# REGULATORY AUTHORITIES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND MEDIA LITERACY

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BEST EUROPEAN PRACTICES

**Robert Tomljenović**

Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)

Funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe

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***Regulatory Authorities for Electronic Media and Media Literacy - Comparative analysis of the best European practices***

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# Introduction

The making of the study titled *Regulatory Authorities for Electronic Media and Media Literacy – Comparative Analysis of the Best European Practices* has been supported by Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX) the joint European Union and Council of Europe programme"Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)", at the request of the Serbian Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM). The study is prepared with aim of providing an analysis of the best examples of the European practices of promoting media literacy, with special focus on the role of the regulatory bodies, and putting forward recommendations for potential activities in Serbia. The cut-off date of the study is 31 August 2018.

The study analyzes and indicates challenges and issues that come with living in a digitalized, hypertechnological mediated world, in which we are faced with countless information, issues of disinformation and fake news, algorithmic separation in ideological echo chambers, hate speech, clickbait journalism, and decreased trust in both mainstream media and the level of journalistic professionalism. With such a media ecosystem, it is vital to define the position of a regulatory authority for electronic media as well as its responsibilities and obligations, and stress the regulator's role in promoting and developing media literacy, one of the key skills for living in the 21st century and the answer to many questions and challenges that come with the modern era.

Furthermore, the study indicates insufficient knowledge of the concept of media literacy, and the importance of a national policy or strategy for the development and strengthening of the citizens' media literacy as an important tool for the democratization and the development of the critical discourse in a society. The study also explains both the term and the concept of media literacy, and it is important to define it because of various approaches and goals (education; protection from harmful media content, manipulation or propaganda; civic engagement, etc.) and different policies. The definition is necessary not only to avoid confusion that can be caused by many elements of media literacy, but also because of the fact that its definition affects the direction of the public discussion, scientific research, and initiatives, as well as the contents of policies, legal and other documents.

Nearly nobody can escape living in a digital environment, and it implies acquiring many new and individual skills and competences, as well as understanding and using a complex code system for the modern media ecosystem and technology. Media literacy encompasses all those skills and competences; it also integrates numerous

necessary skills and literacies as well as knowledge of the media industry's functioning and legality, and of the media content, as well as understanding of the media influence, the context they function in and the influence of the outside factors. Media literacy also implies the capability of an independent and critical detachment from the communication and media environment.

Finally, the study will showcase examples of the best European practices and regulatory bodies' engagement on strengthening media literacy, alongside a special review and case study featuring the most successful European country in this particular field – Finland. It will also provide an analysis of the electronic media regulators' work in Ireland and Croatia. The study does not analyze the situation in the countries in the region, as its goal is to provide an overview of the good European practices in order to inspire and encourage Serbian Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM), but also other regulators in the region, to come up with and implement activities and develop projects related to media literacy. Therefore, at the very end, the study puts forward recommendations for Serbia and REM on what to do regarding media literacy. Moreover, even though the study has been made at the request of REM, it can undoubtedly benefit other regulators in the region, having in mind common global challenges and issues that come with the digital world, as well as the region's similar and common cultural, media and educational background.

# Executive Summary

Media literacy is one of the key competences for living and working in a digital and mediatized fast-changing and continually evolving world, as well as for active citizens and participation in both social and democratic processes. The technological revolution and the convergence of media and technological platforms have resulted in a convergence of necessary skills and a complicating of the media, communication and social environment and the need for analytical and critical reading of numerous and concurrent information sources. Therefore, a responsible strategic approach to a media literacy policy should be the priority in any society.

It is vital to set out a clear and explicit media literacy concept, i.e. a national policy that needs to derive from a social discourse and from challenging one's values, democracy, education and culture. Media literacy should also permeate other national strategic documents, from educational, media and cultural policies to youth policies. Without including media literacy in various national policies, even laws, there are no preconditions for its systematic development. An intersectoral, both horizontal and vertical, cooperation is extremely important for the implementation of a national strategy. Moreover, having in mind the complexity of the media literacy concept, it is necessary that many actors be involved in its development and related projects.

Even though there is no concrete research, a number of documents and studies show that the level of media literacy is rather low in Serbia. Moreover, there are no clearly developed national media literacy policies or strategies, i.e. there is no systematic approach that will enable long-term, sustainable media literacy projects. That is why the recommendation for the Republic of Serbia is to set up an interdepartmental institutional body that will implement media literacy projects and a social discourse on the needs and goals of media literacy education, and develop a national media literacy policy or strategy. What is especially significant is a greater integration of the wider concept of media literacy into the country's educational policy and curricula, particularly the elements of developing critical thinking and understanding of all media types, their structures and impacts, as well as the way they shape the reality.

Furthermore, Serbian Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM), should definitely take a more active role in working on media literacy, owing to its important social role and its complementarity with certain aspects of media content regulation and protection of minors and consumers, as well as the preventive approach to it all. At the same time, REM should establish its internal goals and adopt an

understanding of the media literacy project, and find funds for regular research on the citizens' media habits and literacy (children and youth in particular), as well as for media campaigns aimed at raising the public's awareness. One of REM's most important roles in working on media literacy should be finding, encouraging and including various social stakeholders (from educational institutions, academia, media and libraries to state institutions and civil society) in projects for media education and media literacy. The fact is that good results and self-sustainable projects can only be produced by including more partners, acquiring a common understanding of both issues and goals, and sharing and exchanging knowledge and resources. Accordingly, REM should create a platform for gathering a wide variety of social stakeholders and encourage establishing diverse partnerships, as well as coming up with and supporting various projects (from launching a web portal and publishing brochures to conducting research and organizing workshops and lectures, among other things), and being more active in arranging both regional and international cooperation as well as exchange of experiences and best practices. It is also very important to include the media in these media literacy projects, in particular the public services, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) and Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV), which should, as a public broadcasters, actively work on improving the citizens' media literacy skills. That way, the media are not just developing the citizens' media literacy but also educating their users and, in a way, driving the development of the overall media and creative industry.

It is important to reach a general consensus and understanding that, for both the individuals and the society, media literacy is one of the most efficient answers to the many challenges, requirements and threats that come with the digital media world, which keeps developing and which exposes us to countless information, oftentimes of dubious quality.

# 1. Living in a Digitalized Media World

We live in a hyper-technologized, global, convergent media world, where digital technology is an integral part of our everyday life and we rely on it to communicate with others, as well as entertain and inform ourselves nearly continuously throughout the day. We are surrounded by a media-construed society of spectacles, saturated and overwhelmed with information in an era of post-facts and fake news, while social media algorithms keep putting us in these echo chambers or filter bubbles[1], thus inciting ideological segregation. An opinion by the renowned French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1981) that we now exist in a universe with an increasing amount of information and less and less sense is now gaining in importance. The new media and communication technologies have completely transformed the world, changed social and communication relations, and considerably affected human behavior and identity as well as the development of the entire society.

Nevertheless, this technological and digital revolution is not nearly over; it is still under way and we are now transitioning from the third to the fourth industrial revolution. The third, digital revolution was all about the shift from analogue to digital technology, bringing a considerable increase in both the media and information. As regards the fourth revolution, we can expect a further acceleration of the technological development and a number of new technologies fusing physical, digital and biological worlds and introducing significant changes for the society and the individuals[2]. This is also how we can view the changes in the digital media and information space, which has been fully converged and integrated into our lives. Changes happen at an unexpected pace, imposing continued adjustment cycles on both the citizens and the society. Some theoreticians believe the digitalization of an entire society is comparable to the impact that the invention of steam engine had on the society and the humans at the start of the age we now call the First Industrial Revolution (Brynjolfsson and McAfee, 2014, based on Pekkala and Wadbring, 2017). However, as with all the revolutionary innovations that make the world a better place, even the digitalization and the development of media and communication platforms come with certain unwanted consequences. As stated by Tornero

1 Filter bubbles or echo chambers is a phenomenon where online algorithms filter the information based on previous searches, thus potentially creating "bubbles", in which an individual is exposed only to views and opinions that suit the individual's, while opposing views and opinions are excluded or kept back.

2 https://www.weforum.org/about/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab

and Varis in their influential book titled *Media Literacy and New Humanism* (2010), technological progress, digitalization and exponential growth of the number of the media have led to an explosion of information, communication and interaction among people, causing a nuclear chain reaction of sorts, with yet unforeseeable consequences for the world. All this has had a direct impact on three essential dimensions of human life: communicative energy, time and space, and changed human behavior, structure and culture (Tornero and Varis, 2010).

Nonetheless, the amount of available information has not resulted in citizens being better informed and more aware. Exactly the opposite has happened: this flood of information has exceeded the citizens' capability to process them. Due to the abundance and complexity of information, the citizens can no longer discern between important and trivial information, which politics-wise causes resignation and apoliticism (Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006). Even though many turn-of-the-century theorists were expecting the digital revolution to contribute to the strengthening of the democracy, it is quite difficult to find any arguments in favor that. In his 1997 book *L'utopie de la communication: le mythe du village planétaire*, Phillipe Breton argued that there was nothing in the human history that was similar to the way the media power had established itself in the modern world. He also predicted that the digital media world would result in growing intolerance, xenophobia, radicalism and exclusion. "The naive enthusiasm for virtual worlds has unexpectedly heightened the attractiveness of identity isolation and rejection of the other. Also, the fact that the media have focused all their power on information makes them a potential tool for extensive disinformation undertakings" (Breton, 2012, p. 282).

## 1.1. INFORMATION DISORDER

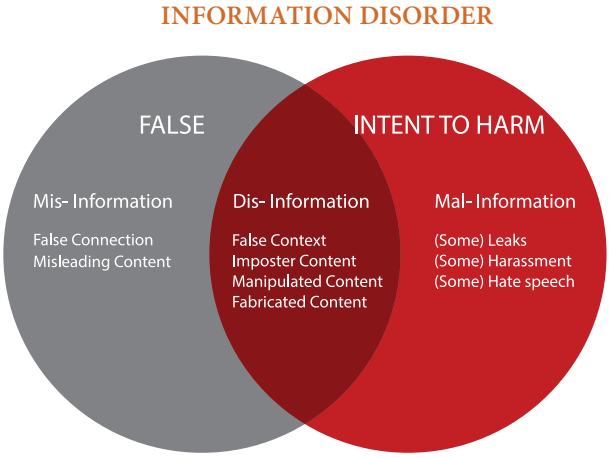
Changes in the media ecosystem have perhaps been even more significant than predicted; new technologies have blurred the line between authors and users, i.e. between the conventional media and social networks as well as alternative websites, and brought a wealth of new information and possibilities for their dissemination. Lately, there has been a dramatic rise in fake news, i.e. disinformation. This particular issue has been illustrated rather well in a BuzzFeed[3] analysis of the news about the German Chancellor Angela Merkel that had been distributed through the global social network Facebook over the past five years. The analysis shows that, of the top ten most shared articles about Angela Merkel, only one was true, seven were fake, and two were either a personal opinion or a comment. The issue of disinformation first came to global notice back in 2016 during the Brexit campaign in the UK and the US presidential election campaign. At the time, the fake news related to the presidential election were shared nearly 38 million times, and 30 million of them were in favor of Donald Trump, who later won the election race (Allcott and Gentzkow, 2017). Even the small town of Veles in Macedonia was linked to the US election, as around 140 pro-Trump fake-news websites were opened. On average, four out of five articles posted on these websites, and later shared en masse on social networks, were fake[4].

3 https://www.buzzfeed.com/karstenschmehl/top-merkel-news?utm_term=.hv3AobzGy#.au796AzoP

4 https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/how-macedonia-became-a-global-hub-for-pro-trump-misinfo?utm_term=.rrplMaNBA#.rlQ4xvG31

Digital revolution had implied enlightenment and democratization of the society; however, the lack of responsibility in the internet space has actually enabled the dissemination of confusion and disinformation. Moreover, the absence of information checking and filtering mechanisms, such as gatekeeping, which is present in traditional media, has been beneficial to mass spreading of fake news and disinformation in the digital space[5]. A 2018 Eurobarometer survey[6] on fake news and online disinformation across the EU Member States showed that 83 percent of the respondents perceived fake news as a problem for democracy. Moreover, the survey's findings indicated that 37 percent of the respondents came across fake news every day or almost every day, while 71 percent of those surveyed felt confident about identifying them. Seeing as the issue of dissemination of news deliberately misleading consumers had been getting worse by the day, the European institutions decided to tackle it and find a solution.

In the fall of 2017, the Council of Europe published a study titled *Information Disorder: Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Research and Policy Making* (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). The study states that the term "fake news" is inadequate, unclear and ambiguous to describe the complex phenomena of information pollution. Furthermore, the study continues, the term has also begun to be appropriated by politicians to describe either disagreeable news or news organisations whose actions they disapprove of. The authors, therefore, suggest using the term "information disorder", identifying its three different types: mis-information, dis-information and mal-information. Dis-information is false information deliberately created and knowingly shared to cause harm to a person, a social group, an organisation or a country. Mal-information is when fact-based information is shared to cause harm, and mis-information is false information that was not created to cause any harm (for instance, unintentional journalistic mistakes).




Source: Wardle and Derakhshan (2017). *Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making.*

5 e.g. S. Fish (*Transparency is the mother of fake news*) or H. Schneider (*It's the Audience, Stupid.*)

6 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-results-eurobarometer-fake-news-and-online-disinformation

This illustration shows how mis-information, dis-information and mal-information interweave and overlap around fabrications and intent to cause harm. Even certain forms of hate speech and harassment are included as they are often used to harm someone over their actions or affiliations (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). The Study, which was carried out on behalf of the Council of Europe, suggests governments should commission research to determine the scale of and reasons for the information disorder in their respective countries, regulate ads in the digital space, and demand transparency around Facebook ads (who is purchasing ads and which users are targeted). The Study also highlights the necessity for supporting public service media organisations, promoting the strengthening of good-quality journalism and local news development, as well as encouraging programs for educating the citizens on online security. Finally, the media are encouraged to cooperate with fact-checking organisations, implement the best practices and strengthen their ethical and professional standards, as well as to increasingly inform their consumers about the information disorder issue, not disseminate fabricated content, and improve the quality of whatever they are putting out (for instance, good-quality headlines vs clickbait headlines).

