

50<sup>th</sup> EPRA meeting  
Athens, 23-25 October 2019  
**Working group 1 – Media Literacy**  
**Introductory note<sup>1</sup>**  
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## 1. Introduction

Across Europe the need to empower media users is now widely recognised among media regulators as a part of the regulatory toolkit which can complement, rather than replace, statutory regulation. This is particularly true in the context of the challenges that regulators face around topics such as managing freedom of expression vs. hate speech issues, securing the protection of minors and promoting media plurality.

One mechanism to help empower media users is through the promotion of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) skills. The role that NRAs have in relation to promoting media literacy is not a new theme for EPRA as it has been addressed at several Working Group meetings and plenary sessions in recent years.

In addition to the Working Group meetings and plenary sessions, a side activity centred on MIL took place in 2018 in the form of a **Media Literacy Taskforce**. The purpose of the taskforce was to provide a platform for sharing expertise, resources and experience in relation to media literacy for interested parties from the EPRA membership, and a small number of other expert organisations<sup>2</sup>.

By the time the first taskforce meeting took place in Luxembourg in May 2018, there were 23 members on the taskforce distribution list. By the second taskforce meeting in Bratislava in October 2018, there were 44 members on the distribution list.

The frequency which MIL has been included in the EPRA work programme demonstrates the appetite that EPRA members have for learning more about MIL, and for sharing their experiences in this area.

As well as providing EPRA members with the opportunity to meet informally and discuss topics and share experiences related to MIL, members of the taskforce also produced a range of "top tips" providing guidance on various aspects of MIL including:

- Establishing MIL networks<sup>3</sup>
- Engaging with MIL stakeholders<sup>4</sup>
- Evaluating MIL projects<sup>5</sup>
- Researching MIL<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **Disclaimer:** this document has been produced for an internal meeting by EPRA, an informal network of 53 regulatory authorities in the field of audiovisual media services. It is not a fully comprehensive overview of the issues, nor does it represent the views or the official position of EPRA or of any member within the EPRA network.

<sup>2</sup> Such as KAVI in Finland and Mercury Insights in Ireland/UK and the European Audiovisual Observatory.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/media-literacy-networks-guidelines>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/mil-taskforce-top-tips-on-stakeholders-engagement>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/mil-taskforce-top-tips-for-evaluating-media-literacy-projects>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/mil-taskforce-researching-media-literacy-a-guidance-document-for-epra-members>

## 2. Activities since the 49th EPRA MIL Working Group meeting

The last meeting of the EPRA Media Literacy Working Group took place in Sarajevo on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2019. At the meeting there were 8 presentations from nine NRAs<sup>7</sup>, evidencing the growing number of NRAs who are active in this area.

The Working Group meeting started with a panel discussion on the theme of Media Literacy campaigns and international cooperation. The second panel focussed on the media literacy in the Western Balkans and featured presentations from the regulators in Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Re-purposing Media Literacy resources and projects was also a theme with presentations from the Georgian and the Irish regulators. Finally, a summary of the Top tips on media literacy research, developed by UK regulator Ofcom, was presented to the participants.

Some of the outcomes from the meeting included:

- A recognition of the importance of strategic coordination and collaboration between stakeholders, as well as the active participation by civil society organisations in delivering far-reaching media literacy projects.
- Exploring how media literacy resources and projects could be adapted and re-purposed for different audiences and regions.
- An acknowledgment that the lack of dedicated funding for media literacy projects is on-going problem in relation to the growth, reach and impact of media literacy projects and activities.
- Discussion about the potential interest and value in developing a pan-European database of media literacy projects in collaboration with the European Audiovisual Observatory.

Since May 2019 the Working Group has delivered on a number of actions including:

- 1 Finalising and publishing the **'top-tips' on commissioning Media Literacy research**<sup>8</sup>; the Guidelines offer an overview of different approaches to research, questions to consider when planning research and the options available to EPRA members wishing to explore this area of work.
- 2 A draft version of another set of 'top tips' have been developed looking at the **development of media literacy campaigns**.
- 3 The Working Group, through the efforts of Ľuboš Kukliš, Director of the Slovakian regulator and ERGA Chair, has **secured the participation of two of the main search and social media platforms** in the next Working Group meeting.
- 4 A **discussion forum** has been established on the EPRA website to facilitate conversations between NRAs in relation to media literacy. Currently, the forum has discussion threads on a number of topics including MIL Top tips, MIL campaigns, MIL events, MIL networks and MIL projects<sup>9</sup>.
- 5 As a result of the Working Group operating as a platform to share experiences and resources, the AAAMS (MK) **adapted campaign material** developed by the BAI-led Media Literacy Ireland network (IE).

