

**27th EPRA meeting,
Riga – 14 – 16 May 2008**

**Media Literacy – what role for the regulators?
Background paper EPRA/2008/02
Emmanuelle Machet, EPRA Secretariat**

Introduction

Though well-known for many years in the area of education, the concept of 'Media Literacy' has only relatively recently emerged in the terminology dealing with the regulation of audiovisual media services and new online media in Europe. Generally mentioned in close connection with 'co and self-regulation', it has become one of the 'mandatory concepts' to be included in any new European initiative dealing with media regulation and policy.

Several factors may explain the current popularity enjoyed by this concept. The first element is the development of new media services and online media. This has been acknowledged as an environment where consumers are increasingly active and taking greater responsibility for their media consumption (also described as "pull" rather than "push" media). This new media environment may challenge some aspects of traditional statutory regulation, especially with regard to its practical application. There is also a widespread recognition of the fact that the legal framework alone cannot guarantee an effective protection of minors.

The second element, which is closely linked to the first, is the change of paradigm in media regulation, with the development of co and self-regulatory schemes alongside traditional statutory regulation. One important precondition for the success of self and co-regulatory initiatives is the awareness and active participation of media users, notably of parents and guardians. This in turn requires the development of media literacy among the entire population.

Media literacy is a multifaceted topic, encompassing the notions of access, analysis, evaluation and content creation. As such, the subject of media literacy has never been explicitly treated during EPRA meetings. However, some related aspects have indirectly been discussed, either in the context of the protection of minors (see notably the discussions on rating systems in Stockholm (2004), Naples and Nicosia (2003)) or evoked in the context of regulating content in the new media environment (see for instance the debates in Dubrovnik).

Although several comparative studies dealing with media literacy in Europe have been conducted, very little has been written on the specific role played by broadcasting regulators in the promotion of media literacy so far. The present paper, after briefly retracing the milestones in the policy introduced by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, aims at providing a clearer picture of the range of current activities conducted by media regulatory bodies in Europe in the area of media literacy.

The present paper is based on the answers to a questionnaire from the EPRA Secretariat (annexed) by the following EPRA members : the VRM and CSA (BE - Belgium), CEM (Bulgaria), CRTA (CY - Cyprus), the Council for Radio and TV Broadcasting (CZ - Czech Republic), DLM (DE, Germany), The radio and Television Board (DK - Denmark), the Catalan CAC and the Navarran CoAN (ES - Spain), CSA (FR - France), the Ofcom (GB - Great-Britain), the National Radio and Television Commission ORTT (HU - Hungary), BCI (IE - Ireland), The Second Authority for Television and Radio (IL - Israel), the Radio and Television Commission (LT - Lithuania), the Conseil des programmes (LU - Luxembourg), the Broadcasting Authority (MT - Malta), The Commissariaat voor de Media CvdM (NL - Netherlands), the Norwegian Media Authority (NO - Norway), ERC (PT - Portugal), the National Audiovisual Council (RO - Romania), The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RS - Serbia), The Swedish Broadcasting Commission (SE - Sweden), the Council for Broadcasting and retransmission (SK - Slovakia)¹. In addition, the authorities from Austria and Azerbaijan reported that were not in the position to answer the questionnaire as media literacy is currently not part of their remit.

¹ The EPRA Secretary would like to take the opportunity to thank the members for their precious contribution to this paper. Special thanks to Monica Arino and Susanne Nikoltchev, for their very valuable help in the drafting of the questionnaire.

1. Media Literacy and Europe - Initiatives at the EU and Council of Europe level

Media Literacy and the EU – A long history of actions

The European Commission has more than ten years of history of activity in this field. Early steps, in the area of education, can be retraced to a White Paper of 1995 on *Teaching and learning: Towards the Learning Society*² which was followed by an action plan *Learning in the Information Society*³ for a European initiative in schools.

With regard to Internet literacy, a decisive milestone was the adoption, in 1999, of an Action Plan on the promotion of safer use of the Internet by combating illegal and harmful content on global networks (*The Safer Internet Action Plan*⁴). This plan, initially scheduled for the period 1999-2002 was extended to 2003 and 2004 and continues until 2008 as *Safer Internet Plus*.

The Commission has also recently presented a Decision on a multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the Internet and other communication technologies, as a follow up of the Safer Internet Plus Programme. The plan would have an overall budget of 55 million euros for a period of five years, and spans a range of activities, including: harmonisation of approaches in creating a safer online environment; encouraging stakeholders to develop adequate self-regulatory systems; involving children and young people more to better understand their needs; increasing information about adequate tools for dealing with harmful content online; ensuring compatibility between approach taken in Europe and internationally.

With regard to comparative research, a study on *Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe*⁵ was commissioned in May 2006 in order to map out current practices in the implementation of media literacy. This study includes some information, though very sketchy, on the involvement of regulatory authorities in the promotion of media literacy.

The Commission's next step, in October 2006, was the launch of a public consultation on media literacy. It is worth remarking that three media regulators (Ofcom – UK, DLM – DE, NAC – RO) submitted responses to this consultation⁶. A Media Literacy Expert Group was also established at this time - including one media regulator⁷.

The EU legal framework relating to content also deals with media literacy. The **Recommendation on the protection of Minors**⁸ first adopted in 1998 and revised in 2006 recognises that *"the changing media landscape, resulting from new technologies and media innovation makes it necessary to teach children and also parents, teachers and trainers to use audiovisual and on-line information services effectively"* and recommends that Member States (promote) *"action to enable minors to make responsible use of audiovisual and on-line information services, notably by improving the level of awareness among parents, teachers and trainers of the potential of the new services and the means whereby they may be made safe for minors, in particular through media literacy or media education programmes and, for instance, by continuous training within school education"*.