In the fall of 2017, the European Commission[7] set up a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) for fake news and online disinformation, representing academics, news media, social networks, civil society organisations, and various journalistic and media associations, and launched a public discussion on the issue. In March 2018, European Commission's HLEG published a report titled *A Multi-Dimensional Approach to Disinformation*[8], analyzing the issue, giving an overview of the best practices, and providing recommendations for the European Commission and the Member States. The report is based on a definition of disinformation that showcases the issue in the best possible way, describing it as false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and disseminated to intentionally cause public harm or for profit. The definition does not cover the creation and dissemination of illegal content, such as defamation, hate speech and incitement to violence, which are subject to laws, or other forms of intentional but not misleading distortions of facts such as satire and parody. Furthermore, in the report, the HLEG avoids using the term "fake news" as they believe it is inappropriate for understanding the complex issue of disinformation, which includes content that is not fully "fake" but has been fabricated and mixed in with facts with the intent of dissemination and harm to others.

Then, in April 2018, following the public discussion and the recommendations by the HLEG, the European Commission published a report titled *Tackling Online Disinformation: A European Approach*[9]. The report states that online platforms, in particular social networks, video-sharing platforms and search engines, play a key role in the spread and amplification of online disinformation, and that they have so far

7 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17–4481_en.htm

8 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation

9 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/communication-tackling-online-disinformation-european-approach

failed to efficiently tackle the challenge posed by online disinformation and manipulations. Furthermore, the report mentions there are serious doubts whether online platforms are sufficiently protecting their users' privacy and personal data against unauthorized use by third parties, highlighting the recent Facebook / Cambridge Analytica case[10].

The European Commission has also warned that the issue of disinformation should be viewed in a wider context, with interrelated economic, technological, political, and ideological causes, highlighting the fact that economic insecurity, increasing extremism, and cultural shifts generate anxiety and provide a breeding ground for disinformation campaigns, which foster societal tensions, polarization, and distrust. Furthermore, the report states that the dissemination of disinformation takes place in the context of major changes in the media, which are undergoing a dramatic transformation and are still looking for new business models, and in the context of a technological revolution, social networking, algorithms and click-based advertising.

Considering the complexity of the issue and the rapid development in the digital environment, the European Commission believes a single solution could not address all the disinformation/related challenges, which is why we should act on several fronts simultaneously. Accordingly, the Commission has listed the following principles and goals that should help us resolve the issue of disinformation:

- Improving the transparency of the origin of information and the way the information is produced, sponsored, disseminated and targeted in order to enable citizens to assess the content they access online and to reveal possible attempts to manipulate opinion;
- Promoting the diversity of information to allow citizens to make informed decisions based on critical thinking, through support for high-quality journalism, media literacy, and the rebalancing of the relation between information creators and distributors;
- Fostering credible information by providing evidence of its reliability, especially with the help of trusted flaggers, and by improving traceability of information and authentication of influential information providers;
- Effective long-term solutions require awareness-raising, improvements to media literacy, broad stakeholder involvement and the cooperation of public authorities, online platforms, advertisers, trusted flaggers, journalists and media groups (European Commission, 2018).

According to the European Commission, media literacy, i.e. the development of critical and digital competences (including content production and privacy protection issue), in particular for young people, is crucial to strengthening the resilience of societies to disinformation. The Commission has announced it will step up the activities related to media literacy promotion and fostering (implementing projects

10 This is a story that broke in the spring of 2018, when it was discovered that the consultancy Cambridge Analytica had made unauthorized use of the personal data of 87 million Facebook users for marketing purposes during the 2016 US presidential election campaign.

such as Media Literacy for All[11], SaferInternet4EU or organizing the European Media Literacy Week), by including media literacy in the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive with an increased monitoring of actions undertaken by the Member States on media literacy, as well as by sharing the best practices and educating teachers (for instance, through Erasmus+, Training and Education 2020 and other, similar projects), and promoting media literacy through curriculum reforms across the European Union and PISA tests.

It is clear that with the reinforcement of transparency in the online world and the improvement of professional journalistic standards and media quality, media literacy has become one of the key tools in fighting disinformation. The European Commission's HLEG has put forward a similar recommendation to the Member States, which should include both media literacy and information literacy in their national educational plans and continued teacher training programs on the subject of media literacy. At the same time, the civil society organisations should cooperate with the academia, experts in education and media industry on media literacy projects, while the media organisations should implement media literacy projects aimed at younger generations in cooperation with schools and other educational institutions.

Furthermore, reinforcing media literacy is also important for the informed citizenry concept, which is based on people's motives and abilities to use the media and participate in public discussions and the democratic life, which has been disturbed somewhat in the new, hybrid media environment. Therefore, media literacy, particularly the skill of understanding news production and their critical consideration (news literacy), should serve as a "societal glue" of sorts that reinforces the ideal of an informed citizenship and contributes to the strengthening of the journalistic professionalism (Balčytiene and Wadbring, 2017).

## 1.2. ISSUE OF ALGORITHMS AND ECHO CHAMBERS

Almost simultaneously with the issue of disinformation, the public has become aware of the issue of algorithms, which trap internet and social network users in echo chambers. These algorithms selectively provide users with information, based on the users' past behavior (including search history, past click-behavior, opinions expressed on social networks, and location). That is how echo chambers are created; it is a state of intellectual isolation, in which a person is exposed to only those opinions that fit their own to a great extent, while opposing opinions are either excluded or suppressed. Consequently, one's ideological segregation is reinforced and the existing prejudices grow stronger (Pariser, 2011, Nenadić, 2017). Filtering and fragmenting information, together with the inability to check and judge the source, can have a harmful effect on democracy, as highlighted back in 2013 by a European Commission's expert group in media freedoms and pluralism (HLG, 2013). Owing to algorithms and fake news, terms such as "fact" and "evidence" have become key issues for education in the post-factual world (Peters, 2017, based on Pekkala and Wadbring, 2017).

11 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/2016-call-proposals-pilot-project-media-literacy-all

The problem with algorithms and disinformation on social networks and video-sharing platforms is the fact that they are not subject to conventional regulations, which puts an even greater stress on the role and responsibility of the internet intermediaries (Facebook, YouTube and Google, among others). Moreover, these internet intermediaries are outside the legal framework, and are mentioned only in the 2000 *Directive on Electronic Commerce, where they are categorized* **as** providers of information society services, which no longer fits the position or the influence these internet intermediaries have, particularly regarding information space access and how informed the citizens are. Over the past few years, the free and unregulated space taken up by social networks and digital media has been overwhelmed by disinformation, propaganda, hate speech and extremism, and even used for terrorist activities. Accordingly, the existing internet intermediaries are being increasingly pressured to take responsibility, which is why they have started making their own rules in an attempt to anticipate any legal solutions. Nonetheless, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir has warned that internet intermediaries are not only removing illegal content at the request of appropriate authorities, but also independently assessing whether certain content is in breach of any legal or other frameworks. That is also a way to threaten one's freedom of expression and we can argue just how safe media freedoms are in the hands of powerful global digital companies whose rules and procedures are anything but transparent (Desir, 2017).

In *Recommendation on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries*[12], the Council of Europe points out that Internet intermediaries should in all their actions respect the internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms of their users and of other parties who are affected by their activities. It also states that any interference by intermediaries with the free and open flow of information and ideas, be it by automated means or not, should be based on clear and transparent policies and be limited to specific legitimate purposes, such as restricting access to illegal content, as determined either by law or by a judicial authority or other independent administrative authority whose decisions are subject to judicial review, or in accordance with their own content-restriction policies or codes of ethics, which may include flagging mechanisms.

Considering the growing global concern, on both political and public level, over the use of algorithms and automatized data processing techniques as well as their considerable impact on the way human rights are exercised, the Council of Europe published a study titled *Algorithms and Human Rights: Study on the Human Rights Dimensions of Automated Data Processing Techniques and Possible Regulatory Implications* in the spring of 2018. The study concludes by warning about the responsibility of the internet intermediaries, and demanding transparent automatized procedures, protection of user privacy and respect for one of the fundamental human rights – freedom of expression. Moreover, the study states that all available means should be used to inform and engage the general public so that users are empowered to critically understand and deal with the logic behind the operation of algorithms. This should, among other things, be included in the awareness-raising and media

12 Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries, Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 March 2018. https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=0900001680790e14

literacy campaigns. Furthermore, the Council's study concludes by saying that the industries developing the analytical systems used in algorithmic decision-making and data collection processes have a particular responsibility to create awareness and understanding regarding the possible biases that may be induced by the design and use of algorithms.

Even individual Member States are exploring the possibility of legal solutions to the problem of fake news. So far, only Germany has managed to adopt a law (*Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz – NetzDG*) that that compels large social networks and video-sharing platforms (with over two million users) to remove any "obviously illegal content", including fake news, within 24 hours. In line with the said law, internet intermediaries and social networks can be fined up to EUR 50 million if they fail to remove the illegal content or repeatedly violate the law. France, on the other hand, has announced a law that will regulate the issue of disinformation during election campaigns. In January 2018, Italy's government launched a police-run website where people could report possible fake news. In November 2017, the country's communications and electronic media regulatory authority (AGCOM) launched an initiative[13] encouraging self-regulation on online platforms as a method of fighting fake news online. Moreover, AGCOM gathered the relevant stakeholders and held a public discussion to that end, adopting guidelines on equal access to online platforms just before the parliamentary elections in March. These guidelines lay down principles that already exist in relation to traditional media, including equal access to news and communication tools for all political subjects, as well as political propaganda's transparency. Finally, AGCOM also called upon Google and Facebook to enhance their fact-checking mechanisms.

The issue of fake news is quite complex and should be viewed in a wider context of social and political developments and changes in the global media ecosystem. In doing so, we should also consider a number of elements such as the decreased trust in conventional media, social networks as the main source of information, decline of the quality of journalism and lower professional media standards, reduced revenues generated by the traditional media, unregulated space of the internet intermediaries and social networks, sponsored news, algorithms and echo chambers, social media bots, and the citizens' underdeveloped media literacy. Therefore, even the measures that will be implemented will need to take into account the causes that led to the information disorder.

In her highly cited article *Did Media Literacy backfire?*, Danah Boyd (2017) says that people need to be given an opportunity to understand different perspectives and make sense of a very complicated information landscape. Moreover, standard educational approaches can no longer be relied upon because the societal context has shifted. It is therefore necessary to build a social structure that will enable a better media literacy. If the society wants to address issues such as propaganda, hate speech, fake news and biased content, it will need to focus on reinforcing the citizens' media literacy (Boyd, 2017).

13 https://www.agcom.it/documents/10179/8946952/Delibera+423–17-CONS/aac2d789–2f86–42a0–8fc2-f4c052eb8dcd?version=1.2

# 2. Media Literacy Definition and Concept

The emergence of a script (an alphabet) marks the start of the continued development of not only communication and the media, but also of multiple necessary skills (literacy). In modern times, the concept of literacy has been expanded to include skills and competences involved in finding, selecting, analyzing, evaluating and storing information, and its use (UAB et al., 2007). With different forms of information transmission came the change in people's sensory abilities, and the structures of thought and perception transformed as well (Kunczik and Zipfel, 2006). However, it was the electronic media that introduced a comprehensive change. The appearance of electronic media (telephone, radio, film and television) has paved the way for mass communication and the later emergence of digital media, i.e. the communication and technological revolution that has brought new languages and codes as well as an explosion of information (Tornero and Varis, 2010). Digital media have expanded at a speed and to an extent never seen before in history, consequently leading to a new intellectual, semiotic, communicative and cultural climate, which has had a profound effect on the development of both individuals and societies (Jacquinot-Delaunay, Carlsson, Tayie and Tornero, 2008). This has led to a need for a wider, umbrella concept of modern literacies and skills. Media literacy has thus integrated the traditional literacy (reading, writing and understanding) and skills that have come with the new media and technological platforms. That is to say, it has integrated the humanity's communication development, from the traditional alphabetical writing, to electronic media and digital information (Perez-Escoda, Garcia Ruiz and Aguaded, 2016).

## 2.1. DEFINING MEDIA LITERACY

The concept of media literacy, i.e. the establishment of the media literacy policy, has been developing for nearly thirty years, starting in the 1980s. As regards media literacy conceptualization and development in the US, but also globally, the landmark event was the 1992 National Leadership Conference On Media Literacy in Aspen[14]. The purpose of the conference was to agree on a definition, vision,

14 http://medialit.net/reading-room/aspen-institute-report-national-leadership-conference-media-literacy

and framework for media literacy efforts in the US, and its results proved to be a vital framework for further work on improving media literacy over the coming years[15]. One of the main conclusions of the conference in Aspen was that media constructed reality, and had commercial, ideological and political implications; that form and content were related in each medium, each of which had a unique aesthetic, codes and conventions; and that message receivers negotiated the meaning (Aufderheide, 1992). The biggest contribution of the event in Aspen was the definition of media literacy hammered out by Prof. Patricia Aufderheide in the final report of the conference. A media literate person – and everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can decode, analyze, evaluate and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training range widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence (Aufderheide, 1993). In the very introduction of the document, Prof. Aufderheide (1993) gave a brief, basic definition of media literacy: the ability of a citizen to access, analyze, and produce information for specific outcomes.

This seemingly simple definition is actually a comprehensive framework of competences and a starting point for the definition of media environment, media divide and media literate individuals (Žuran and Ivanišin, 2013). It had also laid the groundwork for the modern definitions of media literacy, which would be only slightly revised and upgraded in its idea and message over the coming decades. There are numerous definitions; however, most of them include (or combine) the elements of access, analysis, evaluation and production of media content, i.e. communication and civic participation, as well as skills of using media and technological platforms. None of these components should be viewed separately as they are all interconnected and represent a dynamic, nonlinear process, in which knowledge and skill of one element facilitate gaining the knowledge about another element, together creating media literacy (Livingstone, 2003).

