as a component of the right to education,²³⁷

232. Pérez Tornero, J. M. & Varis, T. (2011) *Media Literacy and New Humanism*, UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education.

233. *Ibid.*

234. Stengg, W. (2024) *Digital policy in the EU: Towards a human-centred digital transformation*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

235. European Commission (2025) *Responsible Digitalisation*.

236. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*

237. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment; Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users.*

expressed also in the requirement for digital education to enable individuals to exercise their rights and freedoms online;²³⁸

- ▶ **The right to respect for private and family life** (Article 8 ECHR), where MIL helps users to understand the implications of using digital technologies on their private life and the protection of their personal data.²³⁹ It also empowers users to exercise greater control over their data, including how it is processed, targeted, and profiled by algorithmic systems;²⁴⁰
- ▶ **The right to an effective remedy** (Article 13 ECHR) where MIL empowers individuals by making them aware of available redress mechanisms against harm and infringements of their freedom of expression online;²⁴¹
- ▶ **The right to freedom of assembly and association** (Article 11 ECHR) where, what is referred to as “social networking services” in *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6*, are recognised as having potential to promote the exercise of this right, and media literacy helps users engage responsibly within such platforms.²⁴²

Other key rights-based themes for the Council of Europe include the prioritisation of children’s rights and protection of minors in relation to the digital environment;²⁴³ the focus on inclusion and non-discrimination, particularly with respect to equal access to communication for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups;²⁴⁴ and the prioritisation of MIL and digital citizenship as essential for the full exercise of human rights and active participation in democratic processes.²⁴⁵

238. *CM/Rec(2014)6*.

239. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to search engines*.

240. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression*.

241. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on a Guide to human rights for Internet users; PACE Resolution 2314 (2019) Media education in the new media environment*.

242. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of human rights with regard to social networking services*.

243. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment*.

244. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet; Council of Europe (2022) The digital era? Also my era! - Media and information literacy: a key to ensure seniors’ rights to participate in the digital era*.

245. *Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education*.

Resilient societies in the age of AI

The digital environment is constantly evolving, and for MIL to remain relevant and effective, it must be adaptable and responsive to emerging opportunities, risks, and challenges. This necessitates future-proofing core skills and competencies through frameworks that support transferable abilities, such as critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and ethical judgement. Integrating MIL into lifelong learning frameworks and fostering competencies for a democratic culture – including values, attitudes, skills, and critical understanding – is equally essential for building resilient societies in the face of rapid technological change. Accordingly, national MIL strategies should be designed with flexibility, incorporating mechanisms for regular review and updates, underpinned by a solid evidence base and regular horizon scanning of emerging trends and issues.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), the metaverse and related extended reality (XR) technologies are among the latest innovations in technological advancement, which are likely to fundamentally reshape the landscape for media and information literacy. These technological developments bring both new opportunities to advance fundamental rights within the media and information environment and significant potential challenges.²⁴⁶ From the perspective of MIL, the growing use of AI within search services, algorithmic recommendations and chatbots across social media and websites is a key factor in the evolving information environment.²⁴⁷ Companies such as Google, Meta, X, and Microsoft have integrated generative AI – including LLMs and chatbots – into their services, with ChatGPT notably becoming in 2025 the 5th most visited website globally.²⁴⁸

AI-generated content amplifies the challenges of misinformation and disinformation, by making its creation and dissemination easier, cheaper, and faster than ever before. In 2017, the Council of Europe highlighted deepfakes and AI-driven disinformation as pressing concerns, noting their potential to mislead audiences and enable malicious actors to produce entirely fabricated audio or video files.²⁴⁹ The increased prevalence and sophistication of

246. See Council of Europe & IEEE Standards Association (2024) *the metaverse and its impact on human rights, the rule of law, and democracy*, Council of Europe Publishing. See also Council of Europe (2025) *Feasibility study on freedom of expression in immersive realities*.

247. House of Lords (2025) *Communications and Digital Committee 3rd Report of Session 2024–25: Media literacy*.

248. House of Commons (2025) *Social media, misinformation and harmful algorithms*, Science, Innovation and Technology Committee.

249. Wardle, C. & Derakhshan, H. (2017).

AI-generated misinformation makes it difficult for individuals to distinguish authentic content from synthetic material.²⁵⁰ Such content can be more persuasive and harder to debunk, further eroding trust in news and information. For this reason, labelling content created using generative AI is essential to maintain public trust and promote critical, informed engagement with media in the digital age.