² *Teaching and learning: Towards the Learning Society*, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/official/keydoc/lb-en.pdf>

³ *Learning in the Information Society: Action Plan for a European Education Initiative* (1996-1998), http://aei.pitt.edu/1200/01/education_gp_follow_COM_96_471.pdf

⁴ *Decision no 276/1999/EC* of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 January 1999 adopting a Multiannual Community Action Plan on promoting safer use of the Internet by combating illegal and harmful content on global networks, http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/docs/html/decision/276_1999_EC.htm

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/studies/study.pdf

⁶ Answers from Ofcom (UK), DLM (DE), NAC (RO), see:

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/contributions/68_88_lmnpqr/81_51_ofcom.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/contributions/32_50_pdf/dlm.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/contributions/68_88_lmnpqr/86_01_rom_aud.pdf

⁷ i.e. Robin Blake, Ofcom, for the complete list see:

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/expert_group.pdf

⁸ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and on-line information services industry, (2006/952/EC), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:378:0072:0077:EN:PDF>

In recognition of the need for people to exercise informed choices and to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the new media environment, the recently approved text of the **Directive on Audiovisual Media Services** also contains a recital referring to media literacy (Recital 37) and its Article 26 sets out a reporting obligation for the Commission to measure levels of media literacy in all the Member States.

As a preparation for the implementation of the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive, the Commission has launched, in April 2008, a call for tender for a study to assess media literacy levels⁹. This study will feed into the report foreseen in the AVMS Directive, which the Commission is to table at the latest four years after the adoption of the Directive.

The latest milestone to date is a Communication of December 2007 entitled *A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment*¹⁰ in which the Commission calls on Member States to: (...)

"- encourage the authorities in charge of audiovisual and electronic communication regulation to get more involved and to cooperate in the improvement of the various levels of media literacy defined above;

- promote systematic research into and regular observation of and reporting on the different aspects and dimensions of media literacy;

- develop and implement codes of conduct and, as appropriate, co-regulatory frameworks in conjunction with all interested parties at national level, and promote self-regulatory initiatives".

Council of Europe's policy: focus on Internet Literacy

In contrast to the EU, the Council of Europe's policy seems to be, at least recently, more focused on Internet literacy. A new dedicated Internet site was recently launched by the Media and Information Society Division on the occasion of the Safer Internet day¹¹.

With regard to *concrete actions*, an online game for children on Safe surfing on the Internet¹² was launched at the end of last year. Also of interest is the Internet Literacy Handbook¹³, described as "a guide for parents, teachers and young people with practical tips and suggestions for classroom activities and getting the most of the Internet". A European Workshop on Media Literacy development also took place in Graz (Austria) on 5-7 December 2007.

Concerning *standard setting actions* in the field of empowerment with regard to information and communication services, a *Declaration* of 1999 stressed the importance of developing skills, in particular through training. This was followed by a Parliamentary Assembly *Recommendation on Media Education* in 2000¹⁴, a *Recommendation on education for democratic citizenship* in 2002¹⁵ and, in 2005, by a Resolution and an Action Plan¹⁶ regarding the need to promote media literacy "which involves active and critical use of all media".

As a follow-up of these documents and in response to a call for action by the 46 Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe during their Summit in Warsaw in May 2005 to step up action on children's media literacy, a *Recommendation on empowering children in the new information and communications environment*¹⁷ was adopted in 2006. This text underlines the

⁹http://ted.europa.eu/Exec?DataFlow=ShowPage.dfl&Template=TED/N_one_result_detail_curr.htm&docnumber=89657-2008&docId=89657-2008&StatLang=EN

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment, December 2007, Com (2007) 833 final, http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/com/en.pdf

¹¹ http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/StandardSetting/InternetLiteracy/default_en.asp

¹² *Through the WildWebWoods*: <http://www.wildwebwoods.org/>

¹³ *Internet Literacy Handbook*: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/StandardSetting/InternetLiteracy/hbk_en.asp

¹⁴ [Recommendation 1466](http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=http%3A%2F%2Fassembly.coe.int%2FDocuments%2FAdoptedText%2Fta00%2FEREC1466.htm) (2000) on media education, <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=http%3A%2F%2Fassembly.coe.int%2FDocuments%2FAdoptedText%2Fta00%2FEREC1466.htm>

¹⁵ Recommendation Rec (2002)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on education for democratic citizenship, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 October 2002, [http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec\(2002\)12&Language=lanEnglish&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75](http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec(2002)12&Language=lanEnglish&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75)

¹⁶ [http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/media/4_documentary_resources/DH-MM\(2006\)004_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/media/4_documentary_resources/DH-MM(2006)004_en.pdf)

¹⁷ [Recommendation Rec\(2006\)12](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/media/4_documentary_resources/DH-MM(2006)004_en.pdf) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2006,

importance of ensuring that children become familiarised and skilled from an early stage in their lives as an integral part of their school education. It also stresses that the process of learning and providing children with skills to be active, critical and discerning in their use of these technologies and services must be done hand-in-hand with learning about how to exercise their rights and freedoms on the Internet.

More recent texts include the Committee of Ministers Recommendation on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet in 2007¹⁸ which states that: "*particular attention should be paid to the right to education, including media and information literacy*"; as well as a Recommendation of 26 March 2008 on the use of Internet filters¹⁹. The appended guidelines contain specific guidance to member states emphasising the importance of empowering users to understand and effectively use filters.

