

**WORKING GROUP 2:  
LOCAL AND COMMUNITY MEDIA  
REPORT ON LCM COMPARATIVE  
STUDY**

EPRA meeting, Vilnius, 02–04 October 2013

# Introduction

- ❑ *“Local broadcasting increases plurality and offers an important platform to take part in the decision-making process...”*
- ❑ *Non-commercial broadcasting is referred to as the „3rd pillar“ of broadcasting because its function and tasks differ from those of public and private commercial broadcasters.*
- ❑ *Only CM offer free access to resources and production of programs.”*
- ❑ **as stated in the report from the German Land of Saxony**

# Questionnaire - scope

Deals with Local TV and Radio, Community TV and Community Radio:

- Presence
- Recognition
- Licensing
- Requirements
- Relationship with regulatory authority
- Digital switchover
- EPG prominence
- Funding

# Respondents

- Belgium – French Speaking Community
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- France
- Germany – State of Thuringia
- Germany – State of Saxony
- Germany – State of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
- Germany – State of Hesse
- Germany – State of Bavaria
- Germany – State of Bad-Wurtemberg
- Germany – State of North-Rhine-Westphalia
- Ireland
- Norway
- Poland
- Serbia
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

# Presence

- ❖ Various geographical ranges and forms
- ❖ Great diversity
- ❖ Different types of LCM encountered in this study:
  - Local television
  - Independent Local radio
  - Community radio
  - Community television
  - Local public service television
  - Local public service radio
  - State-run open channels
  - Student radio

# Recognition

## Examples:

- France – presence of a few Community TVs without direct legal provisions
- Montenegro – presence of legal provisions, but no effective operation

## Different methods of recognition:

- Switzerland – legal distinction for local and community radio, but not for television
- Ireland – legal framework adapted for all
- France – legal framework defines several categories of operators to better acknowledge LCM
- Czech Republic – definition based on population coverage
- Poland – no legal recognition, but exists category of “social broadcasters”

# Licensing

Licensing processes applying to LCM can be distinct or separate from other actors in several ways. This is often required in order to make sure LCM specificities are taken in consideration during the process. One common and effective way to support LCM is to have a reserved spectrum

- ✓ German State of North-Rhine Westphalia – much simpler procedures for campus radio stations
- ✓ German Landers - open channels – not subject to a licensing procedure
- ✓ Switzerland – radio licensing standardized, but the mandate differs
- ✓ Norway – spectrum capacity reserved for local TV on DVB-T and for analogue FM
- ✓ France – common radio licensing
- ✓ German State of Saxony – common licensing procedure, the law requires that LCM specificities are acknowledged in the licensing process

# Requirements

Usually subject to identical rules, or even tighter regulation



Requirements regarding in-house production or requirements to provide programs that focus on local or regional content



Same local programming or in-house requirements can be subject to controversy and different interpretations:

In Norway, the definition of “local content” to be met by local radio operators was deliberately defined broadly, and has caused some debate concerning grey areas. The interpretation of what is local and what is not is gradually set by practice from the Media Authority’s supervision of the local broadcasters.

In Denmark, it is reported that many Community Television operators seem to misuse the system, as it turns out they do not make the amount of in-house productions they claimed they would.



# Monitoring & sanctions

Regulatory authorities faced with several issues:

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- 1. the actors being remote, catching their signal may incur additional costs
- 2. the actors being numerous, human-led monitoring tasks are resource consuming
- 3. the actors being small, their impact on the general public is reduced and the outcome of monitoring is thus less cost-efficient

Monitoring of LCM usually less intense

In some cases, technical solution used for remote monitoring

Web broadcasting

In most cases, uniform set of sanctions

# Relationship with regulatory authority

Depending on the situations, regulation authorities may take special measures to deal with:

- ❑ small media outlets
- ❑ remote actors
- ❑ services not run by permanently appointed staff
- ❑ services run by volunteers

Modes of communication:

- ❑ regular meetings
- ❑ decentralized offices
- ❑ existence of federations
- ❑ representative bodies for local media, some as co-regulators

# Digital switchover

The attitude depends on their awareness and on how well their interests are integrated:

- indifference
- threats due to lack of integration
- opportunities

Important not to discriminate smaller actors in DSO plans

The risk of excluding them from digital landscape

Ensure digital capacities for them for later time

# EPG prominence

Important issues:

- Distribution via cable/satellite
- Fair positioning in Electronic Program Guides (EPG)

“Must carry rule”

EPG regulation

# Funding

Issues to consider:

- ❖ protection of local actors against local advertisement by national media
- ❖ audience surveys
- ❖ rules on commercial communications

# Funding – continued

- **Direct funding**
- **Selective funding**
- **Indirect funding through third party**
- **License fee exemption or reduction**
- **Funding by local public authorities**
- **Non-financial support**

# Conclusions

Picture is too varied to be reasonably depicted

More detailed research desirable

Good understanding of LCM specificities can make a difference in supporting diversity and pluralism

Community Media Forum Europe's:  
Country Ranking of Community  
in Europe for 2012

[www.cmfe.eu](http://www.cmfe.eu)

# THANK YOU

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