In addition to the fundamental lack of transparency around generative AI platforms and systems, significant concerns persist regarding the potential for political bias in the Large Language Models (LLMs) used to train AI systems in addition to existing concerns regarding privacy, security and copyright breaches.²⁵¹ More broadly, the emergence of personalised AI agents and chatbots have potentially profound implications for human computer interaction with consequent new risks of user manipulation and loss of critical autonomy.

The implications of AI for media and information literacy are profound. The skills and competences needed to access information, interrogate sources, critically engage with content and distinguish high quality content from false or misleading material must be significantly expanded to encompass AI-driven systems and AI-generated content. Using AI tools is also a new way of navigating the digital world, requiring new technical skills and knowledge. MIL applied to AI – or more specifically AI literacy – also highlights the importance of ethical frameworks underpinning AI systems and their role in the wider media and information landscape.

The Council of Europe’s approach to Artificial Intelligence, grounded in its core mandate, seeks to develop a high-level, values-based approach to the risks AI poses to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, while simultaneously promoting responsible innovation. This effort culminated in the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, adopted on 17 May 2024, which represents the “first-ever international legally binding treaty” on AI.²⁵²

A central pillar of the Council of Europe’s AI strategy is the promotion of AI literacy. Article 20 of the Convention explicitly mandates that each signatory party “shall encourage and promote adequate digital literacy and

250. European Commission (2025) *AI Literacy - Questions & Answers*.

251. House of Lords (2024) *The future of news: Impartiality, trust and technology*, Communications and Digital Committee.

252. Council of Europe (2024) *Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law* (CETS No. 225).

digital skills for all segments of the population”,²⁵³ including specific expert skills for those responsible for the identification, prevention and mitigation of risks posed by AI systems. Knowledge of AI systems and an awareness of its human rights implications are therefore essential for safeguarding democratic values and enabling individuals to exercise their fundamental rights in an environment where AI is increasingly pervasive.

In its proposal for a draft Recommendation on AI Literacy, the Council of Europe has outlined a threefold approach structured around three interconnected dimensions: the technological, the practical and the human²⁵⁴ which are intended to serve as a foundation for member states to develop educational programmes and initiatives tailored to their specific contexts. AI literacy in this context refers to teaching and learning about AI, as opposed to the use of AI in education. AI literacy (or education about AI) should address how AI works and how it might be developed (the technological dimension); how AI can be used effectively (the practical dimension); and the impact of AI on humans, human rights, democracy and the rule of law (the human dimension). The discussion paper on the draft Recommendation notes that while technological and practical skills are increasingly being addressed in educational contexts, the human/human rights dimension is rarely addressed in sufficient detail.

Suggested topics that might be addressed in AI literacy (or MIL) education programmes include:

*the impact of AI on human well-being, gender, dignity, inclusion, trust, education, and the digital divide; the implications of AI for human agency, autonomy, privacy, equity, diversity, and discrimination; ‘fake’ news (mis-, dis-, and mal-information), the history of AI (including the role of the military), the ghost workers of AI, surveillance, election interference, and the impact on jobs; the implications for sustainable development and the impact on both the environment and the climate; and the broader implications of AI for human rights, social justice, democracy and the rule of law.*²⁵⁵

Among Council of Europe member states, many countries have begun to address AI and AI literacy within national MIL initiatives, recognising its

253. *Ibid.*

254. Council of Europe (2025) *Discussion paper on Draft Recommendation on AI literacy*. DGII/EDU/DCE(2025)01 rev.

255. *Ibid*, p.4.

growing impact on information consumption and the spread of disinformation.²⁵⁶ For example, Luxembourg has updated its national media literacy framework, “Medienkompass”, to explicitly include data and AI literacy, including the responsible use of AI in schools. Serbia’s *Strategy for the development of artificial intelligence in Serbia (2025-2030)* includes measures for “raising general literacy in the field of artificial intelligence in society” through educational initiatives, public discussions, workshops, and trainings. Sweden’s Agency for the Media launched a national initiative in 2024 to increase public awareness of how AI can be used in the flow of information. In Germany, the “*fragFINN explains AI to children*” project promotes contemporary media literacy messages which aim to provide a basic understanding of AI and raise awareness of targeted fake news created using AI.