2. Defining Media Literacy

The first and mandatory step in any research dealing with media literacy is to define the concept in order to provide clarity as to the scope encompassed by the paper. Though increasingly used in the context of media regulation, media literacy is not a legal concept and is as a rule not defined in media and broadcasting laws. There is no single, agreed definition of media literacy, even though there appears to be some consensus on the aspects covered by it.

The recent Communication of the Commission on a European approach to media literacy defines media literacy "*as the ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts. This definition has been validated by a large majority of the respondents to the public consultation and by the members of the Media Literacy Expert Group*".

A more succinct, and certainly better formulated alternative, has been proposed by Sonia Livingstone as: "*the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts*", or in the slightly rephrased version preferred by the British Ofcom: as "*the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts*".

These definitions emphasise the four (sometimes summarised in three) components of this multifaceted concept, encompassing the notion of access, analysis, evaluation and content creation. It has the advantage of applying equally well to print, broadcasting and the Internet.

The survey among EPRA members reveals that, as a rule, regulatory authorities have not adopted or coined a specific definition of media literacy. This is for instance the case in Bulgaria, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Sweden.

Most of these regulatory authorities nevertheless mention that specific definitions of media literacy exist in academia in their respective countries. They often roughly correspond to the four-component definition, as in Sweden, Denmark or Romania.

Other closely related concepts or sub-definitions are used in some countries or regions. As an example, the terms '*education in communication*', '*media education*' and '*digital literacy*' are employed in Catalonia, along with media literacy. In the Netherlands, the Council of Culture favours the wording of *mediawijsheid* (media wisdom), referring to the "*knowledge, skills and mentality of citizens in order to be aware, critical, safe and active and therefore to be able to live in a complex, changing society where media are omnipresent*".²⁰

<http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=Rec%282006%2912&Sector=secCM&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>,

See also: <http://merlin.obs.coe.int/iris/2006/10/article4.en.html>

¹⁸ Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet, adopted on 7 November 2007,

<http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1207291&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

¹⁹ [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2008\)6](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to promote the respect for freedom of expression and information with regard to Internet filters, adopted on 26 March 2008

[http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2008\)6&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75](http://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2008)6&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75)

²⁰ *Mediawijsheid staat voor 'het geheel van kennis, vaardigheden en mentaliteit waarmee burgers zich bewust, kritisch en actief kunnen bewegen in een complexe, veranderlijke en fundamenteel gemedialiseerde wereld'*

Not surprisingly however, the regulatory authorities that seem the more active in the field of media literacy are also those who have conducted in-depth research on the terminology to use. In the UK, the (above-mentioned) definition used by Ofcom was agreed following an extensive consultation in June 2004. Ofcom's subsequent statement on its strategy and priorities for the promotion of media literacy explains the rationale behind Ofcom's choice of definition²¹.

In Germany, media literacy is understood by the regional media regulatory authorities as "a competent, critical and conscious handling of media and the knowledge of chances and risks of media reception". "It comprises a multitude of competence levels – media literacy is also sense, reception, technology and participation literacy." "The main reason for the promotion of media literacy by the media authorities is to support the user, to transform him from being largely the object of media activity to being, as far as possible, the subject thereof. Literacy is therefore not solely directed toward abilities in dealing with media, but rather equally toward competence in and responsibility for one's own actions and behaviour."

The definition used by the Second Authority for Television and Radio in Israel relies on the four elements identified by Livingstone. Their approach to media literacy "combines protective aspects (the need to protect young people from offensive content) and a wider definition of 'literacy' that refers to the function of the media in creating individual and communal identities and promoting critical citizenship"²². The Norwegian Media Authority also relies on these four components, slightly rephrased as "the process of accessing, analysing, evaluating and creating messages on a wide variety of media modes genres and forms" .

The Catalonia Broadcasting Council (CAC) in Spain uses both terminologies of 'media literacy' (Livingstone's definition) and 'education in communication'. 'Education in communication' contains both educational and communicative dimensions. It is an extremely broad concept that could refer to any kind of communication.

3. The promotion of media literacy as a statutory duty of regulatory authorities

According to the 26 responses to the questionnaire, only the British Ofcom and the Landesmedienanstalten - the 14 regional regulatory authorities in Germany – are currently under a legal duty to promote media literacy.

In the UK, Ofcom has a duty to promote media literacy under section 11 of the Communications Act 2003²³:

(1) It shall be the duty of OFCOM to take such steps, and to enter into such arrangements, as appear to them calculated—

(a) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public understanding of the nature and characteristics of material published by means of the electronic media;

(b) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, a better public awareness and understanding of the processes by which such material is selected, or made available, for publication by such means;

(c) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which access to material published by means of the electronic media is or can be regulated;

(d) to bring about, or to encourage others to bring about, the development of a better public awareness of the available systems by which persons to whom such material is made available may control what is received and of the uses to which such systems may be put; and

(e) to encourage the development and use of technologies and systems for regulating access to such material, and for facilitating control over what material is received, that are both effective and easy to use.

It is worth mentioning that the BBC also has a duty to promote media literacy as noted in the agreement which complements the BBC Charter that provides the statutory basis for the BBC's existence²⁴.

²¹ See: http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/strategymedialit/ml_statement/ section 2

²² Buckingham, D. Domaille, K. *Where are we going and how can we get there?* General findings from the UNESCO Youth Media studies Survey, 2001.