James Potter (2012) claims no definition of media literacy is perfect as it is a never-ending and an everchanging process – it is a continuum rather than a category. One can also conclude that all media literacy definitions are in a transitional phase and are not only subject to various technological changes but also current interest, social needs, values and cognitive abilities (Žuran and Ivaniš, 2013). Tornero (2008) states that media literacy is the term used to describe the competences and skills required for independent and conscious development in the new communication environment – digital, global and multimedia – of the information society, while Potter (2012) simplifies the whole thing by saying that media literacy is all about taking control.

It is important to define the term because of the various approaches and goals (education, protection from harmful media content...), different policies and

15 http://medialit.net/reading-room/aspen-institute-report-national-leadership-conference-media-literacy

easier access to media literacy conceptualization, its various areas and dimensions, and interpretations in the context of media and democratic development of individual societies (UAB et al., 2007). The technological revolution, i.e. the emergence of new media and communication platforms and related changes in habits and ways of consuming media content, has imposed certain new necessary skills but also the need for a more comprehensive definition of media literacy.

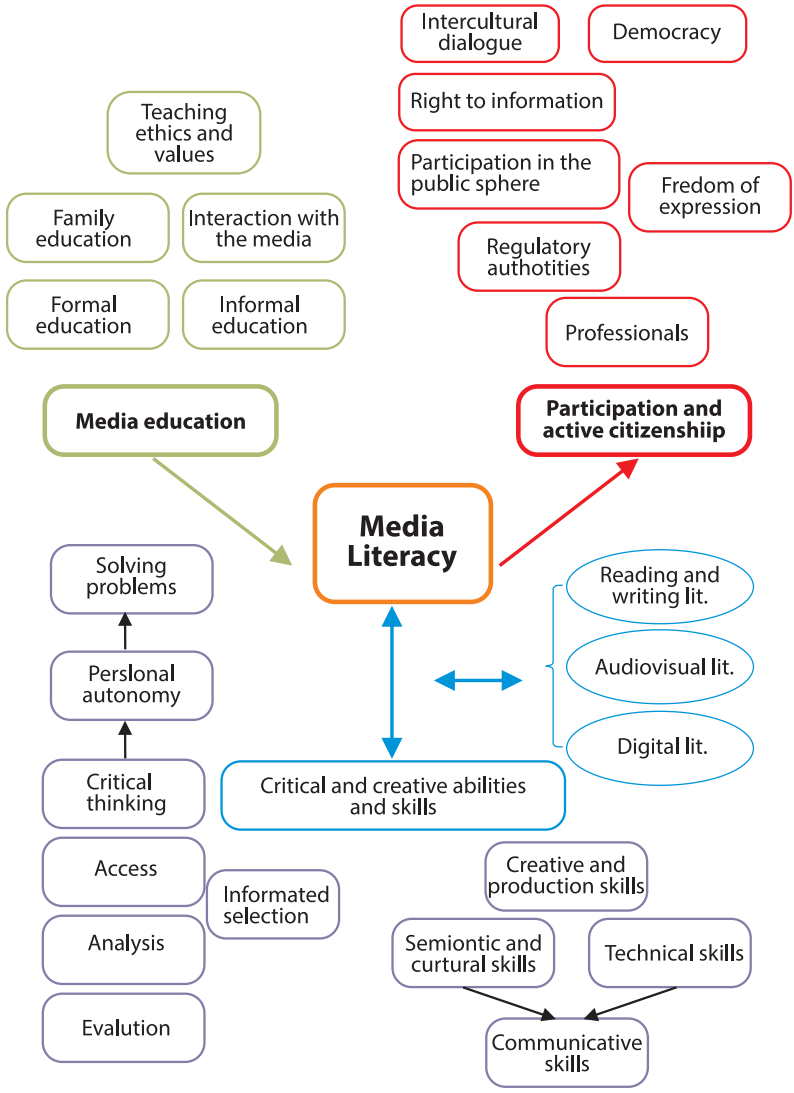
It is also important to differentiate between media literacy and media education. Media education is a process, and media literacy the result of that process or learning and teaching in any context, i.e. acquiring skills and competences (Tornero, 2008). Defined in various scientific contexts and applications, those terms often overlap. It is also probably why those two terms, media education and media literacy, are quite often incorrectly used even in international documents.

## 2.2. MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT MAP

In the 21st century, the new media brought with them yet another dimension, i.e. competence – the ability to create and produce media content. Since then, media literacy has been linked to communication competences and content production. There has also been a change in the way the media are consumed; consequently, the audience is no longer a passive receiver of media messages but creates its own meanings. In this new age of media and communication, knowing and using the technology and the complex system of the media system's codes and languages is a precondition for a successful receiving, creating and sharing information and content. Alongside information and computer literacy, this leads to additional necessary skills called digital literacy and ICT (information and communication technology) skills. Digital literacy (just like ICT literacy) has its roots in computer science and information science, with the emphasis on the ability to use digital devices and tools, and is often considered to be a means for enabling others forms of literacy and a major factor in managing information and content (UNESCO, 2013).

Media literacy is integrated into a wider concept by many competences necessary for the participation in media communication: semiotic skills for coding and decoding, technical skills of using specific devices and technologies, interpretative and cultural skills, i.e. placing into a cultural context and the context of social interaction, and understanding of the media industry and factors in the environment. This way, the concept of media literacy is defined as an integral model of all literacies, and the concept map demonstrates the meaning of and relations between the mentioned terms (Maletić, 2014).

Figure 2.1. Media literacy concept map




Source: UAB et al., (2007). *Study on the Current Trends And Approaches to Media literacy in Europe*

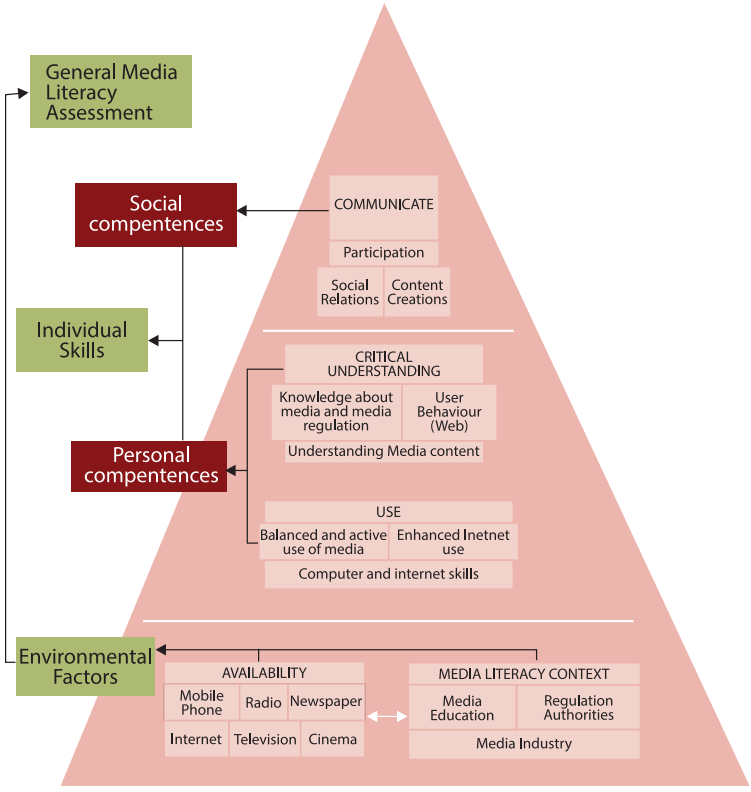
The concept map is part of the *Study on the Current Trends And Approaches to Media literacy in Europe*, which was carried out on behalf of the European Commission in 2007. The goal was to take stock of the situation and define the concept of media literacy in the European Union. The map shows media literacy emerging as the result of the media education process, but also of the citizens' participation and use of critical thinking and skills of creating and producing content, as well as of the use of the three literacies that make up media literacy: reading and writing, audiovisual literacy (film and television) and digital literacy (internet and digital media).

## 2.3. MEDIA LITERACY STRUCTURE/DIMENSIONS

Media literacy is a complex construction comprising many different ideas and streams of thought; it is a dynamic phenomenon, a process of communicative interaction between different agents in a rapidly developing and changing environment (Celot, 2011). In 2009, a group of experts led by an independent organisation, the European Association for Viewers Interests (EAVI), completed the *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels*, i.e. a comprehensive analysis of media literacy elements and ways to assess its levels, and conducted a survey of the media literacy level in the Member States.

Based on that survey, the study identified two fundamental dimensions within media literacy – individual competences and environmental factors (EAVI et al., 2009). Moreover, the study is important as it has shown that the ultimate ambition of media literacy and the key factor in its development must be the critical understanding, i.e. making people media literate so they can participate in all aspects of public life and democratic processes, as indicated by the Project Coordinator Paolo Celot (2011).

Figure 2.2. Media literacy structure




Source: EAVI et al. (2009). *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels*

*The Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels* has used this particular model to show media literacy as the result of the dynamic processes between the base of the pyramid (Availability and Context) and its top (Communicative Abilities), and the route from the base to the top is individual media competence (Media Use and Critical Understanding). The study stresses that critical understanding is the most important element of individual competences and aspect of the relationship between the individual and the media. Livingstone (2003) warns that being able to evaluate media content is no simple skill as critical evaluation rests on a substantial body of knowledge. Critical evaluation requires "contextualization", i.e. knowing the broader social, cultural, economic, political and historical contexts in which media content is produced (Bazalgette, 1999, based on Livingstone, 2003).

## Individual competences

Individual media literacy competences include personal, individual capacities related to using certain skills (access, analysis, communication). In the study, EAVI (2009) examines individual competences using the following three criteria: use (technical skills), critical understanding (cognitive competences – message decoding, comprehension and evaluation of the media content) and communicative abilities.

Elements of the individual competences of media literacy

| INDIVIDUAL COMPETENCES | | |
|---|---|---|
| USE (technical skills)<br>– Media access<br>– Computer and internet skills<br>– Balanced and active use of media<br>– Advanced use of the internet and technical tools | CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING<br>– Understanding of the media and its functionality<br>– Knowledge of the media and media regulation<br>– User behavior (ability to look for and use information) | COMMUNICATION<br>– Social relations<br>– Civic participation<br>– Content production<br>– Creating databases<br>– Use of different platforms (social networks or services etc.) |

Source: EAVI et al. (2009). *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels.*

Furthermore, according to the *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels*, media literacy does not develop in an isolated setting but depends, among other things, on the elements that either engender or endanger the development of individual skills. That includes not only the availability of all the media but also a wider context of media literacy that encompasses five main areas: media education, media literacy policies, media industry, civil society, and basic communication-related rights – availability of both media and information, freedom of expression and media pluralism. Media availability, their offer and accessibility in the given context, i.e. media pluralism, is the key outside factor affecting the development of media literacy. That is why media freedom is the responsibility of the authorities (who must not influence the media), the media themselves (who are supposed to provide reliable information), and the audience (who should have their freedom of expression guaranteed), states the study (EAVI et al., 2009).

# 3. International Organisations and Media Literacy

The work that international organisations such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Commission do in the field of media literacy is of critical importance for the development and encouragement of media literacy. Their efforts and documents are important as they elaborate the concept of media literacy in detail, initiate wide-ranging discussions, and share the best practices, but also because they provide concrete and practical materials for introducing media literacy in national educational systems.

While media literacy in education has been the main focus of UNESCO's activities and in light of specific issues that are subject of this study, in this Chapter we will focus on European Commission and Council of Europe actions in this field.

However, it is important to bring up UNESCO's 2014 Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Age, in the context of a continued technological development and changes in the digital media environment. It says that one should not promote technical and digital literacies and skills, without integrating them into a broader context of media and information literacy as those are complementary skills. Moreover, according to UNESCO, critical thinking, creativity and ethical use of both media and information remain key skills in this digital and convergent media world. Accordingly, in the declaration, UNESCO warns that even in educational or political contexts (for instance, educational curricula or teacher education), neither media literacy nor information literacy should be substituted with digital and IT literacy (UNESCO, 2014).

## 3.1. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

In 2006, the European Commission began exploring the issue of media literacy more actively by setting up a Media Literacy Expert Group[16]. Based on the founda-

16 The Media Literacy Expert Group is still active. Its mission is to recognize, analyze, document and extend good practices in the field of media literacy, facilitate networking between different stakeholders, and achieve synergies between different EU policies and media literacy initiatives.

tions and proposals of the Expert Group and following a public discussion, in 2007, in a document titled *A European Approach to Media Literacy in the Digital Environment*, the European Commission defined 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" (European Commission, 2007). In that same document, the European Commission adopted and introduced a broader concept of media literacy, linking it to the strengthening of both technical and digital competences, production and critical skills of the citizens, and the development of the audiovisual industry, culture, intercultural dialogue, democracy and civic participation.

The next important step in media literacy's further conceptualization in the European Union was mentioning media literacy in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) adopted by the European Parliament in late 2007. The term media literacy is explained in the preamble of the directive: "Media literacy refers to skills, knowledge and understanding that allow consumers to use media effectively and safely. Media-literate people are able to exercise informed choices, understand the nature of content and services and take advantage of the full range of opportunities offered by new communications technologies. They are better able to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive material. Therefore the development of media literacy in all sections of society should be promoted and its progress followed closely" (AVMSD, Recital, Article 47, 2007).

A proposal amending the AVMSD, which should be adopted by the end of 2018, calls on Member States to promote and implement measures for the development of media literacy skills, and requires application reports by the European Commission every three years. It has also been suggested that the following provision is included in the recital of the new directive: "In order to enable citizens to access information and to use, critically assess and create media content responsibly and safely, citizens need to possess advanced media literacy skills. Therefore, it is necessary to develop media literacy in all parts of the society, for all generations and for all the media, is promoted also in cooperation with the audiovisual media services providers, video-sharing platform providers and all other relevant stakeholders" (Proposal for AVMSD, April 2018).