While there is a growing recognition among member states of the need to equip citizens with the skills to understand, critically assess, and responsibly interact with AI-systems and AI-generated information, complex global challenges regarding the development of AI and its regulation persist. National MIL strategies must therefore continually monitor these developments and adapt their approaches accordingly.

A note on implementation

The present policy document on *national MIL strategies* synthesises collective contributions to policy development, drawn from the extensive body of Council of Europe instruments and studies dedicated to MIL. The framework presented in this document reflects the inherent complexity and multidimensional nature of MIL and should be viewed within the context of an evolving agenda that remains a high priority at both national and international levels. The primary aim of the document is to outline the key components of a comprehensive national MIL strategy, while also providing practical steps and indicators that serve as tools for integrating its various elements.

Indicators function as both guides for measurement and assessment, and as a summary of the main components of a national strategy. They are not intended as a prescriptive checklist, but as a flexible framework that can be adapted to local circumstances. The survey of member states shows that a wide range of activities supporting MIL are already underway, and many countries have been actively addressing this topic for many years.²⁵⁷ Nevertheless, fragmentation in implementation and a lack of coordinated pol-

256. Council of Europe (2025) *National Strategies for MIL Education: A survey of member states* (unpublished), CDMSI.

257. *Ibid.*

icity development remain obstacles in several countries. Accordingly, the document emphasises an integrative process—bringing together diverse elements in a collective effort to achieve common goals, progressing towards a more cohesive national approach.

From the perspective of member states, this document is intended to provide a foundation for assessing, tailoring, and adapting the individual components to their specific national contexts and local circumstances. Adaptation should be guided by solid research, a fundamental principle underpinning effective MIL strategies. Not all sections of the document will be equally relevant or applicable to every country, given differences in experience and starting points. The accompanying table of indicators can serve as a template for a national review and adaptation process, offering an opportunity to establish a baseline, prioritise focus areas, and support the development of a more holistic and comprehensive approach to MIL, ensuring the strategy is relevant and effective for each country.

Finally, the document underscores the importance of focusing on impact. Hypothesised stages of development for national MIL strategies are included in Appendix 2, along with impact statements that outline potential phases of development across each topic area. These statements offer a framework for evaluating progress and understanding how a country's MIL efforts might evolve. By prioritising impact, member states can move beyond implementing activities in isolation to measuring their effectiveness, shifting the focus to tangible evidence of societal change, in line with the broader objectives of a comprehensive national MIL strategy.

Appendix 1 - Indicators for national MIL strategies

Indicators for national MIL strategies are designed to support the practical implementation of the principles identified in this document. They are presented in the form of descriptors that assist in the practical interpretation of each topic included. The indicators also serve as a checklist to assess overall levels of implementation in accordance with the framework outlined in this guidance. While it serves as a guide for monitoring various aspects of the national MIL strategy, it is not an assessment tool and is not intended to prescribe a specific approach to implementation. The guidelines should be tailored to the unique context of each country, reflecting different starting points and existing levels of MIL provision.

Area	Guidelines	Indicators
<p>Policy and regulatory frameworks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish high-level leadership and strategic vision for MIL. • Formulate a comprehensive, long-term national MIL strategy aligned with international frameworks. • Review and update legislation/regulation to incorporate MIL in line with human rights standards. • Define MIL competences holistically, covering media, digital, information, and AI literacies. • Develop coordinated multi-year action plans with adequate resources. • Create inclusive governance/steering mechanisms (e.g., national task forces). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-level strategic vision and coherent MIL strategy in place. • Lead ministries/agencies formally responsible for MIL strategy. • Strategy presented in public-facing formats and promoted via multiple channels. • MIL explicitly included in education, information, and media policies with legislative backing. • Legal frameworks define MIL clearly and assign responsibilities for implementation. • Evidence of alignment with European/international MIL standards. • NRAs and agencies mandated and resourced to promote MIL. • Regular review of MIL-related laws/regulations (e.g., every 5 years). • National action plans operationalising MIL initiatives, with adequate funding. • Dedicated task force or steering mechanism established for coordination.