²³ see: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030021_en_3#pt1-pb4

²⁴ see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/framework/charter.html>

Media literacy is one of the central tasks of the 14 Media Authorities in Germany. The State Media Laws include the regulation for funding media literacy and therewith the task to organise the promotion of media literacy. The Media Authorities devote various methods and monetary resources to this task. The concrete implementation depends heavily on the respective legal task, the existing media pedagogical situation in the state and on cooperation with the responsible Ministries for Education, Culture and Social Affairs, as well as with other local educational institutions. The handling of common matters in the area of media literacy, is also laid down in the "*Basic Principles for the Collaboration of the Association of Media Authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany (ALM)*" – the ALM Statute – from 20th January 2004²⁵.

Media literacy might increasingly becoming a more formal aspect of the activity of other regulatory authorities. For example, in Ireland, under the Broadcasting Bill 2008 – a piece of legislation yet to be enacted, it is envisaged that the new Broadcasting Authority of Ireland will have a role in the promotion of media literacy. In the absence of the final published version of the 2008 Bill, and without its enactment, no formal plan or determination of the manner in which the media literacy role for the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has been reached.

In France, it is reported that the outcome of the mission on media literacy very recently commissioned by the Ministry of Culture may lay the basis for a more developed role of the CSA with regard to media literacy, notably concerning the Internet.

Other regulatory authorities report that whereas they are currently not subject to any legal duty to promote media literacy, other legal provisions, despite being mostly confined to television and radio programme content, may indirectly contribute to greater media literacy. This may include provisions on the protection of minors, especially programme rating and classification obligations (as in France or Bulgaria), obligations to foster good citizenship and strengthen values of democracy and humanism as well as maintain broadcasts aimed at educating the general public and specific groups (as in Israel), or requests to create "opportunities for new services to develop..." or to avoid: "...unnecessary constraints on increasing the range, variety and quality of programmes ..." (as in Malta). Similarly, it was remarked that the "reports on the monitoring of the broadcasters' operation, which cover the irregularities, possible abuses and generally all problematic situations in the professional sense may contribute to the increase in media literacy regardless of the interpretation of the meaning of the concept" (as in Serbia).

Several regulatory authorities, such as the Czech RRTV, the Hungarian ORTT, the Navarra CoAN, the Catalan CAC, The Broadcasting Council of Lithuania, the Romanian NAC, the Norwegian NMA, CNP from Luxembourg, ERC from Portugal while acknowledging no legal duty, claim that they are active in the promotion of media literacy *on a voluntary basis*.

As an example, the Norwegian Media Authority actively promotes media literacy as part of the awareness node in Norway, which is linked to the EU Safer Internet plus programme.

In Malta, even though the Broadcasting Authority has no official media literacy policy, it has always encouraged training in the audiovisual sector and promoted programmes in media literacy.

Several regulators however, report that - taken in a stricter meaning of *promotion* and excluding protection of minors aspects - they are not at all active, even on a voluntary basis in the area of media literacy. This is the case of the KommAustria, the Belgian regulatory authorities (CSA of the French speaking Community of Belgium and Flemish VRM), the Danish Radio and Television Board, the Dutch Commissariaat voor de Media, the Swedish Broadcasting Commission, the Serbian Republic Broadcasting Agency or the Slovak Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission.

The responses to the questionnaire reveal that the main actor in charge of promoting media literacy is the Ministry of Education in the respective countries, as is the case for instance in Bulgaria, Czech republic, Denmark, Belgium, France (together with the national school system), Hungary, Israel, Malta, Norway or Portugal. In some countries, ad hoc commissions, often under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, have been established. *The Media Council for children and young people*²⁶ in Denmark which deals with children competent use of internet, *The Council for Media Education*²⁷ in Belgium (Walloon) or the *Special Commission for Media Education*²⁸, an

²⁵ see http://www.alm.de/fileadmin/Download/Gesetze/alm_statut_200104.pdf

²⁶ <http://portal.medieraadet.dk>

²⁷ <http://www.cfwb.be/cem>

advisory body of Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic can be mentioned at this point. In Sweden, initiatives on media literacy are not taken by any authority. The schooling system and the universities are providing classes and are working for media literacy from within the education system. These initiatives are not ordered by any government function but exist purely to meet the needs to teach students media literacy.

In some countries, such as Luxembourg, Lithuania or Serbia, it appears that to date no authority has officially been designated to deal with the promotion of media literacy.

4. Focus on the role played by regulators

As mentioned above, only a few regulators have a legal duty to promote media literacy while the majority may be active on a voluntary basis, often though not exclusively through the objective of protection against possible harm from the media. Owing to the blurred outlines of the concept of media literacy, it appears that several regulators included in the responses their actions with regard to the protection of minors while others based their replies on a stricter approach to media literacy, a methodological caveat may therefore be necessary in the interpretation of the answers to question 3 pertaining to the role played by regulators.

Most of the regulatory authorities report that they **support concrete initiatives aimed at improving media literacy**, as in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Spain (CAC - Catalonia) and the UK.

Promoting awareness of the need for media literacy also seems a widespread role as in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain (Catalonia and Navarra). In Romania, the National Audiovisual Council has the initiative in collaboration with the civil society for awareness raising campaigns on the influence of the television on children, targeted at parents.

Conducting research in the field of media literacy also seems a rather common task of regulatory bodies as mentioned by the authorities in Israel, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal, Spain (Navarra and Catalonia) and the UK. In Ireland the BCI is currently funding a piece of research on media literacy.

Developing media literacy indicators however seems a less usual role for regulators and is only mentioned by the authorities in Germany, Israel, Spain (Navarra and Catalonia) and the UK.

The role of **setting or coordinating the policy** in the field of media literacy is also mentioned by the authorities in Spain (Navarra and Catalonia) and the UK. In Cyprus, the *"CRTA in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, and the competent Ministry for Media policy issues, has taken the role of coordinating different bodies and interested parties and the responsibility to proceed, at a certain stage, with a public consultation in order to define and establish the policy concerning the implementation and promotion of media literacy on the island as well as a programme of activities."*

Drawing up Codes of practice is mentioned by the authorities in France, Lithuania and Spain (Catalan CAC).