## 3. Overview of Media Literacy Working Group meeting in Athens

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed summary of the working group in Sarajevo, see: <https://www.epra.org/attachments/sarajevo-working-group-1-media-literacy-summary-of-of-the-session-and-debate>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.epra.org/attachments/mil-taskforce-researching-media-literacy-a-guidance-document-for-epra-members>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.epra.org/forum/topics/media-literacy-test-forum>

The next Media Literacy Working Group meeting will take place in Athens on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> EPRA meeting. The focus of this meeting will be on **media literacy skills relating to the use of social media and video-sharing platforms**.

Over the last two years media literacy has been rising on policy agendas at a European and EU level.

The Council of Europe recognises media literacy as a transversal issue addressed in various contexts by different bodies and departments of the Council of Europe. The Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership<sup>10</sup>, included guidelines aimed at (i) developing citizens' ability to access, understand and use information and ideas propagated by the media, and (ii) enabling them to make an informed and critical evaluation of those ideas based on the awareness of many different influences impacting the production and dissemination of media content. The Recommendation calls on member States to:

- adopt/develop appropriate legislative provisions;
- adopt coordinated national media literacy policy and implement it through multi annual plans involving a wide range of stakeholders;
- include media literacy in school curricula at all levels and in lifelong learning cycles;
- encourage media to promote media literacy through their policies, strategies and activities;
- ensure that national regulatory authorities have the scope and resources for the promotion of media literacy.

Furthermore, 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 points out that digital literacy encompasses media literacy and encourages member States to fully promote these capabilities for children as well as for parents and carers.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, the draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States CM/Rec(2019)## on promoting a favourable environment for quality journalism in the digital age, also highlights the critical role that media literacy has to play in helping citizens recognize and value quality journalism and points to the important role that NRAs can play in relation to promoting media literacy skills.

The revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive is due to be transposed into law by EU Member States by September 2020. Art. 33a of the revised AVMSD places an obligation on the EU Member States to promote media literacy along with an obligation to report to the EU Commission<sup>12</sup> on media literacy activity.

In addition, Article 28b of the revised AVMSD also obliges video-sharing platforms to provide for effective media literacy measures and tools, and to raise users' awareness of these measures and tools.

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<sup>10</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 March 2018 at the 1309th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e13](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680790e13)

<sup>11</sup> 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 (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 4 July 2018 at the 1321st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies): [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016808b79f7](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016808b79f7), margin 41-49.

<sup>12</sup> For an overview on the EU-Commission's work on MIL see also <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/media-literacy>.

Media literacy is also addressed in the EU [Communication on tackling online disinformation: a European approach](#).<sup>13</sup> Adopted in April 2018, it outlines four strands for tackling disinformation online at a European level. One of these actions focusses on fostering education and media literacy.

The EU-wide [Code of Practice on online disinformation](#)<sup>14</sup>, which outlines support for an independent network of fact-checkers and tools to stimulate quality journalism was signed by Facebook, Google, Twitter and Mozilla as well as the trade association representing online platforms and trade associations representing the advertising industry and advertisers. Under this Code the signatories give a commitment to partner with civil society, governments, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to support efforts aimed at improving critical thinking and digital media literacy.

In this context, it is perhaps unsurprising that a number of NRAs are either leading on, or participating in, projects or initiatives that help to promote media literacy skills related to the effective, ethical and safe use of social media and VSPs.

The importance of working in collaboration, and utilising the strengths of other media literacy stakeholders through initiatives like national networks, has been well-documented by both the EPRA Working Group members, as well as in some of the policy documents mentioned above and the *best practices of the regulatory authorities of electronic media regarding media literacy report*<sup>15</sup>.

With this in mind, the EPRA Media Literacy Working Group meeting in Athens will provide an opportunity for WG members to share and learn from the experience of other NRAs. At this meeting the search and social media platforms are also given the opportunity to highlight how they view the challenges and what they to help promoting media literacy skills in line with the commitments they have made.

There will be an opportunity for an open discussion towards the end of the meeting, and it is anticipated that the following themes will be discussed:

- Funding for ML projects
- Protection of minors online (including issues of privacy and data protection)
- Social media/online platforms and citizenship/democracy
- Ways forward for a structured cooperation between NRAs and platforms in the field of ML

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<sup>13</sup> [Communication on tackling online disinformation: a European approach](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/code-practice-disinformation>

<sup>15</sup> Regulatory Authorities for Electronic Media and Media Literacy - Comparative analysis of the best European practices” <https://rm.coe.int/regulatory-authorities-for-electronic-media/1680903a2a>