Area	Guidelines	Indicators
<p>Strengthening the evidence base</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular needs assessments and baseline studies on citizens’ MIL skills, behaviours, and vulnerabilities. • Establish continuous research on disinformation, hate speech, AI-driven content, and emerging risks. • Support independent research (universities, NGOs) with funding and data access from platforms. • Implement evaluation frameworks to measure effectiveness of MIL initiatives, using standardised tools and comparative methodologies. • Require regular public reporting on MIL, media pluralism, online hate speech, and disinformation trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National baseline studies of MIL knowledge/skills/attitudes conducted regularly. • Needs-based assessments feeding directly into policy design. • Research funded on disinformation, hate speech, algorithmic systems, AI-driven content. • Independent research institutions actively engaged in MIL studies. • Standardised evaluation frameworks adopted to assess MIL project effectiveness. • Regular national reports published on media pluralism, disinformation, hate speech. • Evidence of MIL policies adapting based on monitoring/evaluation results. • International comparability of MIL data ensured (shared methodologies, tools).

Area	Guidelines	Indicators
<p>Integrating MIL across education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate MIL into formal national curricula from primary level upwards, using cross-curricular approaches. • Promote MIL in non-formal and informal education for lifelong learning (including seniors, minorities, underserved groups). • Define and adopt a comprehensive MIL skills and competency framework (including civic, technical, ethical, AI-related). • Provide adequate training for education professionals (teachers, librarians, non-formal educators). • Develop diverse, high-quality educational resources, repositories, and digital learning tools, supported by PSM and regulators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIL included as curricular learning objective across educational levels. • Number/percentage of schools integrating MIL as cross-cutting theme. • Number of subjects including MIL competencies; MIL mandatory, not optional. • Teacher training programmes on MIL and digital citizenship education available annually. • Non-formal MIL programmes (libraries, NGOs, museums) available nationwide. • MIL initiatives specifically targeting hard-to-reach groups (seniors, minorities, disadvantaged groups). • Public registry/database of non-formal MIL initiatives available. • National MIL competency framework adopted; national surveys/tools measuring MIL implemented. • Educators (formal/non-formal) trained in MIL framework (including AI/media ethics modules). • Centralised MIL educational resource repository accessible to public. • Diverse range of materials (lesson plans, games, podcasts, interactive platforms) available. • Standards exist for evaluating quality and effectiveness of MIL resources.

Appendix 2 – Indicators to monitor progress

<p>Empowerment through engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular national awareness initiatives (e.g., on disinformation, hate speech, privacy, elections). • Support community-based initiatives (libraries, museums, community media) to reach wider audiences. • Develop strategies for women and groups who are discriminated against, seldom-heard, in vulnerable or marginalised positions (elderly, minorities, refugees, people with disabilities). • Implement targeted initiatives addressing key issues: freedom of information, threats to journalists, hate speech, discrimination, bullying, gender equality, disinformation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach and engagement metrics for national awareness activities regularly collected. • Evaluation of knowledge/confidence/behavioural changes from MIL awareness initiatives. • Evidence of stakeholder involvement in awareness initiatives. • Qualitative assessments of how well MIL initiatives meet needs of diverse groups. • Existence of MIL programmes tailored to women and groups in positions of disadvantage (elderly, minorities, refugees, disabled). • Data on presence/voice of marginalised groups in public discourse (online/offline). • Surveys measuring citizens' ability to identify/respond to hate speech, harassment, stereotypes.
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<p>Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach involving government, regulators, journalism entities, civil society, academia, tech platforms and the rest of the private sector. • Establish a national MIL forum/network with clear mandate, governance, and resources. • Encourage professional media organisations (PSM, commercial, community) to support MIL initiatives. • Involve private sector (tech platforms, internet intermediaries) in funding, transparency, algorithm accountability, and MIL programmes. • Promote quality journalism through MIL, including education about media ownership, funding, and regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National/regional MIL taskforce or committee with all key stakeholders established. • Governance structure outlining roles and responsibilities in place. • National Knowledge Base/ repository of MIL stakeholders, interventions, resources maintained. • Formal multi-stakeholder MIL network/platform operating with governance and funding. • Number of joint initiatives delivered annually by multiple stakeholders. • Processes in place for managing conflicts of interest (esp. with private sector/media). • PSM and private media have formal MIL policies/strategies adopted and published. • Media outlets producing MIL-related content (fact-check explainers, media ethics programming). • Internet intermediaries contributing anonymised data and insights to MIL education/ research. • National curricula/strategies include content on role of journalism in democracy. • Public awareness activities include a focus on journalist safety and quality journalism.
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<p>Policy and regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>Building a foundation for MIL</p> <p>A formal plan or vision is in place or developing. There are legal definitions and assigned roles. A body (task force, steering group) is created.</p>	<p>Formalising a structured approach for MIL</p> <p>MIL explicitly included in education, information, and media policies with legislative backing. Specific government bodies are officially assigned ownership of the strategy. The national framework demonstrates adherence to international standards.</p>	<p>Operationalising and implementing MIL</p> <p>Detailed plans are in place and are backed by sufficient financial resources. The strategy is being actively communicated to the public. A system is in place to ensure the legal framework remains relevant and up to date.</p>	<p>Sustained Impact</p> <p>Proactive and future-oriented policy development (regular review, foresight, scenario planning). High levels of transparency and accountability. Evaluation shows that the framework is comprehensive, resilient, and capable of adapting to new challenges.</p> <p>There is a robust, funded, and independent research system that informs policy in a transparent and adaptive manner. Research on emerging trends (like AI) is used to create pre-emptive policies. Research and monitoring reveal positive trends on the baseline indicators.</p>
<p>Strengthening the evidence base</p>	<p>A national baseline study of MIL knowledge, skills, and attitudes has been carried out or is in preparation. A consistent tool is in place (or in development) to measure outcomes of individual projects.</p>	<p>Resources are allocated to study the most pressing and contemporary issues in the media and information landscape. Independent research institutions are actively engaged in MIL studies. Research is explicitly used to inform and shape new policy initiatives.</p>	<p>Government or designated body publicly share findings on MIL, increasing transparency and public awareness of these issues. There is evidence of MIL policies adapting based on monitoring/evaluation results. National data is benchmarked internationally.</p>	<p>There is a robust, funded, and independent research system that informs policy in a transparent and adaptive manner. Research on emerging trends (like AI) is used to create pre-emptive policies. Research and monitoring reveal positive trends on the baseline indicators.</p>