Drawing up recommendations is mentioned by the authorities in Bulgaria, France, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Spain (Catalonia and Navarra), the UK.

An additional role mentioned by several authorities, such as in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic or Lithuania, is the **organisation of workshops and seminars dealing with media literacy**. Under a bilateral Agreement with the Vilnius University Institute of Journalism, the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania organises seminars for the future journalists on the issue of media literacy twice a year. The students are shown extracts from different programmes that have violated the law; they are encouraged to find the violations and discuss the cases. In their work they are assisted by lawyers from the Lithuanian Commission.

²⁸ <http://www.minedu.sk>

5. Funding for media literacy-related activities

As a rule, regulatory authorities do not appear to get external funding for their media literacy related activities. Their income, either from the state budget, derived from the licence holders or from the licence fee, does not seem to be specifically earmarked for media literacy actions.

In Spain (Catalonia), media literacy activities are self-financed by the Catalonia Broadcasting Council (CAC) and represent approx. 70.000 EUR per year.

In Israel (Second Authority for Radio and Television), there is no external funding for the activities. One section of the annual budget of the Strategy and Research division is dedicated to media literacy (as part of the annual plan). Another part of the funding comes from the production department (TV division) which dedicates funding to support AV production by young people and for young audience.

In the UK, Ofcom's work to promote media literacy is part funded by grant-in-aid from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). An additional sum is derived from UK broadcasting licence holders. In Germany, the Media Authorities receive funding from the licence fee. The funding rate depends on the number of licence fee payers in every state. The Media Authorities also appropriate different funds for the promotion of media literacy.

6. Partnerships with other stakeholders with the view to promoting media literacy

Media literacy is a multifaceted concept, encompassing technical, social and cultural abilities. As a consequence, there are many stakeholders who have a key role to play in its promotion and engage in partnerships, or interaction with media regulatory authorities.

This includes working with bodies ranging from:

- Government departments/ministries:

This is the case for instance in the Czech republic or Germany (Ministry of Culture); Norway, Israel, Luxembourg and Romania (Ministry of Education); the UK (DCMS, Home Office); Spain (Government of Navarra). In Cyprus, the Ministry of Interior is a major stakeholder especially in formulating media policy issues; while other institutional stakeholders are the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Office of Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation.

- Broadcasters/content producers:

This is the case in the UK, where all major broadcasters are involved in actions aiming at promoting media literacy; France, where broadcasters are consulted before the adoption of decisions or recommendations in the field of the protection of minors, Cyprus with cooperations between the regulatory authority CRTA and the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (PSB) as well as with other commercial broadcasters.

- Universities/ research organisations/academic experts:

The Catalonia Broadcasting Council (ES) has interactions with universities (*Pompeu Fabra University* and the *Autonomous University of Barcelona*) with the aim of promoting media literacy. In Germany, media regulatory authorities engage in numerous cooperations with other organisations and institutes like Universities (for example the *Media University for Children*²⁹) or the *German Film Institute*³⁰. The Lithuanian Broadcasting Council has an agreement with the *Vilnius Institute of Journalism*. The Portuguese ERC established a partnership with the *Universidade do Minho* (University of Minho) and the *CIES/ISCTE* (Investigation and Sociology Studies Center of ISCTE).

- Schools/educators:

In Germany, the regional *Media Authorities* see the schools as being important actors and partners, who are supported through media literacy activities. With this background, they undertake various activities to promote media literacy in the school environment, whereby the implementation and the extent differ in the various federal states³¹. The *CNP* in

²⁹ <http://kindermedienuni.net>

³⁰ <http://www.deutschesfilminstitut.de>

³¹ A link list of institutions acting on the field of media literacy is available under: <http://www.alm.de/271.html>

Luxembourg also cooperates with schools. The *Norwegian Media Authority* has a cooperation with some publishers of educational material.

- **Civil society/quangos** (quasi NGOs)

In the UK, Ofcom has established cooperations with organisations such as the *Broadband Stakeholders Group* or the *Media Literacy Task Force*, as well as with other bodies in the UK's constituent nations (*Digital Inclusion Unit*, *DFPNI*, *Scottish screen*, *Welsh Media Literacy Network* and other groups (*NIACE*, *Digital Unite*).

In Hungary, the ORTT is supporting, both financially and with expertise, an initiative called *Media Tudor*³². This emulates Media Smart whose aim is to address children between six and eleven years old. The body of the organisation created and published workbooks which can be used in teaching. Media Tudor also set up a television advertising campaign, which draws attention to the well-known fact that you should not believe everything which appears on the television.

With regard to the specific issue of programme classification, the Commissariaat voor de Media, the Dutch regulatory authority reported that it was recently given the task to perform a 'meta supervision' of the work conducted by the NICAM, the Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audio-visual Media (who is behind the well-known *Kijkwijzer*, a cross media rating system). Every year, NICAM will have to report to the CvdM on how it safeguards the quality of the classification. Also NICAM should demonstrate to the CvdM to what extent the classifications are reliable, valid, stable, consistent and precise. Further arrangements regarding this check by the CvdM have been laid down in a supplement to a covenant between both parties.

The results from the questionnaire emphasise that the establishment of partnerships and cooperations with other stakeholders with a view to promoting media literacy is of central importance for regulatory authorities, either because they are only marginally active in the area or because, on the contrary, they assume a leading role in the policy developed. The latter applies to Ofcom who acknowledges that "*one of the key strands of work is connecting, partnering and signposting*".