Over the course of the second decade of the 21st century, the European Union has been including both media education and media literacy in a number of policies, declarations, programs and studies in various areas, from education, economy, culture and audiovisual industry to youth and human right policies. In doing so, it has been increasingly frequently shifting the focus from the concept of media literacy to a narrower concept of digital skills or competences. In 2010, the European Commission unveiled the Digital Agenda for Europe, the first of seven flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy. The importance of digital skills was highlighted even in the Commission's 2015 Digital Single Market, which is part of the whole Digital Agenda package.

The broader concept of media literacy was once again highlighted in 2016, when the European Commission's Media Literacy Expert Group expanded on the definition of media literacy by saying that it was an umbrella expression that included all the

technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allowed a citizen to access, have a critical understanding of the media and interact with it. These capacities allow the citizens to participate in the economic, social and cultural aspects of society as well as to play an active role in the democratic process. The Expert Group also stressed that in any media literacy definition, the key element was the development of critical thinking (Cernison and Ostling, 2017).

This particular definition of media literacy was even accepted by the Council of The European Union. That same year, in its document titled *Council Conclusions on Developing Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Education and Training*, the Council clearly stated that digital skills were just one of many components of media literacy. The document in question also warns that a low level of digital competence may put the citizens in an unfavorable position in the labor market and the society in general. It goes on to say that formal education needs to teach young people to think independently and critically and use facts to counter extremist messages, indoctrination and disinformation. Moreover, Member States were called on to include the issues of media literacy in policies in a number of areas, including education, youth and culture as well as audiovisual and media policies (Council of the European Union, 2016).

## 3.2. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

For the Council of Europe, media literacy was initially mostly linked to the right to freedom of expression and the protection of media consumers.

One of the Council's most important documents is the 2000 *Recommendation for Media Education*, which defines media education as teaching practices which aim to develop media competence, understood as a critical and discerning attitude toward the media in order to form well-balanced citizens, capable of making their own judgements on the basis of the available information. Moreover, the document states that media education enables the citizens to access the necessary information, to analyze it and be able to identify the economic, political, social and cultural interests that lie behind it. Media education teaches individuals to interpret and produce messages, to select the most appropriate media for communicating and, eventually, to have a greater say in the media offer and output. The document then goes on to say that media education allows people to exercise their right to freedom of expression and right to information, as well as to strengthen their civic competences and participation in society (Council of Europe, 2000). The new media communication age has also pushed the Council of Europe to adopt the concept of media literacy and try to define it. At the 2009 Conference of Ministers in Reykjavik, Iceland, the Council of Europe adopted a new resolution titled *Towards a New Notion of Media*. The resolution states that the development and changes on the media scene, which were caused by technological changes, call for a closer analysis of our understanding of media, including the criteria and assumptions that underlie this understanding. In this context, the document states, media literacy should be considered essential and recognized as part of the education for democratic citizenship (Council of Europe, 2009).

Lately, the Council of Europe has been supporting research and publishing studies on the many problems of living in a digital media world, such as the study on the issue of disinformation and algorithms mentioned earlier.

The Council of Europe highlighted the importance of media literacy in the *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership*[17] (March 2018). This document stresses the important role of media in democratic societies and points, among others, at the position of internet intermediaries, which have an increasing control over the flow, access and accessibility of information and other content. The demand of new strategic solutions for the maintenance of an independent, high quality journalism and the increase of accessibility of various media content on all kinds of platforms and all types of media has been emphasized. The Council of Europe considers media literacy one of the main tools for strengthening of media pluralism and the quality of media content providing a couple of recommendations:

- States should introduce legislative provisions, or strengthen existing ones, that promote media literacy with a view to enabling individuals to access, understand, critically analyse, evaluate, use and create content through a range of legacy and digital (including social) media. This should also include appropriate digital (technological) skills for accessing and managing digital media. Another important aim of media literacy is to enable individuals to know and understand how their personal data are collected, stored and used by internet platforms.
- States should develop a national media literacy policy and ensure its implementation through yearly and long-term plans as well as provide funds for this purpose. In this sense, the key factor could be the support in creating a national media literacy network, which would include a wide range of stakeholders as well as further development of such a network in areas where it already exists.
- In the multimedia ecosystem, media literacy plays an important role for people of all ages and therefore measures for promotion of media literacy should assist in the development of media literacy education in schools but also of a lifelong learning concept.
- States should encourage all media, without interfering in editorial independence, to promote media literacy through various policies, strategies and activities, whereby public media services and community media could play a special role due to their obligations and goals. States should therefore promote media literacy through media support programmes, taking into consideration the special roles of public service media and community media.
- States should ensure that independent national regulatory authorities and/or other bodies have the scope and resources to promote media literacy in ways that are relevant to their mandates and encourage them to do so.

17 https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680790e13

– States are encouraged to take particular account of media pluralism and transparency of media ownership in their coordinated national media literacy programmes in order to help citizens make an informed and critical evaluation of the information and ideas propagated via the media. To this end, States are called upon to include in their strategies for ensuring transparency in the media sector educational content, which enables individuals to use information relating to media ownership, organisation and financing to better understand the different influences on the production, collection, curation and dissemination of media content (Council of Europe, 2018).

Before that, the Council of Europe has been continuously implementing the activities related to media education and reinforcement of media literacy importance. Reminding the Member States that the citizens should be able to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms even online, in 2014, the Council of Europe issued a *Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users*[18]. The guide is intended for internet users so they can learn more about their basic human rights online and their possible limitations, and about using legal instruments for that very purpose. The latest version of the internet literacy guide, *Internet Literacy Handbook*[19], was originally published back in 2003, and the Council of Europe issued it in 2017. The new edition takes into consideration all the many changes, but still the guide helps families, educators and policymakers to acquire new skills and technical knowledge to navigate both digital and communications technology.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the European Union and as part of the iLEGEND project, the Council of Europe set up a Media Literacy Task Force[20]. The goal of the iLEGEND project is to raise awareness about the global interdependence and solidarity through the Global Development Education (GDE) program and cooperation of the youth in Europe and around the world. One of the main objectives of the Task Force is to promote awareness and knowledge about the media literacy dimension of global education, toward youth, educators and decision makers.

There are some rather significant projects that the Council of Europe has been implementing in South-East Europe, promoting the development of media freedoms and pluralism and affecting media literacy. For instance, a document titled *Montenegro Media Sector Inquiry with Recommendations for Harmonization with the Council of Europe and European Union Standards*[21], was completed as part of the JUFREX project. The analysis identifies several political initiatives and strategy documents that have recognized the importance of promoting media and information literacy in the future, thus drawing the local structures' attention to the importance of reinforcing media literacy.

One of the most important European studies unveiled in the past few years is *Mapping of Media Literacy Practice and Actions in EU-28*[22], by the Council of Europe's

18 https://rm.coe.int/16804d5b31

19 https://rm.coe.int/internet-literacy-handbook/1680766c85

20 https://rm.coe.int/the-media-literacy-task-force-short-report/168077da09

21 https://rm.coe.int/montenegro-media-sector-inquiry-with-the-council-of-europe-and-europea/16807b4dd0

22 https://rm.coe.int/media-literacy-mapping-report-en-final-pdf/1680783500

European Audiovisual Observatory on behalf of the European Commission. The document analyzes good practices and highlights the most important media literacy projects in the European Union in the period between 2010 and 2016. Twenty of the most relevant media literacy projects at the time were analyzed, taking into consideration the issues addressed, and the projects' coordinators and financial backers, as well as whether media literacy networks were being created and whether there was any cross-sector collaboration. This study has also confirmed the connection between the development of national policies, the involvement of stakeholders and the results of media literacy projects. A total of 547 projects linked to media literacy has been analysed, which included several main media literacy components. The results show that most of them, even 403, were dedicated to the development of critical thinking e.g. the understanding of the functioning of media, of the construction of media messages, the recognition of different media content as well as the analysis and evaluation of media content.

# 4. National Media Literacy Policies Across Europe

Numerous studies[23] and analyses focusing on the development of media literacy in Europe nearly always highlight the countries in the north of Europe, particularly the Nordic countries, as boasting the highest levels of the citizens' media literacy. Some theoreticians (Cernison and Ostling, for instance) link the countries' economic development to the quality of their national media literacy policies. Presumably, apart from finances, these wealthier countries tend to have an innovative approach to political processes, and media literacy can be viewed as some sort of an innovation. Moreover, the problem is that a large number of countries still perceive media literacy policies as secondary and immaterial needs that attract political attention only when the political pressure on basic economic issues is less strong (Cernison and Ostling, 2017). However, when creating national media literacy policies, the important elements include not only economic preconditions but also cultural characteristics and media tradition. Having a national media literacy strategy or policy (or including it in other national policies) sends a message about the importance of media literacy for the society, thus raising the awareness about the goals and the importance of the activities on national, local and institutional levels, and laying the groundwork for the financing of various media literacy projects and cooperation and synergy between various stakeholders and initiatives.

The study *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe*[24], published in 2017, analyzes national media literacy policies in the European Union's Member States as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey. The analyses were conducted based on individual reports and analyses for every country, as part of the 2013 ANR TRANSLIT project and the European COST research network, Transforming Audiences/Transforming Societies. The study determined that progress in adopting relevant policies and implementing projects in many European countries was still rather slow. The lack of an institutional definition of media literacy proved to be an issue when creating national policies and a major obstacle in

23 For instance, Cernison and Ostling (2017). Measuring media literacy in the EU: Results from the Media Pluralism Monitor or EAVI et al. (2009). Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels.

24 Edited by Divina Frau-Meigs, Irma Velez and Julieta Flores Michel.

media literacy development and implementation for a large number of these countries, particularly the new members of the European Union (Trultzsch-Wijnen et al., 2017). In most of the Member States, media literacy is defined as a set of competences for a critical and creative use of various media as well as social empowerment through an active and participating citizenry. A large number of countries have adopted the media literacy definition suggested by the European Commission in the 2007 document titled *A European Approach to Media Literacy in the Digital Environment*. Others have used it as basis for their own definitions, placing it in the context of further technological development or clearly expanding it by adding a social, civil and cultural purpose that media literacy must serve (Trultzsch-Wijnen et al., 2017). Furthermore, in many of the European countries, media literacy or digital and computer skills have been included in their fundamental national education plans, usually as intercurricular courses. Most of the countries are also focused on digital and/or information literacy, which could lead to a potential marginalization of the media literacy concept. That is why Trultzsch-Wijnen et al. (2017) believe transposing the recommendations from UNESCO's *Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Age* into national policies would be a step forward in reinforcing a broader media literacy concept combining many literacies and skills.

The study *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe* divided the countries into three categories, based on the stage of development of media education and media literacy implementation – initial, advanced and fully developed.

## *Countries at the initial stage of media literacy implementation*

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Latvia and Romania were recognized as being at the initial stage, lacking an institutional definition of media literacy or a national media education policy, as well as institutional bodies responsible for promoting and implementing media literacy projects (del Mar Grandio, Dilli and O'Neill, 2017). Bosnia and Herzegovina was singled out as lacking legal and institutional frameworks for media literacy promotion and reinforcement. As for Serbia, it was emphasized that it lacked a developed media education policy but that the importance of media literacy had been recognized in certain national documents, such as the Strategy for Education Development in Serbia until 2020, adopted in 2012, where media education and media literacy were credited as one of the outcomes, and where the importance of information literacy was highlighted. Otherwise, it is notable that in Serbia, there is an awareness of the importance of working on media literacy, at least on the declarative level, seeing as the *Strategy for the Development of the Public Information System in the Republic of Serbia until 2016*[25] states the following: "The level of media literacy is low and there is a necessity for the state to do more in that particular area. During the EU accession process, the state will have to raise the level of media literacy of the citizens in the Republic of Serbia, as well as of all the actors in the media sector, to create a society that all its members are involved in and to strengthen the right to information, freedom of expression and freedom of information flow."

25 http://rem.rs/uploads/files/strategija/strategija_razvoja_sistema_javnog_informisanja_u_republici_srbiji_do_2016.pdf

The study, nevertheless concluded that, probably because of the lack of public media literacy policies, one of the characteristics of these countries was the work of the private and civic sectors on encouraging media literacy, particularly through projects promoting computer and IT literacy (del Mar Grandio, Dilli and O'Neill, 2017).

### *Countries at an advanced and developed stage of media literacy policies*

According to the study, the countries that are at an advanced stage of implementing media literacy policies include the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Ireland and Spain. Most of them have a legal framework for media literacy, and their laws and declarations laying down the fundamental principles of media literacy have, for the most part, been passed and adopted on the basis of the European Union's recommendations. What is significant is that most of these countries have a national authority (or regional authorities) responsible for the implementation of media literacy or the supervision of the media literacy issues. Moreover, these countries are known for their continued development and expansion of the civil society organisations, which enable a systematic teaching of media literacy through informal education (del Mar Grandio et al., 2017)

In the United Kingdom, media literacy became a legal category in 2003, when the Communications Act placed a responsibility on the country's communications regulator Ofcom to promote media literacy. As part of that task, Ofcom also carries out regular and extensive research into media literacy and the use of electronic media by both children and adults[26]. Ofcom's research plays an important role in shaping public policies and helping those implementing media literacy projects. It should be noted that Ofcom has defined media literacy as "the ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts".

As regards Ireland, its electronic media regulator BAI (*Broadcasting Authority of Ireland*) is also very active when it comes to media literacy, as discussed in a later chapter describing the best regulatory practices.

In France, the Ministry of National Education has defined media literacy as a concept of critical understanding of the media enabling the citizens to develop competences for exploring, selecting and interpreting information, as well as assessing the sources and critically consuming media content, and understanding the media and new information technologies in all their dimensions: economic, social, technological and ethical.[27] France was the first country in Europe to introduce an institutional agency responsible solely for media education – CLEMI[28] (*Centre pour L'Education aux Medias et a L'Information*). Established in 1983, CLEMI cooperates with the academic community and local educational institutions on developing and financing media education projects, only to disseminate them across the country and to anyone who needs them, in partnership with both public and private stakeholders. Lately, CLEMI has also been producing hour-long video modules for teachers[29], helping them illustrate concrete cases in media education, especially when developing the students' critical thinking.