	<p>Integrating MIL across education</p>	<p>Building a foundation for MIL</p> <p>Official curriculum documents at various levels (e.g., primary, secondary, higher) now include MIL.</p> <p>A standardised framework for what MIL skills students should have is created, along with initial tools to measure them.</p> <p>A publicly available repository is established to hold MIL learning materials.</p> <p>Formal training opportunities for educators on MIL are offered on a regular basis.</p>	<p>Formalising a structured approach for MIL</p> <p>A significant proportion of schools are actively incorporating MIL into their teaching.</p> <p>MIL is a required component in multiple subjects.</p> <p>A variety of engaging and different types of learning materials are available.</p> <p>MIL is being taught and promoted outside of formal education in multiple settings.</p>	<p>Operationalising and implementing MIL</p> <p>Targeted educational programmes are designed to address the needs of groups not easily reached by standard educational methods.</p> <p>Training for educators is advanced and includes complex topics like artificial intelligence and information ethics.</p> <p>A system is in place to ensure the materials being used are high-quality and achieve learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Sustained Impact</p> <p>There are high participation rates in non-formal MIL programmes, especially from target groups.</p> <p>Resources are regularly updated to reflect technological changes and emerging societal needs.</p> <p>Learning outcomes are consistently sustained through behavioural and attitudinal change.</p>
	<p>Empowerment through engagement</p>	<p>Targeted awareness initiatives are systematically developed and implemented.</p> <p>Mechanisms for measuring behaviour change among citizens concerning MIL are developed and tested.</p>	<p>Community-based initiatives and partnerships are fully leveraged and operational.</p> <p>Regular evaluation assesses behavioural changes resulting from MIL initiatives</p>	<p>MIL interventions demonstrate a sustained, measurable increase in the public's critical autonomy and informed participation in democratic processes.</p>	

	<p>Building a foundation for MIL</p> <p>A formal group is created to bring together representatives from government, media, civil society, and other relevant sectors.</p> <p>The rules of engagement are defined, specifying how the group will operate, who is in charge of which tasks, and how decisions will be made.</p> <p>A central directory is created to keep track of MIL activities.</p>	<p>Formalising a structured approach for MIL</p> <p>Limited but growing stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>The national MIL task force has evolved into a fully functioning, funded network with a clear mandate.</p> <p>Successful collaboration is demonstrated by tangible outputs, e.g. shared projects, joint training programmes, research, awareness activities.</p> <p>There is comprehensive participation from across the media and information ecosystem.</p>	<p>Operationalising and implementing MIL</p> <p>Strong inter-agency coordination and collaboration on MIL activities.</p> <p>Media organisations, both public and private, have integrated MIL principles into their official business strategies.</p> <p>Media outlets actively produce content that helps the public be more media-literate.</p> <p>Online platforms contribute data to help better understand user behaviour and media consumption patterns.</p>	<p>Sustained Impact</p> <p>Collaboration between educators, government, and media has resulted in MIL being integrated into core educational concepts, linking media literacy directly to civic engagement.</p> <p>MIL interventions have successfully shifted public perceptions regarding quality of information.</p> <p>There is a sustained, quantifiable increase in public trust in the media and information ecosystem and democratic institutions</p>
<p>Stakeholder collaboration and partnerships</p>				