In Israel, the Second Authority for Radio and Television, through the creation of a network of stakeholders, is planning to publish, in the near future, an invitation to join the network, for relevant people and organisations. The *CRTA* from Cyprus is currently looking into the possibility of cooperating with other European regulatory authorities on the issue of media literacy.

7. Focus of work

The answers to the questionnaire reveal great differences as to the focus of the activities conducted by regulatory authorities in the area of the promotion of media literacy. Whereas some authorities have adopted a clear focus, others such as the German Media Authorities and Ofcom consider that media literacy should encompass the entire population as well as all media.

- **Authorities with focus on a specific medium**

The *SATR* from Israel, as a regulator of commercial TV and radio, does not deal with internet, therefore in supporting and initiating projects tends to focus more on television. Similarly, media literacy initiatives from the Catalan *CAC* are focused on TV. In contrast, the *Norwegian Media Authority's* main focus is on the use of the Internet for children and youngsters in the age group from 8 to 18 years.

- **Authorities with focus on a specific age group**

As a rule, regulatory authorities, also considering their traditional mission in the field of the protection of minors, tend to particularly focus on children and young people. This is the case in the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Romania, Spain (*Navarran CoAN*, *Catalan CAC*), France). In contrast, the *Lithuanian Broadcasting Council* addresses its media literacy activities to future journalists.

- **Authorities with focus on a particular issue**

It follows from the previous paragraph that regulatory authorities, as a rule, tend to predominantly focus on protection – rather than promotion, creative or cultural aspects, as

³² <http://www.mediatudor.hu>/Media Smart Hungary Kht.

illustrated for instance in Spain (*Navarran CoAN*). For the *Norwegian media authority*, digital inclusion and protection aspects go hand in hand. The *SATR* from Israel, however, “focus on the “promote” part of the definition, i.e. on the function of the media in creating individual and communal identities and promoting critical citizenship (alongside existing protective functions). A large part of (their) current work is related to the production function, unique to the *Second TV & Radio Authority*: as the agency produces broadcasts which fulfil a public interest³³ (mainly documentaries)”.

- **Authorities with no focus**

Authorities with no current focus are either authorities who are still about to define their policy (as in Cyprus or Portugal) or authorities for whom media literacy is a key role and whose activities need to be all-encompassing (UK, Germany).

In Cyprus, since the issue is still under examination, “the *CRTA* does not have a specific focus, either on a medium, an age group or on a particular issue. What can be said with certainty, all *Electronic mass media* including mobile TV and Internet will be targeted. *CRTA* will also focus especially on children and the elderly”.

“The *Portuguese Regulatory Entity* was established only two years ago, and is still taking the first steps in promoting media literacy. The *Media Reception Study*, was planned in order to provide the essential data about the impact of the media in the general public, which will be decisive to organize future actions with the aim of promoting media literacy”.

From the point of view of the *German Media Authorities*: “the promotion of media literacy must encompass the entire population as well as all media. Encouraged are predominantly **action-oriented projects**, aiming to convey media literacy. The competent use of media by children and adolescents takes centre of media education. The *Media Authorities* promote skills in regard to media production especially for minors by means of diverse kindergarten and school projects. Projects which are focussing on radio and television can be supported as well as those which are focussing on internet or computer. One of the most important tasks of the next years is to make children and adolescents fit in the use of computer, internet, mobile phones, user-generated content etc. But also parents and teachers have to be informed about the potentials and risks of using these new media offerings. Skills in regard to media production are, from the point of view of the *Media Authorities*, an essential attribute of media literacy. The *Media Authorities* promote participative media work in the form of citizens’ media (citizens’ television and citizens’ radio) and university broadcasting”.

8. Recent/important actions of regulatory authorities

The EPRA survey gathered a large number of examples of recent or key actions, either conducted or supported by media regulatory authorities in the field of media literacy. They were unfortunately too numerous to be all mentioned in this paper. The overview below presents a representative selection of them.

Research/publications/databases:

- *The Research Media Literacy Audit*³⁴ – a large-scale research report assessing media literacy levels in the UK is to be published by Ofcom in Summer 2008.
- *Social Networking*³⁵ – qualitative and quantitative research report into public use of Social Networking Sites was published on 2 April 2008 by Ofcom.
- The “*Media Reception Study*” is the outcome of a partnership between the Portuguese regulator ERC and CIES/ISCTE (Investigation and Sociology Studies Center of ISCTE). The guidelines of this study are both the qualitative and quantitative characterization of television, radio and press audiences and the representation of this audience in broadcast content. There is also a focus on the identification, characterization of the so-called *sensitive audiences* and also its representation on broadcast contents.
- In 2007, the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF) sponsored by the Catalonia Broadcasting Council (CAC), carried out an initiative aimed at defining and coming to an agreement about the concept of competence in audiovisual communication. A document³⁶ was drawn up based on an analysis

³³ According to article 48 in the *Second TV and Radio Authority Law*, 1990.

³⁴ http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/ml_audit/

³⁵ http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrss/socialnetworking/

³⁶ http://www.cac.cat/pfw_files/cma/recerca/quaderns_cac/Q25EN-Ferres-2.pdf

of the most successful experiences carried out in the most outstanding countries in the subject. This document can serve as a basis both for the criteria on which this education should be based as well as the dimensions that must be taken into account. This document is an essential instrument in assessing whether education in audiovisual communication is being carried out well or not, if the results that should be achieved are actually being achieved.