26 https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/media-literacy

27 http://eduscol.education.fr/cid72525/l-emi-et-la-strategie-du-numerique.html#lien1

28 https://www.clemi.fr/

29 https://www.clemi.fr/fr/declic-clip-pub.html

In recent years, the French regulatory body for electronic media *Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* (CSA) has been strengthening its activities in the field of media literacy. Since 2013, CSA has been investing efforts in education about media in parallel with the Ministry of National Education. Using its website http://clesdelaudiovisuel.fr/, CSA continues its collaboration with CELSA (Sorbonne University in Paris), with the aim of enriching the scientific literature in the domain of the media. Master's degree students organized in working groups edit articles that are published on the website. The central topic in 2017 and 2018 was *French Audiovisual Works in the World*. Every year, in cooperation with CLEMI, CSA organizes a Media Week, and in both 2017 and 2018, the week took place in March, featuring the topic *Where does the information come from?*. In 2017, 1,850 media outlets actively participated in the Media Week, organizing workshops and lectures, online workshops, and distributing nearly one million copies of the newspaper free of charge. Also, CSA sent 43,000 packages of educational materials to schools by postal mail.

CSA's Audiovisual and Education Working Group also focuses on education about the media and education by the media. In 2014, it was decided that the group would engage in media literacy in a more participative manner and, in that sense, form an observatory where media and communication professionals, representatives of various relevant institutions, experts and audiovisual students would work together. The observatory is envisioned as a think tank about the relationship between education and media with a multidisciplinary approach. Operationally, it complements the work of CSA and provides concrete proposals in terms of policy for audiovisual and the general public.

Even though it is one of the advanced-stage countries, Germany has no legal definition of media education and related terms or a central national authority for media literacy. Nonetheless, media literacy is mentioned in various official documents as *Mediakompetenz*, which includes film, IT and information literacy. Moreover, certain federal states' regulatory authorities for electronic media are quite active in spreading media literacy, particularly in securing funds for various projects and research and encouraging the media to cooperate (Kammerl and Hasebrink, 2014).

Spain also lacks a national body responsible for regulating and supervising electronic media. As far as activities encouraging media literacy are concerned, we need to mention the Catalan regulator *Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya* (CAC), which has focused primarily on producing educational materials teaching media literacy. In cooperation with the Catalan Ministry of Education, CAC has been implementing a project, *eduCAC*[30], providing various teaching materials for educators teaching media and audiovisual language. These materials, intended for children aged 10 – 16, have been developed by a multidisciplinary team of experts in pedagogy, education and media. The materials consist of twelve teaching modules focused on the critical analysis of the news, the entertainment content, and the advertisements. They also provide an overview of the best practices in using the internet, and suggest projects so the students can test whatever they have learned in practice. The project's main goals include encouraging healthy media consumption habits

30 http://www.educac.cat/

and promoting skills, knowledge and understanding that enable an efficient and safe use of the media. Alongside teaching materials, CAC also has a special website www.educac.cat offering content and suggestions for families on how children and youth should use audiovisual media and the internet, with special emphasis on the issue of online safety. CAC has also prepared guides to correct and safe use of mobile devices and social media.

Since 2008, the Dutch media literacy programs have been implemented by *Mediawijsheid Expertisecentrum*, an expertise center for media literacy founded by the country's Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (McGonagle and Schumacher, 2013). The center gathers many stakeholders and coordinates media education projects, and organizes training courses for teachers, while their web portal is a good source of information for professionals. Furthermore, the Netherlands has been using the term *mediawijshed* (media wisdom) instead of media education since 2005. Media wisdom is defined as a set of knowledge and skills with which citizens consciously, critically and actively engage in a complex, changing and mediatized world. The term was introduced at the recommendation of the Council for Culture, which believed that media education referred only to education and children, while media wisdom encompassed all the citizens and all the relevant areas (McGonagle and Schumacher, 2013).

The study *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe* has highlighted Denmark and Finland as the most advanced countries, where media literacy is highly integrated in both the legislation and many national policies, and is clearly tied to the concept of human rights and active citizenry (del Mar Grandio, et al., 2017). The study says these countries promote the development of media education by encouraging equality, diversity and quality based on human rights. Denmark has a clear legal, financial and organisational framework for improving media education in its both formal and informal educational system. As regards the Finnish approach to media literacy, it will be analyzed as a separate case study in the next chapter.

# 5. Media Literacy and the Role of Regulatory Bodies: Best Practice Examples in Europe

## 5.1. FINLAND – A CASE STUDY

The best starting point for determining the impact of media literacy on the development of democracy, pluralism, and critical discourse in a society is the position that well-informed citizens, who take part in political processes and social life and make informed decisions based on media information, are the necessary prerequisite for every democratic process. This kind of reasoning underpins the notion of "informed citizenship", relying on their motivation and capacity to be critical consumers of the media, and take an active role in public debates that concern them. In turn, this active engagement leads to their understanding of modes of participation in the democratic life (Balčytiene & Wadbring, 2017). Media literacy, among other things, aims to understand how a society functions and how people build their values and personal views on the basis of information.

This allows for correlation between the level of media literacy and the level of democratic development in a society, in the sense that media literacy knowledge and skills can be said to have a positive impact on democratic processes and civic engagement. It is noteworthy that it is almost always the same group of countries from the north of Europe that come at the top of rankings in terms of media literacy, the state of democracy, freedoms, and satisfaction with the functioning of a society in different categories. Finland, which is the leader by media literacy level among EU Member States[31], is also among the best-ranked countries in most of the research measuring in some way the state of democracy and social development. The freest countries (scoring maximum 100 points) according to Freedom House[32] are Finland, Norway, and Sweden, while the highest level of media freedom according to the World Press Freedom Index[33] has been measured in Norway, Sweden, and Finland; political elections in Finland and Denmark are

31 EAVI et al. (2009). *Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels.*

32 https://freedomhouse.org/report/fiw-2017-table-country-scores

33 https://rsf.org/en/ranking

perceived as the most free.[34] There are some other indicators that might be correlated with quality policies for media literacy, such as the information that, on average, more daily newspapers are sold in Finland than in any other Member State, or that Reuters Institute's researchers found the highest level of trust in news and the media in Finland[35]. Furthermore, the Fragile States Index[36] places Finland at the top of the world's most stable countries and Eurostat's data[37] positions the country as second by the trust its citizens have in the national judiciary, political parties, and people in general. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)[38], which sums up relevant digital economy indicators in the European Union (including people's digital skills and the human capital), Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and the Netherlands have the most advanced digital economies in the European Union.

Of course, as previously implied here, the leading positions that Finland and other Nordic countries occupy in these researches, and the level of development of their respective media literacy policies are connected to the level of their economic development. However, one needs to keep in mind that in Finland, which was a poor rural country after the World War II, national consensus on the importance of developing the education system was reached in the 1960s, while the 1970s saw the implementation of the key education reform. In the 1980s, Finland's high education was aligned with the needs of its national economy, which was high-tech and knowledge-based. Systematic media education in schools also began in the 1970s. All these decisions, the accompanying social engagement, and the national consensus have taken Finland to the top of rankings mentioned earlier and to the high level of education and media literacy of its citizens in the years and decades that followed.

Obviously, Finland's excellent education system, which many consider to be one of the world's best, played an important part in all these achievements. The first time that media education made its way into Finland's national curriculum and education plan was back in 1972, and this was the first such example in the world. At the time, the reasoning leading to this decision was that a society could not ignore the fact that children too were becoming regular consumers of mass media, through which they gathered information about the world around them. This realization was coupled with awareness about mass media being an important institution, the activity of which is essential for a community's functional cultural and social life (Minkkinen and Nordenstreng, 1983). More recently, Finland began dedicating more attention to media education in early age, so a special curriculum for this was introduced in the autumn of 2016. This curriculum does not include mandatory outcomes for children, but mandatory guidelines for their educators. Its goal is to introduce the media to children through games and gradually develop their critical thinking in relation to them. Media literacy has never been treated as a separate

34 https://www.electoralintegrityproject.com/

35 https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%2017.pdf

36 http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/data/

37 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-datasets/-/ILC_PW05

38 https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/desi

subject by any educational policy in Finland; instead, it has always been integrated with other subjects through a cross-curricular approach.

This systematic approach of Finnish schools and continuous efforts by all relevant stakeholders in promoting education about the media is clearly reflected in the high level of media literacy possessed by the citizens of Finland, but also in the development of its democracy and civic engagement. For example, there is a strong correlation between the high circulation of daily newspapers and the education of Finnish students about the print media, which began in the 1950s, as well as systematic activities the national newspapers' association has undertaken together with local schools in co-organizing seminars and workshops for students and their teachers for more than 50 years. All this considered, the Finnish approach to media literacy has been selected here for a case study. We believe it is important to clarify and understand the comprehensive approach that the Finnish government and society overall have taken in treating this matter.

### 5.1.1. Finnish approach to media literacy

Media education, i.e. media literacy, in Finland was developed through the collaboration of government bodies, educational institutions, the scientific community, the civil (non-governmental) sector and the media (both public and commercial). Finland has been implementing a coherent national policy of media literacy, which is included in many national policies and strategies: educational (covering pre-school education and library policies as well), cultural, media, audiovisual, youth, and social welfare policies (Kotilainen and Kupiainen, 2014). It is extremely important that all national policies crucial for media literacy (audiovisual, cultural, education, child and youth) are adopted under the supervision of a single body – the Ministry of Education and Culture. Apart from currently being included in national educational plans, media literacy is also an integral part of Finland's Digital Agenda 2011 – 2020, the Audiovisual Culture Policy, the Public Library Policy and the 2012 Child and Youth Policy Program, and the Ministry of Education and Culture has also prepared a separate national strategy to promote media literacy – Good Media Literacy 2013 – 2016.

The National Board of Education has a key role for developing education in Finland, as it is responsible for developing basic educational programs and curricula and for organizing continuing education of teachers. The Board also allocates the funds needed by institutions involved in media education and the development of teaching tools. Other state institutions whose statutory obligations include the promotion of media and information literacy in their respective areas of interest also include Finland's Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Competition and Consumer Authority (Kavi, 2015).

Furthermore, media education also accounts for an important part of the law regulating the broadcasting activity, which has set up national bodies tasked with media education and the promotion of media literacy. The most important among them is the Center for Media Education and Audiovisual Media (MEKU), which was founded in 2012 as the successor to the Finnish Board of Film Classification and soon be-

came the key point of reference for the development of media literacy in Finland. Two years later, MEKU was unified with the National Audiovisual Archive to create a new body – the National Audiovisual Institute (*Kansallinen audiovisuaalinen instituutti* – KAVI), which is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Through the integration of two bodies, MEKU has become a department of the National Audiovisual Institute, and although the person leading it is the Institute's deputy director, who answers directly to the minister of culture. As the main body in charge of media literacy, MEKU[39] is required under the law to promote media education, media skills in children, and the development of a media environment safe for children and youths, to encourage scientific research important in this field, to monitor international practices and studies, and to distribute scientific and other publications on children and the media. Furthermore, it acts as a regulatory body, monitoring audiovisual content to make sure that children and minors are protected, and classifying audiovisual programmes by determining age limit depending on the content.

In the European context, MEKU has a unique make-up, acting both as the media content regulator (from the aspect of protection of children and youths) and the authority for media literacy. Furthermore, MEKU coordinates the activities of other government bodies, media and civil associations in the domain of media education, and implements numerous media literacy projects (the Media Literacy Week and the Media Education Forum for Professionals, to name only two). It is also Finland's reference point for the European Union's Safer Internet project. By setting up MEKU, Finland has earned a place in the very small group of countries with a special institutional body in charge of developing and promoting media literacy. The existence of a special national agency for media literacy allows for long-term planning, project relevance and sustainability, and the harmonization of content of a large number of projects with relevant national policies.

### 5.1.2. National Policy Guidelines 2013 – 2016: Good Media Literacy

Although media literacy has been an integral part of many national policies and strategies in Finland since the early 21st century, it was not until 2012 that the Ministry of Education and Culture adopted the first national policy on media literacy – the *Good Media Literacy: National Policy Guidelines 2013 – 2016*[40]. This document relies on the targets defined by government programs, particularly the national policies on children and youth and on audiovisual culture, as well as on the need to increase media education in a continuously evolving media environment. Built on the principles set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it aims to secure conditions for children and youth to access and participate in media and information society safely, enabling them to become active citizens with a sense of social responsibility. The vision contained within these guidelines is that of Finland becoming a society with respect and improved understanding for media literacy and its importance. They set out the following principles of media literacy: equality

39 https://kavi.fi/en/media-education-and-audiovisual-media

40 http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/75280/OKM13.pdf

and pluralism in access to media education; systematic and long-term projects; transparency and cooperation between the many stakeholders, and building a solid base of knowledge that relies on continuing research and valuation.

There are four principal goals defined by the national policy guidelines for media literacy:

### *1. High-quality every-day media education centred around children and young people*

The guidelines state that meeting this goal requires adequate resources for media education and educators at local levels. They further emphasize the need to develop and provide the kind of media education that will help children and youth to learn how to take part in media activities in different surroundings, support parenthood, and create opportunities for intergenerational interaction and learning. It is necessary to develop educational projects, seminars, materials, and models for working in media education that will take into account different needs and ages of children and youth, new groups and areas (including children up to the age of three, videogames, children and youth in media production). The need to encourage and support local communities in their media literacy activities and to get other stakeholders involved as well is also highlighted here.

### *2. A sustainable structure for the promotion of media literacy enabled through laws, financing and steering at national and local levels*

In order to achieve this goal, the impact of legislative adjustments in the audiovisual industry and media environment for children and youth will be monitored systematically. There will be continuous efforts to promote media literacy and media education through the cultural policy, while in the youth policy media education will be part of advocating an active citizenry. Encouraging of media literacy will be embedded in the new, reformed curricula for pre-school and general education and in the documents and policies of local authorities, schools, libraries, youth and social welfare centers, and the media sector. Teaching staff at all levels will have secured access to education and continuous assistance on the field. The European Union's structural funds will be used for media education projects alongside central and local government funding.

