



39th EPRA meeting
Budva – 4 - 6 June 2014



Working Group 1
"Empowering Users: Focus on Media Literacy"
Summary

Moderator: *Maja Cappello, EPRA Vice-Chairperson*

Presenters: Ofcom, UK (Ofcom) – *Martina Chapman*

Directors' conference of the Länder Media Authorities, Germany (LFK) – *Kerstin Lange*

Audiovisual Council of Catalonia, Spain (CAC) – *Roger Loppacher I Crehuet*

Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) – *Hüseyin Demirbilek*

European Broadcasting Union (EBU) – *Nathalie Labourdette*

Topics covered:

- What is your authority's formal role in relation to Media Literacy/its other responsibilities such as research, organised events, publications, stakeholder management etc?
- How does your authority fulfil this role?
- Are there any other organisations that have a Media Literacy Policy – how do the different actors in your country collaborate?
- How do you measure the success of Media Literacy initiatives?
- Can you briefly outline a recent initiative, project or piece of research?

Background

Media Literacy (ML) was last addressed at an EPRA meeting in 2008 when very few regulators had a duty in relation to ML and it was a relatively new concept. When ML was chosen as a working group topic for the 39th EPRA, Martina Chapman and Stephen McConnell acted as coordinators from Ofcom.

Twenty-eight regulators responded to a pre-conference survey about regulators and ML. Based on the results, Ofcom produced a comprehensive comparative paper (which was very well received) which showed that a greater number of regulators were becoming more active in this area and activity could be categorised into four key areas:

- Education and awareness

- Research and report writing
- Stakeholder collaboration, and to a lesser extent
- Content classification.

Key findings from the Working Group

- There is no universally agreed definition of ML at a European, or even at a national (or regional!) level. However, there is general agreement on what it *means* – *which is to access, understand, critically evaluate* media. This often, but not universally, includes safe and responsible use. Media Education, normally through schools, is also a key concept, as are creativity and self-expression.
- Addressing the ML needs of children was evident in all presentations. The CAC, RTÜK, and LFK worked in close collaboration with schools. The CAC will be announcing a formal agreement with the dept. of Education later this month. The German Landesmedienanstalten do not have a formal agreement with the Dept. of Education but provide very comprehensive teaching resources for use in schools (hard copies and online games etc.). They also provide resources for parents. The RTÜK also have developed a ML website with resources for children and parents.
- Despite the focus on children's ML in the presentation, during the discussion afterwards it was also acknowledged that ML was a life-long learning activity, particularly in the context of a converged media world and the challenges that regulators face in relation to managing freedom of expression / hate speech issues.
- The BAI (Ireland) noted that ML is about the nature of citizenship, and the understanding and influence that people have on the media. As such regulators have enormous influence, as do other actors such as educators, PSBs, commercial organisations etc.
- However, professionals from all sectors need ML training before they can help to play their role as in promoting ML, e.g. the RTÜK example cited the need to educate media professionals, while the CAC and LFK spoke of the need to make sure that teachers understood what ML was and their role in it.
- The EBU, presented their viewpoint on ML and the programme they were developing to help PSB's understand what ML was and the benefits of promoting ML for PSB's.
- Despite the acknowledgement that ML was an area of growing importance of regulators, funding for this area was problematic for some regulators who were operating on little or no budget.

- Possibly linked to this, stakeholder collaboration was also a key theme, not just with session presenters, but also during the discussion afterwards. Almost everyone was working with stakeholders on this topic, particularly in relation to funding and outreach.
- The question of funding evolved into a question about duty and whether regulators would/could do more in the area if promoting ML became a formal duty for all, with linked budgets. There was also a question from an academic about whether a European policy might help, (with the review of the AVMSD specifically mentioned). However, both Ofcom and LFK pointed out that as ML as such is a complex concept, and closely linked to local cultures, with no universal definition, implementation could prove very difficult – as evidenced by the difficulty in simply measuring ML levels across Europe called for in the current AVMSD. Also, there were risks around positioning regulators as the organisations with key, or even sole, responsibility for promoting ML, when it was clear through the level of stakeholder collaboration that regulators cannot do this alone and a multi-stakeholder approach was essential.
- Maja Cappello indicated that EPRA should follow-up the discussion and may have a role with follow-up activities such as sharing of existing resources, best practice case-studies.
- Ofcom will gather the presentations and circulate them to the members who attended the working group, along with a number of others who expressed interest in the discussion. The EPRA secretariat suggested that the EPRA website may be an appropriate place to bring interested parties together.
- In addition to the presentations during the WG itself, there was also another presentation from the National Media and Infocommunications Authority in Hungary (NMHH) on a new 'Media Literacy Centre' that they have developed in partnership with a wide range of public/commercial stakeholders. The centre is custom-designed and staffed space where groups of young people get hands-on experience of creating media.