- The studies commissioned by the German Media Authorities focus on topics, which complement each other reciprocally so that from the series of research projects a comprehensive picture of media literacy emerges, especially that of children and youth, but also of adults (educators, teachers, over 35s, etc.). Two examples (among many others) are the *KIM* (Kinder und Medien) and *JIM* (Jugend, Information, Multimedia) studies which focus respectively on the media use of children from 6 to 13 and young people from 12 to 19 years-old. Detailed information about training and further education, research and development, promotion and cooperation, awards and presentations, campaigns and initiatives can be found in the ALM project database³⁷.

- In Israel, the *Second Authority for Television and Radio* will establish an Israeli 'clearinghouse' for media literacy as part of the Authority's website. The website will act as a *bulletin board* for new and existing initiatives, cooperation possibilities etc, a *forum* for deliberation and consultation between the relevant bodies; it will contain *comparative information* about media literacy activities and developments around the world as well as a bibliography on media literacy.

Media campaigns/awareness:

- In Romania, the National *Audiovisual Council* organised a media campaign for raising the awareness of adults concerning the negative impact of violent TV programmes on children.

- In France, the *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA) produced an awareness campaign regarding the programme classification (signalétique) for the first time in 2004 (until then this was done by channels themselves). The spot, regularly broadcast, was done in such a way to show the public that adults and children do not perceive images and scenes or violence in the same way.

- In Luxembourg, the *Conseil national des programmes* (CNP) launched, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, with the media industry and with schools, an initiative with the objective to sensitise students to the contents of media and helping them to develop a critical approach towards media by creating TV spots. The spots were supposed to make a critical analysis of media contents.

- In Spain (Navarra), the CoAN conducted a campaign called "Family, television and other screens" through the organisation of theoretical and practical workshops in 2006 and 2007. It was addressed to parents to show them patterns on how to guide their children in a good use of audiovisual displays.

- In cooperation with cinemas in Germany and with several commercial broadcasters, the *LPR Hessen* (Germany) promotes a video clip entitled "Where is Klaus?", which is intended to encourage parents to pay attention to their children while using the internet³⁸. Every year the German Media Authorities also take part in presentations for the EU-initiated "Safer Internet Day"³⁹. The presentations of the "Safer Internet Day" are organized by "klicksafe.de", i. e. by the authorities of Northrhine-Westfalia and Rhineland-Palatine, in cooperation with the ecmc.

Training:

- In Malta, the *Broadcasting Authority* sponsored courses on the good use of the Maltese language for journalists and broadcasters. It also organised a short training course on "Economics for Broadcasters" to provide life-long learning for people in the media industry through the amalgamation of pedagogical studies in different areas with media practices. The authority also organised a short course on environmental issues which targeted media producers, independent broadcasters and newsroom editors and provided baseline environmental knowledge on key factors, which shape Malta's environment for a better understanding and reporting on such issues.

- One example of a multi-state campaign of the Media Authorities is the German hub 'klicksafe.de'⁴⁰ which is organised by the authorities of Northrhine-Westfalia and Rhineland-Palatine, the two most active German regulators in the field. As part of the 'Safer Internet

³⁷ <http://www.alm-mediienkompetenz.de>

³⁸ The clip was produced by the EU-Initiative klicksafe.de and can be recalled at:

http://www.klicksafe.de/common/presse.php?site=Wo_ist_Klaus

³⁹ <http://www.klicksafe.de/sid>

⁴⁰ <http://www.klicksafe.de>

Programme' of the EU, it offers, among other things, continuing education for teachers and teaching materials on the topic "Chances and Risks of the Internet".

Concrete projects focussing on children and television:

Flimmo, a common project of the German Media Authorities, gives parents programme advice for all kinds of television programmes. *Flimmo* also asks children between 3 and 13 years about their experiences while watching TV⁴¹.

Concrete projects focussing on children and the Internet:

- Information, tips and tricks about the Internet for primary school children, their parents and teachers are provided by "*Internet-ABC*"⁴², another common project of the *German Media Authorities*". Step by step, children can learn, try out and play on the advertising-free platform how to use chat rooms, search engines and e-mails.

- In Norway, the *Media Authority* has developed some education material on the Internet⁴³ which teaches the youngest children about some media literacy aspects of the internet and in particular the use of private photos on the web. They have also developed some material on source criticism which has been included in textbooks for 6th graders and 7th graders in primary schools in Norway, The Tryggbruk project has also recently conducted a large scale study covering various aspects of children's and young people's use of the Internet. The results from the survey were published on the Safer Internet Day organised on the 7th February.

- The Ofcom is co-sponsor (with the Home Office) of the world's first safety standard for home internet filtering software which was launched on 3 April 2008⁴⁴.

Seminars/conferences:

- Ofcom is organising the International Media Literacy Research Forum⁴⁵ – a major international conference to take place in London in May 2008.

- The *Czech Council for Radio and Television* organised a workshop regarding programme classification (labelling) in cooperation with the Dutch CvdM, NICAM, and the Czech Ministry of Culture.

Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire sent to EPRA members reveal a highly contrasted snapshot of the current involvement of media regulatory authorities in the field of media literacy. Whereas most authorities are involved in what could be qualified as the 'protective' aspects of media literacy, mostly as a consequence of their legal obligations relating to the protection of minors, only a few engage in "incentive-based" actions and creative production, i.e. the fostering of media-related knowledge, the development of critical judgment ability, the enhancement of practical usage skills and also the capability of designing media independently.

With regard to their involvement in the area, five categories of regulatory authorities can be roughly distinguished. As all classifications go, this one is of a rather subjective nature and only based on the answers to the questionnaire without conducting further research.