### *3. Clearly define activities and stakeholders in media education, strengthen their cooperation and create new partnerships in this field.*

The National Audiovisual Institute (its department MEKU) will be positioned as the national center for media education, working closely with other government bodies, organisations, and the civil sector. The civil society will be encouraged to promote media literacy and the production of media content that is versatile and safe for children and youth. The scientific community is expected to work on strengthening and expanding the multidisciplinary bases of knowledge and data on media education, to organize seminars and increase publication. Support to existing successful models of cooperation (between schools and libraries, for instance) will maintain, along with support to creating new partnerships (between civil and private sectors, for instance).

### *4. Finland will play an active role in media education activities globally*

Media education is one area where Finland has a very close cooperation with Nordic countries. This cooperation will be maintained along with cooperation on European and global levels, through development and research projects, conferences, and the European Union's Safer Internet network, for example.

The Good Media Literacy policy's most important achievement is the setting out of goals and the foundation for a deeper understanding of the importance of media literacy in society as a whole and among decision-makers and professionals in particular. A common understanding between institutions of the state and the general community is articulated by this policy that establishes the Finnish understanding of the importance, goals, and adequate promotion of media literacy and points out the important role that different stakeholders have on the field. Without this kind of foundation, it would be very difficult to achieve broader social comprehension of how important media literacy is, or to get an active involvement from the civil sector. Although originally intended for the period between 2013 and 2016, this policy continues to be implemented, although its modification is expected shortly. There are no benchmarks for measuring how successful the Good Media Literacy policy is. As this is all standard practice in Finland, particularly in the area of media literacy, they see no need to define benchmarks and measure media literacy levels.

## 5.1.3. Media literacy organisations and projects in Finland

The power and success rate of the Finnish media education are mainly accounted for with a longstanding, well-organized and coordinated work done by the institutions of local administration and the civil society, the media and libraries, all assisted by the state administration bodies. Media education stakeholders, who are large in number, have been allowed freedom to create projects, in a way that enables each of them to play a special role and use individual approach to the promotion of media literacy. That way, all options for arranging the most versatile partnerships are completely open to them (Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, 2013). National strategies have set out a clear common framework for understanding and needs, which serves different players in the area of media education. There is a wide range of different, often multidisciplinary, approaches to organizing media literacy "networks" in Finland; they depend on the specific need and various elements and dimensions of media literacy.

An important role in the practical implementation of media education belongs to NGOs, which have deep roots and a well-established position in the Finnish society. According to official statistical data, there are 127,000 NGOs registered in the country and as much as 80 percent of the citizens of Finland are a member of at least one of them (MLL, 2016). An estimated 100 NGOs are focused on media literacy and media education only. The important detail is that financing of quality projects by the civil society is secured, as the Finnish lottery and betting establishments are required by law to set aside a certain percentage of their income for funding NGOs. The relevant central government body will also assess project applications and allo-

cate funds to NGOs involved in social activities; more than half of the funding they need is collected by NGOs in this way.

## *Media literacy projects*

### Media Literacy Week (*Mediataitoviikko*)

The Media Literacy Week has been taking place in Finland every February since 2013, as an offspring of the Safer Internet Day, which was first marked in Finland in 2004. The Media Literacy Week is one of the most important media literacy projects in the country, considering its scope, the volume of educational materials that are produced, and its impact on raising awareness and promoting the importance of media literacy and media education. Approximately 40 different organisations with different backgrounds – government departments and agencies, media outlets, telecommunications operators and NGOs – take part in the Week (Kavi, 2015). Every year, they work together to plan topics that will be covered by the Week, which is also important for urging participation from a large number of stakeholders. Organizing and coordinating everything for the Week is a responsibility of the National Audiovisual Institute, more precisely its department for Media education and audiovisual media (MEKU). Around 2,700 participants registered in 2017, of which around 1,000 were kindergartens, 700 were schools and the others were libraries, youth centers, museums, and other local organisations that organized their own events, workshops or lectures dedicated to some selected topic.

Apart from raising public awareness, the Media Literacy Week's main purpose is to produce working materials for kindergartens and schools and to provide support to educators and teachers, as well as to create new ideas and topics for media education. So, there were almost 30 different materials or campaigns that were left after the 2017 Week. Their topics were versatile[41] and included children's rights in the digital world, creativity, data protection, copyright, to name just a few. One of the Week's main topics was developing empathy in communication on media and information platforms and it has led to the creation of teaching material for three age groups (Messages in a Bottle: Empathy Skills through Media Education[42]). The motivation for this project came from the increase of hate speech in Finland's public sphere, so the intent was to introduce the problem and all dangers that come with it to children and the youth by explaining the concept of hate speech and emphasizing the importance of freedom of expression, of social debate, empathy and critical opinion.

The educational material produced during the Media Literacy Week is available to teachers on MEKU's website: www.mediataitokoulu.fi.

### Newspaper Week

The Finnish Newspapers Association has an almost 50-year-long tradition of cooperation with schools, which was one of the most important elements in media education taking place in the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Since 1994, this Association has been organizing The Newspaper Week, during which different lec-

41 https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/finland/sid

42 http://www.mediataitokoulu.fi/pullopostia.pdf

tures on newspapers are given in kindergartens and schools and students familiarize with the process of creating a newspaper. Educational materials are handed out together with free copies of newspaper. Schools receive technical and editorial assistance in creating their own newspapers and teachers are advised on ways of incorporating newspapers in classes (Kavi, 2015).

### Finnish Game Week (*Peliviikko*)

The Finnish Game Week[43] is an offspring of the Nordic Game Week and since 2011 it has been organized as a theme week focused on promoting the skills of gaming and critical approach to games. The event encompasses many educational events about games, their impacts, bias and how to reduce it, and it is also dedicated to creating a positive gaming culture. These events are organized by libraries, schools, youth centers, museums and other organisations across the country, with everything coordinated by the Finnish Game Educators' Network (Kavi, 2015). The importance of videogames and digital games has also been recognized by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the Good Media Literacy 2013 – 2016 national policy. It reads that videogames are one of the key areas for media education, particularly as families tend to pay more attention to them than to other media content and platforms.

### Media Muffin

One of the special characteristics of media education in Finland is systematic work with pre-school children, which began in 2006 on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Culture as part of the Media Muffin project. This project was focused on developing media skills of pre-school children and their educators. The School Cinema Association (Koulukino) and the Metka Center for Media Education were the main partners in its implementation. One of the most important results was the publication of *Guidelines for Media Education of Pre-School Children,* which describes the values and goals of media education in early childhood. Their goal was to increase the capacities of local centers for adopting media education as part of their educational process in children's early age, as well as to support the planning, execution, and valuation of media education. The project has also produced educational materials for children under the age of eight and launched seminars for educators, in which they were given some basic information about media education concepts and taught to develop media skills of preschoolers (Kotilainen and Kupiainen, 2014).

### Media Key (*Media avain*)

The Koulukino association has created a website – www.mediaavain.com – intended to help parents find appropriate and positive media content (mostly films) that has been assessed, analyzed, categorized and described, for their children aged from four to fifteen. The assessment criteria were developed by a group of experts from the fields of media education and developmental psychology. The Media Key encourages family debates about positive and negative media content, its themes, and the emotions it creates (particularly films).

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43 https://nordicgameday.wordpress.com/category/finland/

### Media Education Forum for Professionals

This is an annual gathering of government officials, scientists, members of the academia and all other experts in the field of media education, organized by the National Audiovisual Institute. The Forum's purpose is to discuss the promotion of media education, exchange best practices, and provide support to developing partnership and cooperation across the sector (Kavi, 2015).

## *Organisations included in media literacy projects*

### Finnish Society for Media Education (*Mediakasvatusseura*)

The Finnish Society for Media Education was founded in 2005 and it is one of the most important non-governmental organisations from the field of media education. It consists of many associations and coordinates their activities, playing an important role in the organisation and execution of media education projects, in encouraging research and disseminating educational and other useful materials. This Society is crucial in the collaboration between the scientific community and media education practitioners by helping to bypass the gap between scientific studies and practical activities (Kavi, 2015). One of this Society's most important projects is the www.mediaeducation.fi web portal developed primarily for teachers; since 2007 it has been informing them about the best-practice examples, educational materials, and scientific studies and publications. It also serves as a news channel, bringing information about events, and as a network platform for the many stakeholders in media education.

### Finnish Library Association

Libraries have played an important role in Finland since the 1950s, when a national strategy was adopted to encourage people to read. A network of libraries was therefore set up, making book accessibility an important factor in boosting people's reading habits. The Finnish Library Association is very active in terms of media literacy, it cooperates with schools and the civil society, it is behind many projects and seminars and one of the goals of these projects is to develop new methods for media education (Kotilainen and Kupiainen, 2014). More recently, libraries are more and more active in the field of digital books, audiovisual media, video games and the internet. They also play an important role in the educations of seniors, for whom they organize computer workshops, education about using new media and communication platforms, and they offer them access to the internet (Lundvall, 2011).

### The Finnish Media Federation (Finnmedia)

Media themselves play an active and important role in the promotion of media literacy and in that way they educate their audiences and create future users. Media education of the youth encourages the consummation of different content and its production and distribution, and consequently the development of the creative sector as well (Lundvall, 2011). As an association of Finland's commercial media outlets, Finnmedia decided in 2008 that developing media literacy of children and youth would be its strategic and socially responsible goal. Media education and media-literate people with a developed critical opinion are needed in all parts of the society and the education of teachers has a crucial role in developing critical media literacy in schools,

Finnmedia's official document reads, emphasizing the importance of citizens being able to adequately use and consume media services (Kupiainen et al., 2008).

### Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE)

Finland's public broadcasting system has been very active in media education since the very beginning. It is involved in many media literacy projects together with NGOs, it organizes independently media literacy projects and produces educational materials. The News Workshop (*Yle Uutisluokka*) is one of its more recent projects, in which students create their own news for various platforms under the mentorship of YLE's journalists and news editors. Apart from developing the student's media literacy skills, the mentors also teach them about the basic principles and professional standards of journalism. During 2015, more than 300 schools and 9,000 students from all over Finland participated in the Yle Uutisluokka projects (EAO, 2016).

### Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (*Mannerheim Lastensuojeluiitto*)

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare[44] was founded in 1920 and it is the oldest, largest and one of the most active Finnish NGOs taking care of children and their parents. One of the latest projects by this League was connected to media education and media literacy, and it focused on the prevention of peer violence in the digital age (*Powers of Peers – Bullying Prevention in the Digital Age*[45]). A survey on this subject was conducted as part of the project, workshops were organized in schools, and educational materials and personal/group assistance were prepared for providing peer support.

### Save the Children *(Pelastakaa Lapset)*

In the past few years, the Save the Children organisation (established in 1920) has been paying increased attention to the life of children in the digital media world and organizing versatile projects about this issue. The organisation has a special department for children and digital media[46], which organizes online activities to provide support to children and regularly holds courses for online volunteers who work with children in the digital environment. They are focused on child and youth-empowering projects, aiming to give them skills that should reduce the risk of sexual abuse in the digital space. Through cooperation with the Helsinki police, they have developed the Help.some mobile app as a source of reliable information and professional support to children on the matters concerning violence, sexual harassment, and abuse. Digiboom is the name of a campaign promoting the rights of children in the digital world and it was launched in 2017. Save the Children also operates the Netari youth digital center, which assists youths in developing versatile online skills and a relationship with the digital world, particularly in the areas of privacy protection. Hotline is the name of one of their most important projects. Although not directly involving children or young people, the Hotline call center aims at reducing the frequency of illegal material and activities connected to children who are online.

44 https://www.mll.fi/tietoa-mllsta/welcome-mannerheim-league-child-welfare

45 https://dzmdrerwnq2zx.cloudfront.net/prod/2017/08/07160729/LR_Power_Of_Peers.pdf

46 https://www.pelastakaalapset.fi

### Conclusion

Media education in Finland is carried out wherever there are children and youths, not only in kindergartens and schools, but also in libraries, playrooms, youth centers, and even in virtual communities and digital games. The importance of engagement is emphasized for both the civil society and the media (public and commercial alike) in Finland, in projects and efforts to promote media literacy. The MEKU regulatory body has the role of leader and coordinator. Summed up, the Finnish approach to developing media literacy can be said to be a strategically thought-out decision derived from social debate and need, which is implemented with a high rate of participation and ongoing interaction with the wider social community, and involving active cross-sectoral cooperation between different stakeholders with support from the State. Its important traits include the concept of cooperation that is deeply rooted in the society, concern for the general welfare, social responsibility, and media education that is free of any dogma or ideology.

## 5.2. IRISH MODEL OF MEDIA LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Unlike in Finland, where the regulatory authority and responsibility are divided between two separate bodies, MEKU and FICORA (Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority), in Ireland, the electronic media regulation has been set up rather conventionally, with a single regulatory body, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI). In line with the 2009 Broadcasting Act, BAI assumed the obligation of undertaking and encouraging measures, activities and studies to promote media literacy. In the meantime, BAI has positioned itself as the leading national interdepartmental body in charge of media literacy.

In late 2016, BAI unveiled its Media Literacy Policy, which had been developed over long-lasting consultations with a number of stakeholders, including representatives of the media (both traditional and digital media), press associations, the film industry and various governmental bodies, as well as the civil sector and the academic community. The policy states that it is the key skill to navigate the new technological, media and social environment, understand the media in an everchanging environment, and determine the accuracy of the information. BAI took on the task of supporting the implementation of the policy in a number of ways; for instance, by making an annual media literacy plan (defining key annual issues, organizing seminars and conferences, securing project funds, etc.), developing a national media literacy network, providing continued support through fundamental regulatory activities, including allocating money through Sound & Vision grants[47] for good-quality radio and television shows featuring Irish culture and heritage, and shows improving adult literacy.

BAI describes the Media Literacy Policy's main objective as empowering the Irish with the skills and knowledge to make informed choices about the media content and services that they consume, create and disseminate.[48]

47 http://www.bai.ie/en/media/sites/2/dlm_uploads/2016/12/BAI_media_literacy_policy_EN1.pdf

48 http://www.bai.ie/en/bai-launches-media-literacy-policy/

BAI will try and achieve that objective through five strategic policy objectives:

- *To provide leadership and facilitate a coordinated approach to the promotion of media literacy in Ireland*

  The policy and the framework concerning the promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation on promoting media literacy have been designed to reflect the interests and the activities of the growing number of stakeholders in Ireland. BAI understands that no stakeholder can achieve the media literacy goals all on their own, especially since the approach to media literacy as lifelong learning requires different stakeholders supporting people at different stages of learning.