Appendix 3 - Overview of existing Council of Europe guidance on MIL

Recommendations relating to MIL

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech encourages member States to ensure that human rights education, education for democratic citizenship and media and information literacy, should be part of the general education curriculum. Member States should also take specific measures to encourage critical thinking, promote equality and intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and strengthen the competences needed to identify and counter hate speech.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression recommends that member states encourage and promote the implementation of effective and tailored digital literacy programmes, in co-operation with all relevant stakeholders, to enable all individuals and groups to benefit from digital technologies for their enhanced exercise and enjoyment of freedom of expression. These should include fostering an understanding of how digital technologies impact freedom of expression and how information, regardless of its quality, is produced, distributed, and processed. Individuals should also learn to safeguard their rights and develop critical attitudes towards the benefits and risks of using the Internet and ICTs. Programmes must raise awareness about personal data processing, how algorithms draw inferences from this data, and how these inferences can influence attitudes and behaviours. Users should be informed about opportunities to control their data use and be aware of available redress mechanisms. The recommendation also emphasises multi-stakeholder collaboration in educational initiatives and the importance of rigorous, independent research to inform policies and distinguish legitimate persuasion from manipulative practices.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on electoral communication and media coverage of election campaigns outlines how media and information literacy is a pre-condition for informed participation in the political life of a country and calls on member States to promote MIL in school curricula, as part of lifelong learning cycles and through support schemes for the media, in particular for public service media and community media.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on principles for media and communication governance contains fifteen procedural and substantive principles that should inform media and communication governance in the Council of Europe member states. These include media and information literacy (MIL) as a vital component for navigating the complexities of the digital environment. It calls for initiatives to strengthen media and information literacy as a measure to mitigate the potential negative effects of disinformation and a lack of transparency in content dissemination. Among the benefits of MIL are empowering users and encouraging responsible use of media and platforms. Empowerment measures include understanding and leveraging tools such as the labelling of reliable content, ensuring transparency in commercial and political advertising, and enhancing the transparency, accountability, and explainability of algorithmic systems.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age calls on member states to create a favourable environment for quality journalism to thrive and to play its essential role in democracy. MIL programmes and activities should help users to better understand how online infrastructure and economy are operated and regulated and how technology can influence choice in relation to media. Development of this knowledge should be prioritised and the development of relevant skills integrated, where possible, in MIL programmes and activities. Future MIL programmes to promote and protect quality journalism should consider how people understand and make choices when dealing with digital media, including awareness of irrationalities, biases, inaccuracies and falsehoods.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education identifies MIL as a key competence of digital citizenship which is categorised under the “Being online” cluster within the “10 digital domains” that underpin digital citizenship. The recommendation stresses that basic functional and digital literacy skills, encompassing MIL, are essential for citizens