The first cluster, which could be qualified as "*the precursors*" or "*the pioneers*", is composed of the *German Media Authorities* and the British *Ofcom*, which have gathered significant experience in the field over the last years and are active in all the components of media literacy. Their approach to media literacy encompasses all media and is targeted towards society as a whole so that everyone might become a competent member of the information society. An important factor behind such a level of involvement is that media literacy has been recognised as a statutory duty for these authorities.

The second cluster is composed of authorities which are rather active in the field of media literacy but which, until now, have a specific focus on certain media (such as television for instance) and/or target specific groups of society (such as children for instance). The *Second Authority for Television of Radio* in Israel, the *Catalonia Audiovisual Council* (CAC), the *Navarran*

⁴¹ <http://www.flimmo.de>

⁴² <http://www.internet-abc.de/kinder>

⁴³ See the website: <http://www.tryggbruk.no>

⁴⁴ <http://www.bsi-global.com/en/ProductServices/About-Us/News-Directory/Kitemark-Child-Safety-Online-Launched/>

⁴⁵ <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/theforum/>

Audiovisual Council (CoAN), the Norwegian Media Authority, and the Luxembourg CNP could be classified in this group.

The third cluster is composed of authorities, while not yet very active in the field of media literacy, are likely to be increasingly involved in the next years as a consequence of potential legal reforms. The *Broadcasting Commission of Ireland* (conditional to the adoption of the Broadcasting Act), the French *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (pursuant to the outcome of the report commissioned by Mrs Albanel, Minister of Culture), the *CRTA* from Cyprus and the Portuguese *ERC* could be classified in this group.

The fourth cluster is composed of authorities which, until now, are only marginally active in the area of media literacy but may have conducted some awareness work, occasionally supported concrete initiatives or organised conferences or seminars on related issues. This category may include the *Broadcasting Council of Lithuania*, the Maltese *Broadcasting Authority*, the Hungarian *ORTT*, the *National Audiovisual Council* of Romania or the *Czech Council for Radio and Television*.

The fifth, and last, cluster is composed of authorities which, until now, claim no involvement in the field of media literacy. This group includes the remaining authorities, and notably the *CSA* and the *VRM* from Belgium, the *Danish Radio and Television Council*, the *Dutch Commissariaat voor de Media*, the *KommAustria*, or the *Swedish Broadcasting Commission*. Depending on how broadly media literacy is defined, these media authorities may however be considered as promoting it *at least indirectly*, e.g. possibly through their actions in the field of the protection of minors. To paraphrase Mr Jourdain, it could be claimed that they "have been dealing with media literacy all their lives and didn't even know it."

Indeed, to a certain extent, media literacy was always a core component of media regulation, and regulators already rely today on audiences' media literacy as an element of the regulatory ecology. The most prominent example is the awareness of the watershed or of the 'signalétique'. In addition, regulators' rely on audiences' ability to respond to on-air warnings and the general context of the programmes, for example the channel branding.

It seems likely, however, that this contrasted snapshot may look rather different in a couple of years time. In the wake of the recent European media policy initiatives encouraging "the authorities in charge of audiovisual and electronic communication regulation to get more involved and to cooperate in the improvement of the various levels of media literacy" and further to the change of paradigm in media regulation as a result of new media development, the promotion of media literacy is likely to be acknowledged as an additional task for many media regulatory authorities in the years to come.

It is too soon to tell whether this may result in a real shift of the role of regulatory authorities from protection towards empowerment, or "from a repressive toward a pro-active approach" as the title of the EPRA plenary session in Riga puts it. At this (early) stage, it seems that the two approaches will not replace each other but are rather complementary, though the balance between the two might shift eventually. Media literacy could then be considered as a preventive measure to be added to the extensive toolkit at the disposal of regulators, based on the assumption that the legal framework alone cannot solve all problems and the recognition that "Media literacy is increasingly becoming an integral element in the life skills in the 21st century"⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Quote from the answers of the DLM (Germany) to the questionnaire.

Annex 1: Questionnaire on Media Literacy

**27th EPRA meeting,
Riga, 14-16 May 2008**

**EPRA members questionnaire
Media Literacy – what role for the regulators?**

Please fill out this questionnaire and return it to the EPRA secretariat (per email: machet@epra.org or fax: +33 3 88 14 44 19) at your earliest convenience, **please no later than 4 April**. The information gathered will be used for the drafting of a comparative EPRA paper for the first plenary session in Riga.

1. DEFINITION

Media literacy has been defined by Sonia Livingstone as “*the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts*”⁴⁷.

Please provide any other definition that may be used by your authority or in your country:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. LEGAL BASIS

Is the promotion of media literacy a statutory duty of your authority under the current legal framework? YES/NO

- If YES, please quote the relevant provision/legal basis:.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

- If YES, please indicate whether other bodies/organisations are also under a legal duty to support media literacy:

.....
.....
.....

- If NO, Is your authority active in the promotion of media literacy on a voluntary basis? YES/NO

- If your authority has no legal competence, please specify who is in charge of promoting media literacy in your country:

.....

3. ROLE PLAYED BY AUTHORITY

What is the role played by your authority in the promotion of media literacy?

- Setting /co-ordinating policy
- Drawing up codes of practice
- Drawing up recommendations
- Conducting research (e.g. on levels of media literacy, emerging issues etc.)
- Developing media literacy indicators
- Promoting awareness of the need for media literacy (e.g. through campaigns)
- Supporting concrete initiatives aimed at improving media literacy
- Other, please specify.....

4. FUNDING

Does your authority receive specific funding for media literacy-related activities? YES/NO

If YES, please specify, e.g. how much money, from whom, and for which purpose

.....
.....

⁴⁷ http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse/pdf/Media@lseEWP4_july03.pdf