- *To describe and promote media literacy among citizens, consumers and interested parties, in a way that is relevant and meaningful*

  BAI claims that different stakeholders from different sectors often understand the term media literacy differently, which can result in disagreements and confusion. A decision was, therefore, made not to define media literacy in the *Media Literacy Policy*. Instead, BAI focused on creating and describing a set of media literacy competences and skills, as well as success indicators in a language that will be equally understood by citizens, society and various stakeholders and that will help to improve media literacy awareness.

- *To encourage a wide range of stakeholders to participate in the promotion of media literacy, in line with their specific business and strategic priorities*

  This policy and its associated media literacy framework are intended for use by a wide range of stakeholders in an attempt to help the stakeholders to recognize their interests and how they might develop media literacy projects, thus moving away from the popular belief that media literacy is something that only the media and educational sectors should be addressing.

- *To foster media literacy research and the development of a comprehensive knowledge base*

  The policy is intended to be used to identify future areas for research and potential research partners, develop a base of existing research, and encourage media literacy studies.

- *To develop a policy that is strategically aligned to other key national policies*

  This policy is designed to complement a range of existing formal and informal learning frameworks and policies related to education, digitalization and national classification framework, among other things, at the same time using similar language and terminology.

In an attempt to set up a framework for the promotion of media literacy, BAI also developed three core media literacy competences and a set of associated skills and success indicators. It is not expected that all the stakeholders will address all the elements and the very broad range that media literacy covers. This way, the stakeholders have an opportunity to identify their interests and priorities, and to align them

with their core businesses and their own objectives. The three sets of competences are as follows:

- Understand and critically evaluate diverse media content and services, in order to make informed choices and best manage media use;
- Access and use broadcast and digital media content and services in a safe and secure manner, to maximize opportunities and minimize risks;
- Create and participate, via media, in a responsible, ethical and effective manner, in the creative, cultural and democratic aspects of society;

For each set of competences, the policy has defined skills necessary for individuals, social impact and success indicators. These competences and their associated skills are not in any order of priority or particular correlation.

While working on the Media Literacy Policy, it became clear that there was considerable interest among various stakeholders in participating in projects encouraging media literacy, and that these stakeholders were not sure how they should participate. Subsequently, BAI decided to act, forming and launching a media literacy network, that would be the main driving force behind cross–sectoral cooperation, stakeholders' gatherings and sharing of knowledge and best practices. In July 2017, as many as 35 organisations and individuals working on media literacy in one way of another gathered to establish Media Literacy Ireland.[49] Membership in the network is free-of-charge and open to all the media literacy stakeholders. members are expected to share their knowledge, practices and resources, while BAI is there to primarily facilitate and provide financial support.

Among other things, the network's goals were outlined at that first meeting:

- To promote all aspects of media literacy across Ireland;
- To organize events and activities to showcase best practices and raise awareness of the opportunities and risks arising from new media platforms;
- To create and maintain a cross-sector media literacy knowledge base, including a media literacy research archive and database of existing projects and resources;
- To identify shortcomings, make recommendations on how to address them, and identify potential opportunities for funding;
- To connect people, organisations and projects to facilitate dialogue and foster the development of new partnerships and sustainable media literacy projects.

The network is headed by the Interim Steering Group, formed by BAI and comprising 12 members, coming from the media, film, publishing, and academic communities, as well as bodies engaged in the protection of minors and freedom of expression. The Group is responsible for reaching strategic decisions and features key sectors involved in the promotion and encouragement of media literacy. The idea is

49 In July 2017, as many as 35 organisations and individuals working on media literacy in one way of another gathered to establish Media Literacy Ireland. https://www.bai.ie/en/viewers-listeners/understanding-media/

that three to four members will change each year. At their first meeting in October 2017, the Interim Steering group adopted a program of activities for the first two years, including:

- Setting up working groups to carry out specific media literacy activities (communication, research, project and event organisation group);
- Carrying out an audit of existing media literacy research, projects and resources with a view to creating a sustainable and manageable database;
- Producing appropriate and useful communications for members including four quarterly newsletters and relevant social media;
- Organizing two large annual events for members to showcase projects and share information;
- Increasing the network's membership and involving stakeholders from other areas.

The network has stareted to work recently so its impact and contribution to the development of media literacy in Ireland will be seen in the upcoming period. However, by gathering stakeholders in one platform and defining national goals, BAI has made an important first step.

## 5.3. THE CROATIAN APPROACH – THE AGENCY FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA'S WORK ON MEDIA LITERACY

The international studies cited in this paper have placed Croatia among the countries achieving mediocre results in media literacy. It has been found that Croatia is one of the rare EU Member States that have no national policy for this issue. In the education segment, the new national educational curriculum does propose a step forward. Among the seven curricular topics, the curriculum is introducing the usage of information and communication technology, and one of the proposed domains for this curriculum is research and critical valuation, which covers the development of information and media literacy in the digital environment and the promotion of investigative spirit through critical thinking and problem solving. One could say that in Croatia, the key factor in the development of media literacy is the civil society organisations, which are very active in development and implementation of media education projects. The most active ones include the Association for Communication and Media Culture (DKMK) and their nation-wide program Djeca medija (Children of the Media) and participation in projects EU Kids online and Mind Over media in EU; and the Center for Missing and Exploited Children and their projects Center for Safer Internet (www.csi.hr) and Safer Internet Croatia (Safer Internet Day). Associations in the field of film and audiovisual literacy are especially active, such as the Croatian Film Association (e.g. the School of Media Culture dr. Ante Peterlić), Alternator (Children's Rights Festival), Children Meet Art (the Seventh Continent program) and Bacači sjenki (project FROOM!, interdisciplinary school for media and film literacy for children and youth). Through extensive involvement and great volunteer effort civil associations have, in a way, created a systematic opportunity for informal media education of citizens.

There is no law in Croatia that would define the existence of an institution to address activities aimed at media education or implement and foster media literacy projects (Kanižaj and Car, 2015). The Electronic Media Act of 2009 lists the many tasks for the independent regulatory authority in the area of electronic media – the Electronic Media Council – very briefly mentioning an obligation to promote media literacy. However, it was not before 2014 that the Agency for Electronic Media[50] started regular activities for media literacy and became the leading institution in Croatia for this issue, launching many projects and prompting numerous stakeholders to action.

The Agency for Electronic Media's media literacy projects started with the signing of the memorandum of understanding with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) in 2014. UNICEF is the leading global humanitarian and developmental agency focusing on children, their rights and needs worldwide, endeavoring to secure good living conditions for every child. The memorandum defined cooperation between the two sides on advancing children's rights in electronic media, in accordance with the action plan laid out by UNICEF and the Croatian government. However, soon media literacy and the projects of media education for children and parents became the main area of cooperation between the Agency and UNICEF.

The Agency opted for a more active involvement in media literacy projects when they found that the technologycal revolution had brought many changes in media and communications platforms and the media content usage habits. In this new media ecosystem, legal and regulatory provisions can help and contribute to protection from inappropriate and potentially harmful media content among young children, who are all consuming media content through traditional electronic media, in the company of their parents and guardians. However, many studies have shown that children over 12 are using audiovisual content to a much greater extent, most often without any supervision, via new media platforms that are under milder or non-existent regulatory regime. That is why media literacy, or the ability to critically evaluate media messages, is becoming the literacy and skill crucial to children's development and growing up in a mediated world, and to the protection from potentially harmful media content.

That is one of the reasons why the Agency for Electronic Media has decided to work with UNICEF on their media literacy projects. UNICEF is globally recognized as the "guardian" of children, and cooperation with this institution brings greater reach and additional credibility to the overall project. Also, they took into consideration that the media literacy projects would be more efficient and long-lasting if they involved the general society, so almost every project has included additional partners. The media literacy projects headed by the Agency and UNICEF are primarily intended for parents, caregivers, teachers and educators, who are offered systematic support in fostering media literacy among children and youth, but the trend is to adopt and develop projects that treat media literacy as necessary life-long learning. The Agency and UNICEF worked together as equal partners, putting their resources (eg communication and legal departments) and knowledge in joints projects as well as ensuring necessary financial support.

This subchapter will present projects to describe and analyze the Agency for Electronic Media's approach to promoting media literacy in the period between 2014 and 2018.

50 The Electronic Media Council manages the Agency for Electronic Media.

## 5.3.1. Projects of the Agency for Electronic Media

### *Survey of electronic media usage habits among children and youth (2014)*

The cooperation between UNICEF and the Agency started by ordering a survey of children and youth's habits of the use of electronic media, especially television. The findings of the survey showed that children watched TV an average of three hours a day, and almost half of that time spent in front of the screen is unsupervised by an adult. This piece of information confirmed what a significant role media had in a child's development and that it was crucial to raise awareness and media literacy among parents, caregivers and children about the importance of choosing appropriate content. Also, it turned out that parents were not aware of the amount of time their children spent in front of TV and other screens, and that they lacked the knowledge and skill needed to select quality and appropriate content for their children. Based on the findings of this survey, the Agency and UNICEF decided to launch a media campaign and start working on a web portal dedicated to media literacy.

### *Co-funding media literacy projects (2015 – 2018)*

At the same time, independently of their work with UNICEF, in 2015 the Agency launched a sort of fund for media literacy projects, a regular annual public tender to co-finance media literacy projects. All universities, institutes, educational institutions, associations and other legal entities developing and implementing media literacy related projects (seminars, workshops, conferences, lectures or surveys, for instance) had the right to participate. In the first years, they awarded just over EUR 20,000 in total, and in 2018 the sum rose to EUR 40,000. An individual project can receive a maximum of EUR 5,400 in a year. There was great interest in project co-financing in the first year, but then it stagnated for two years, only to be exceptionally high in 2018. This could be the result of the Agency's work on media literacy awareness.

| Year | Total funds | Participants | Awarded |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2015** | EUR 20,000 | 43 | 11 |
| **2016** | EUR 27,000 | 16 | 9 |
| **2017** | EUR 27,000 | 24 | 11 |
| **2018** | EUR 40,300 | 95 | 23 |

### *"Let's choose what we watch" media campaign (2015, 2016, 2017)*

The media campaign comprised three TV spots[51], TV testimonials by famous journalists and editors about their personal experience with media use by their own children, and advertisements on web portals. The campaign's goal was to raise awareness of the importance of media literacy among parents, caregivers and children, the importance of carefully selection of media content for children, and the importance of using age-based tv rating system. TV spots pointed to potentially harmful effects that violent and inappropriate content, as well as distorted and unrealistic media images, could have on children and youth.

51 TV spots: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBEF5D3iSy2JCLlXxLpQgx0tYcc_7Ii6Q

Figure 5.1. *Let's choose what we watch* campaign logo

Experts in media literacy, developmental psychology and advertising were invited to work on the TV spots. The spots were aimed at parents, so the idea was to provoke a reaction and encourage them to change or reconsider their attitude toward media's effect on children. That's why the campaign had to be appropriately dramatic and warn of the potential consequences of inappropriate media content. The authors started with the experience from prevention campaigns that told them the TV spots were not supposed to create satisfaction, because that would significantly weaken their reach and effect. The spots began by attracting attention and inviting parents' involvement, including how to discuss the issue with a child that had seen the spot. All three spots consist of three parts: the consequence, the activity leading to the consequence, and the solution – what the parents could do. The end of each spot featured a graphic with the campaign's logo and slogan "*Let's choose what we watch*", and the project's chief goal – "campaign for the promotion of media literacy". This way they tried to stress the fact that the media campaign was just a piece of the whole, much more comprehensive media literacy project.

The TV spots were aired for five weeks in September and October 2015 at all 11 national and 20 local tv channels, and had a total reach of 87.8 percent of general population, which was deemed extremely successful. All TV stations aired the spots free of charge.

### *Recommendations for the Protection of Children and the safe use of Electronic Media (2016)*

The recommendations were prepared by the Electronic Media Council, primarily in order to facilitate the implementation of the Ordinance on The Protection of Minors in Electronic Media and to meet the requirements for televisions, radios, on-demand services and electronic publications. Although the recommendations are in essence a bylaw by which the Agency for Electronic Media worked out the details of the Electronic Media Act and Ordinance on the Protection of Minors in Electronic Media and the related legislation, they served to reinforce the necessity of media literacy among children and parents. In this way, they are a part of the overall media literacy project by the Agency and UNICEF.

The Agency invited established experts in developmental psychology, psychology, sociology, media, film, communicology and media literacy to work on the Recommendations. The Recommendations' base goal is to provide guidelines for media workers to produce, classify and use media content so as to secure the best possible environment for the development of children and youth growing up in Croatia. The Recommendations are also intended to help teachers and parents in media education of their children, by describing the characteristics of each stage of development, the effect and dangers of certain media genres and providing advice in choosing the appropriate audiovisual contents and media education of their children, as well as assisting participants in the educational process of creating teaching and learning contents and tools.

Figure 5.2. Recommendations' front cover

The Recommendations are structured in several parts, each of which can be used individually and for different purposes (media, parents and schools). They offer a short overview of recent scientific findings and studies of the media's influence on a child's development and functioning, guidelines to classify media content potentially harmful to children and youth, and advice for editors and media workers, parents and educators. Drafting the Recommendations, one of the starting points was the fact that media workers, editors and journalists themselves needed to improve their media literacy, to reinforce their own professional position, especially in the context of fierce market competition the media are exposed to these days, and to more easily recognize their own social importance and responsibility, as well as the huge influence media products have on children and youth, and the society as a whole. The responsibility of media in regard to their own social role is a common issue in which media are criticized for transmitting violent behavior, materialism, prejudices, stereotypes as desirable values, as well as encouraging stereotypes and imposing certain idealistic (non-realistic) beauty as opposed to encouraging curiosity, openness and desire for knowledge. Keeping in mind the potential tension between important commercial and social projects and contents, where such tension cannot always be avoided, media professionals can find these stated recommendations and related criteria useful in making decisions on programmes and contents that might be potentially harmful, especially in regards to minors.