to engage effectively in their communities, allowing them to access, read, write, download, post information, and participate in digital societies. The recommendation calls on member states to introduce comprehensive measures to support digital citizenship education, including updating of relevant legislation, involving stakeholders, providing training and creating frameworks for cooperation. It also provides comprehensive guidelines for policy makers and decision-makers, based on research into the competence needs of digital citizens.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism provides the first international definition of sexism and a comprehensive framework for addressing it in all spheres of life, including education, media, and digital environments. It urges governments to adopt legal, policy, and educational measures to eliminate sexist attitudes, language, and behaviours that perpetuate gender inequality. The Recommendation emphasises the need to challenge stereotypes and promote gender-sensitive communication, media literacy, and representation. In relation to MIL, it highlights the importance of equipping individuals—especially young people—with critical thinking skills to recognise, question, and counter sexist messages and portrayals in media and online content. Among its recommended actions are integrating anti-sexism principles into MIL programmes, fostering equality, inclusivity, and respect, empowering citizens to actively contribute to more just and balanced information and communication ecosystems.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment recommends MIL and digital citizenship education to enhance children’s competence to effectively engage with the digital environment and cope with its risks. It recommends the inclusion of digital literacy education in basic education curricula from the earliest years, considering children’s evolving capacities. Such education should impart technical skills for online tool usage and content creation, alongside fostering a critical understanding of the digital environment’s opportunities and risks. It also emphasises the promotion of digital literacy in settings where children use the internet, particularly schools and organisations, and encourages support for parents or carers in enhancing their own digital literacy. It calls for particular efforts to reach vulnerable children who have limited access or skills. Educational programmes, reinforced by MIL, should inform children about their rights, responsibilities, consent, available redress mechanisms, and how to manage potentially harmful online content and behaviours. Civil society and media are encouraged to actively promote MIL and related training initiatives for children, parents, and educators.

CM/Rec(2018)2 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries calls for the implementation of effective, age- and gender-sensitive MIL programmes through formal and non-formal education. MIL programmes are regarded as crucial for enhancing cognitive, technical, social, and critical skills necessary for safe and informed digital engagement. MIL initiatives should ensure users are fully aware of their rights and freedoms, particularly regarding access to effective redress mechanisms against both state authorities and internet intermediaries.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership encourages member states to take account of media pluralism and transparency of media ownership in their coordinated national media literacy programmes. It recommends that member states introduce a comprehensive MIL framework, including by developing appropriate legislation and policies for the promotion of MIL and implementing them together with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes the development of a co-ordinated national media literacy policy and its operationalisation and implementation through annual or multiyear action plans with adequate resources. A key strategy proposed is the creation of a co-ordinated national media literacy network comprising a wide range of stakeholders and the exchange and promotion of positive practices in relevant international forums. Life-long learning strategies, the promotion of MIL by media and by regulatory authorities are also among its recommendations.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)6 on a Guide to human rights for Internet users focuses on providing individual media users with the knowledge and skills to navigate the online media environment through digital education and knowledge. Internet users should have access to digital education and knowledge in order to exercise their rights and freedoms on the Internet. Member states should facilitate access to information and communication technology (ICT) devices and promote education to allow all persons, in particular children, to acquire the skills needed to work with a broad range of ICTs and assess critically the quality of information, in particular that which could be harmful to them. Information literacy is defined as the competent use of tools, development of critical content analysis, and acquisition of communication skills to foster citizenship and responsible ICT engagement.

CM/Rec(2013)1 Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on gender equality and media urges member states to integrate gender equality principles into their media frameworks, including legal measures and media regulation, and to combat gender stereotypes

and gender-based violence in media content. It emphasises balancing the representation of women and men in media work and coverage, promoting non-stereotyped images, and raising awareness about gender equality's importance for democracy and human rights. Promoting gender sensitive media literacy for young people and developing specific awareness raising tools both for media professionals and for the general adult population are among noteworthy recommendations on MIL.

Other texts and studies

Council of Europe (2024) Media literacy strategy for the Audiovisual Council of Moldova (Assessment paper No. BH 8809/2024/54). (Prepared by M. Chapman)

This document supports the work of the national regulatory authority in the Republic of Moldova to promote media literacy in line with its legal obligations and in support of existing frameworks. The actions recommended are intended to build on the already achieved results of a wide range of activities by existing stakeholders in order to promote media literacy to all citizens. To reach this objective, the document supports the development of a Media Literacy Strategy for the Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Moldova. Guiding principles include MIL as a life-long learning process, adopting multi-stakeholder approaches, developing evidence-based interventions, meeting citizens “where they are” and fostering trust through transparency. Key recommendations for the Audiovisual Council of the Republic of Moldova involve strategic collaboration, building a national knowledge base, and delivering user engagement initiatives.

Council of Europe (2020) Supporting quality journalism through media and information literacy (Study prepared by the Committee of Experts on Quality Journalism in the Digital Age; MSI-JOQ) [Study] (Rapporteurs: Martina Chapman and Markus Oermann)

This study was prepared by the Committee of experts on quality journalism in the digital age to support quality journalism through MIL. It recommends fostering MIL's role in protecting quality journalism, shaping programmes to support it, learning from existing practices, fostering collaboration, and evaluating projects. MIL is defined as the cognitive, technical, and social knowledge and skills that empower citizens to access media content effectively, critically analyse information, understand how media is produced, funded, and regulated, and make informed choices. The report emphasises that responsibility for MIL must extend to all stakeholders in order to reach citizens of all age groups. This requires new dissemination networks beyond

formal education and long-term funding commitments from member states. Key findings indicate that MIL projects often under-address skills related to media regulation, funding, data/privacy, and the operation of social/search platforms. Furthermore, older adults (over 65s) are identified as an under-served group, despite being vulnerable to disinformation.

Council of Europe (2022) [The digital era? Also my era! Media and information literacy: A key to ensure seniors' rights to participate in the digital era](#) (Information Society Department, Council of Europe). (Prepared by A. Hermans)

This study identifies MIL as a key competence for participation in the digital era, especially for older persons. MIL encompasses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively access, critically evaluate, use, and create information and media content ethically. It is regarded as essential for active and healthy ageing, social inclusion, and democratic engagement, serving as a lever for informed participation and combating disinformation. The report highlights that older adults, particularly those over 74, are frequently excluded from MIL initiatives and research, exacerbating a digital divide that deepens with age. This omission, partly due to ageism, prevents MIL from securing older persons' human rights and dignified societal participation. The document calls on all stakeholders, including states and civil society, to lead, finance, and implement long-term, age-friendly MIL projects for all citizens, fostering critical digital engagement and ensuring inclusive participation.

Chapman, M., Bellardi, N. & Peissl, H. (2020) [Media literacy for all: Supporting marginalised groups through community media](#) (Background Paper).

This background paper explores how the community media sector promotes MIL and strengthens marginalised communities' participation in the media environment and public discourse. The community media sector regards the promotion of MIL as "core business", empowering groups with access and skills to create their own communication channels. Projects explicitly target marginalised communities, providing training in media production and fostering critical content analysis. The paper recommends that member states develop coordinated national MIL policies, recognising community media and Community Media Associations as main stakeholders, and ensuring they are adequately resourced.

Council of Europe (2018) [Regulatory Authorities for Electronic Media and Media Literacy: Comparative analysis of the best European practices](#) (prepared by R. Tomljenović)

This study analyses the role of MIL in addressing challenges such as disinformation, fake news, algorithmic echo chambers, hate speech, and decreased trust in media. It emphasises media literacy as a key 21st-century skill, vital for critical thinking, informed citizenship, and participation in democratic processes. The study defines the crucial role and obligations of regulatory authorities for electronic media in promoting media literacy. It presents a comparative analysis of various European practices, showcasing models from Finland, Ireland, and Croatia, and the active involvement of their regulatory bodies in media literacy initiatives. The study includes recommendations for Serbia, advocating for a national media literacy policy, establishing a coordinating institutional body, and fostering extensive multi-stakeholder cooperation to develop sustainable media literacy projects.

Council of Europe (2017) Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking (Prepared by C. Wardle & H. Derakhshan)

This report identifies news literacy as a key component in tackling information disorder. It argues for the urgent need to implement news literacy programmes and curricula across all ages, emphasising adaptable research skills, critical assessment of information sources, and understanding the impact of algorithms and artificial intelligence. Programmes should foster “emotional scepticism” to counteract the tendency to be less critical of emotional content. The report also highlights the importance of forensic social media verification skills and statistical numeracy. Education ministries and funding bodies are urged to collaborate internationally on a standardised news literacy curriculum and support initiatives to teach critical information skills, recognising that existing media literacy efforts have sometimes failed to provide sufficient critical research abilities. Ultimately, strengthening information literacy is seen as essential for individuals to navigate polluted information streams and mitigate the threat to democratic principles.

This Council of Europe policy document aims to support governments in developing comprehensive Media and Information Literacy (MIL) National Strategies that effectively strengthen individuals' ability to access, critically evaluate, and responsibly create and share information throughout life.

It focuses on five interconnected areas: establishing strong policy and regulatory MIL frameworks; building a robust evidence base to guide policymaking and assess progress; integrating MIL across formal, non-formal, and lifelong learning, supported by training and quality resources; empowering individuals, including vulnerable and under-represented groups, through awareness-raising and engagement initiatives; and fostering sustained multi-stakeholder cooperation among public authorities, media, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

An accompanying explanatory report and practical indicators provide support for effective implementation and monitoring.

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