The Recommendations were printed and distributed to all the media in Croatia and municipal libraries, and they can be downloaded from the Agency's official website and the web portal medijskapismenost.hr.

### *Inernet Website medijskapismenost.hr (2016)*

The next step was to launch the internet website medijskapismenost.hr. In this care, the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF expanded their pool of partners, and immediately involved the Academy of Dramatic Art, the Faculty of Political Science of Zagreb, the Croatian Audiovisual Center and the Croatian Film Association. They signed a cooperation agreement with the partners, formalizing the cooperation, and this became a cornerstone for a media literacy network. By expanding the circle of partners for the web portal project onto stakeholders that focus on education and create, foster or finance various content, the project created a synergy effect and facilitated the creation of content for the web portal.

The portal's purpose is to inform, educate and empower parents, caregivers and teachers on media literacy. Its goal is to empower parents to actively search for knowledge and information on media and the ways they can affect children's development. It provides information on the effect of various types of media and genres on children, covers topics such as safer internet, violence in the media, stereotypes, media's effect on child development, and offers advice to parents on how to approach certain real-life situations. The portal is also important because, for the first time, everyone involved in the education of children and youth can find in one place a comprehensive overview of reliable and useful information about the media and their potential influence on child development, and about media literacy. In its first year, the portal reached an average of 20,000 users per month, and became the first national portal and reference point for media literacy in Croatia.

The web portal's significance was recognized by the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO). In its comprehensive report *Mapping of Media Literacy Practices And Actions in EU*[52], the EAO included the web portal among the most important media literacy projects in the European Union, and among the five most significant ones in Croatia in the period between 2010 and 2016.

The web portal's promotion involved the airing of reworked TV spots from the campaign *Let's choose what we watch*, with an ending that pointed to the portal's web address. Those were the second (September – October 2016) and third wave (January 2017) of TV spots, reiterating the media's influence on child development and at the same time promoting the portal.

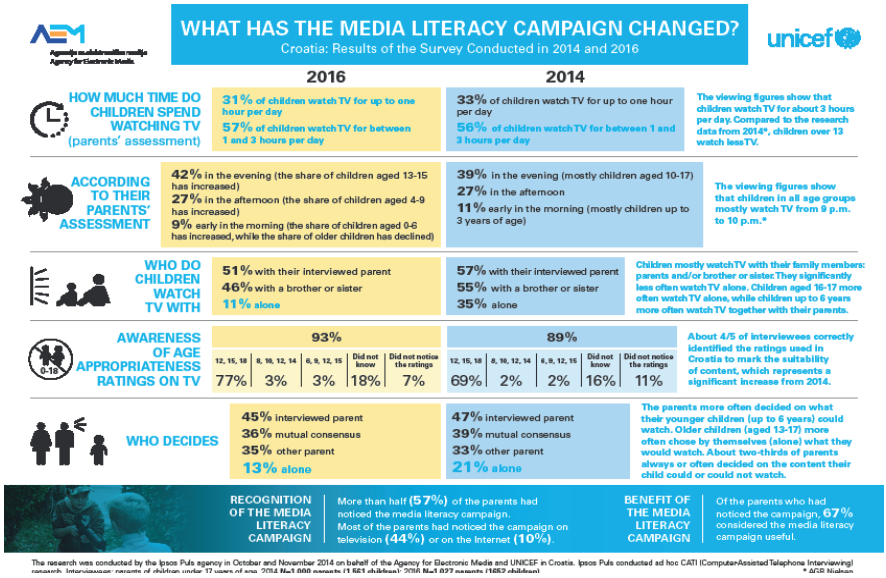
### *Second survey of electronic media usage habits among children and youth (2016)*

Two years after the first survey, after two waves of the *Let's choose what we watch* media campaign, the issue of Recommendations for the Protection of Children and the safe use of Electronic Media, and the launch of the media literacy web portal,

52 European Audiovisual Observatory: *Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28* (2016).

the Agency and UNICEF repeated the survey of electronic media usage habits among children and youth. The new survey identified changes in the way children and parents watched television. Most children watch TV in the company of family, and just 11 percent of them watch TV alone. Just two years before, every third child watched television without adult supervision. Almost all parents, 93 percent of them, recognized age ratings signs on TV that indicate the suitability of TV content and knew what they mean for children. Parents found that content appropriateness was most important in deciding what a child was allowed to watch, and 67 percent of parents thought the media literacy campaign was useful.

Figure 5.3. Comparison of surveys of media habits in 2014 and 2016




## *Participation in the EU Kids Online project (2017)*

The Agency for Electronic Media was the main partner (and sponsor) in the EU Kids Online project, an extensive field survey organized and lead by the civil organisation Association for Communication and Media Culture. It was the first national comparative survey into media habits among children and their parents, and online child safety. Through the survey, Croatia joined the world standard of monitoring online child safety, on the basis of participation in the EU Kids Online consortium comprising 33 countries (www.eukidsonline.net). The survey's general goal was to gain better insight into children's habits in their use of the internet and modern technologies, measure the frequency and forms of children's exposure to disturbing content and violence, and analyze protective factors and the role of the environment in the protection and education of children and youth about the dangers on the internet. The findings of the survey[53] and the insight into children's habits and experience in this area are useful for the development of national guidelines for safe

53 Results of the EU Kids Online survey: http://hrkids.online/

internet use, educational materials for children and parents, and national and local educational policies. They point to the necessity of further work on media literacy among children and parents. By participating in this project the Agency showed how important it was to participate and implement such surveys, using survey results to determine and develop further projects.

### *Survey of media literacy in Croatia (2018)*

As in introduction to the Media Literacy Days, the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF ordered a survey of citizens' opinions on media literacy. The survey was carried out in March 2018 by way of face to face interviews with a nationally representative sample, involving 1,000 persons older than 15. The aim of the survey was to gain insight into how Croatian citizens assessed their media literacy, whether they had opportunities to learn about the topic, whether they thought that children got enough education on media literacy, and whom they considered responsible for education, as well as to evaluate opinions on potential dangers that media pose for children.

Figure 5.4. Survey of media literacy in Croatia

Among other things, the survey showed that only 11 percent of respondents had an opportunity to learn about the skills of critical consideration of media content, while 81 percent believe that children are not sufficiently educated on the influence of media on children and adults. Moreover, 57 percent of respondents thought that parents and extended family were responsible for the education of children on the meaning of media content, while 33 percent placed the responsibility on the educational system, and 7 percent on the media. They assessed their media literacy with an average grade of 2.8. The survey showed an increasing awareness among citizens

on the necessity of media literacy, confirming a need to establish an environment for education.

### *Media Literacy Days (2018)*

The Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF developed and, in April 2018, launched the Media Literacy Days, the biggest media literacy project organized in Croatia. The Media Literacy Days were launched in order to establish a platform that would facilitate gathering and cooperation among various social stakeholders, to promote and organize sustainable media literacy projects, and to raise public awareness of the importance of media education. Starting from the idea that only by gathering a large number of stakeholders they could create stronger, long-lasting and far-reaching results in fostering and development of media literacy, the project involved many partners. From the very beginning, the Agency and UNICEF found auspices in the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science and Education; and projects partners in Carnet (academic research network), which provides online and digital services to all schools in Croatia; the Croatian Film Association with its wide network of film clubs and film literacy projects; the Association for Communication and Media Culture, the civil organisation most active in media education; and the leading national media. In cooperation with municipal libraries in 15 Croatian cities, the Agency for Electronic Media organized lectures and workshops on media literacy, by defining topics with libraries, and then providing lecturers and other needed resources. This in turn encouraged libraries (as well as other associations and faculties) in other cities to join the project, while kindergartens and schools carried it out via workshops, making use of educational materials developed for the Media Literacy Days.

The Media Literacy Days took place between April 18 and April 21, but various activities also took place throughout the second half of April. In the end, 61 cities and towns hosted 130 workshops, lectures and panel discussions on the topic of media literacy, intended primarily for children and youth, as well as teachers and, to some extent, all generations. It is estimated that more than 6,500 children and around 660 adults from across Croatia took part in the project.

Figure 5.5. *Media Literacy Days* logo

The project consisted of several segments – public lectures and workshops (some of which were livestreamed on the web portal), development of digital educational materials, printing booklets for parents and picture books for children, and workshops for select schools in the leading media. In cooperation with experts, teaching materials were developed to hold media literacy lectures to children and youth in kindergartens, elementary and high schools, and these materials were downloaded from www.medijskapismenost.hr (15,000 downloads in April). For the kindergartens, they developed materials for the Optical Toy Workshop, while teachers got materials covering the following topics: Positive and Negative Media Content (elementary school grades 1 through 4), Child Safety on the Internet and Electronic Violence (elementary school grades 5 through 8), and How to spot Disinformation and Fake News (high schools).

They also printed a picture book for children, parents, guardians and tutors. Its purpose was to give the smallest children a chance to understand the media through one of the first media literacy lessons, the one about the difference between the constructed world of the media and the real world. Parents and caregivers got the booklet titled *Children and Media*, translated and adapted from the original publication of the same name, published by Finland's National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI), which lent the rights to the Agency for Electronic Media. The booklet explains how to use the media in families with children, how to balance them with other activities, why it is important to pay attention to the age-based ratings signs on films and television channels as well as video games, how the media can facilitate learning and recreational activities, what children need to know to safely use the internet, social networks and mobile applications, how to develop critical media literacy, etc. The Agency and UNICEF sent the booklet and picture book to kindergartens, schools and libraries that applied at the medijskapismenost.hr portal and requested their copies; they can also be downloaded in electronic form.

Under the title *Children Meet Media*, in the media it is organized interactive workshops for students between 5$^{th}$ elementary and 4$^{th}$ high school grade. The children learned from the media professionals themselves how the media functioned, how media content was created, and how the news is being prepared and they got to create their own media content under expert supervision. Groups of students in the range between 5$^{th}$ grade elementary and 4$^{th}$ grade high school could apply for workshops via the web portal medijskapismenost.hr. In just 48 hours from opening, a total of 90 schools applied, and further submissions had to be closed due to limited capacity. A total of 974 students from 90 schools throughout Croatia took part in these one-day workshops, held in April and May in 11 media outlets in Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Zadar and Osijek. The workshops were conceived as a combination of theory and practice, and the goal was to show the students how the media functioned and how media content was created. The project involved main national televisions (HRT, Nova TV and RTL), daily newspapers (Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Novi list, Slobodna Dalmacija and Glas Slavonije), few commercial radio stations and agencies (Media Servis, Antena, Enter, Yammat FM), and a web portal (Tportal).

The project integrated other media literacy projects, such as the web portal medijskapismenost.hr that served as the chief communication channel for the Media Literacy Days and a platform for the download of work materials and brochures. The Media Literacy Days in a way involved the Agency's project that co-financed media

literacy projects, as some of the chosen projects were purposefully set to occur during the Days. The project's success can be seen in the expanded circle of stakeholders involved and the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among them, a great benefit for the development of long-term and sustainable media literacy projects. Also, public events (forums and lectures), as well as the many media reports on the Media Literacy Days (from national to local and online media) contributed to the continued growth of awareness on the necessity of work on media education, especially children and parents.

## *Conclusion*

Over the past four years, the Croatian Agency for Electronic Media has systematically worked on raising awareness of the importance and strengthening of media literacy, co-financing media literacy projects, maintaining the web portal for media literacy and organizing and participating in surveys. The Agency has maintained constant strategic cooperation with UNICEF, very important for the projects' success and reach.

For every project, the Agency endeavors to involve as many stakeholders and partners as possible. Its systematic work has encouraged other stakeholders to get involved, and raised awareness of the importance of media literacy, both among the general public and state authorities and institutions. Also, the Agency for Electronic Media promotes international and regional cooperation as well as sharing the best media literacy practices. This is best illustrated by the cooperation with the Montenegrin regulator, which was given right to use the TV spots for the campaign *Let's Choose What We Watch*, as the regulator took over the Croatian model of work with UNICEF on media literacy projects.

# 6. Recommendations for Media Literacy Development in Serbia

Neither media literacy nor work on encouraging and strengthening media literacy and media education should be considered isolated or separate from the social, media and technological processes and developments. Media literacy is quite a complex, multicontextual, dynamic, multidimensional and fluid concept that needs to be adaptable to social needs, and should be viewed in a situational and local context, and as a specific cognitive skill of an individual. Numerous analyses and practices have confirmed the importance of defining and formulating a media literacy concept, and for a number of different purposes (education, civic participation, protection from manipulation, disinformation and propaganda, etc.), and to create various policies and strategies. It is critical that the concept derives from a social discussion and our own questioning of values, democracy, education and culture, and that it has a clear and unambiguous definition so the entire society can understand it. Social understanding of the concept of media literacy, in particular its objectives, is of immense importance, as activities should be planned based on objectives, and on what is important about the activities on both a microlevel (educational systems, projects) and a macrolevel (strategic planning, policies). If media literacy objectives and concept are not clear, there is a possibility that, during implementation, not all of its relevant elements and dimensions will be considered or that the concept will be interpreted differently by different stakeholders.

Bearing in mind the position of media literacy and its correlations with other social processes and influences, it will not do well to provide an electronic media regulator with isolated recommendations only for working on encouraging media literacy – recommendations need to be put in a broader context.

## Proposed measures for approaching the development of media literacy in Serbia

### • National policy / media literacy strategy

Despite the declarative support for the reinforcement of media literacy in certain documents (particularly as part of the accession talks with the European Union), Serbia still lacks clear policies, a strategic approach to the development of media lit-

eracy, and systematic projects. Adopting a national policy or strategy is important as it will elaborate on the elements and goals of media literacy, encourage its development, create a platform for cooperation and synergy within the wider social community, and enable the development of self-sustainable, long-term projects and media education. That would also send a clear and unambiguous message about the importance of media literacy for the entire society, raise awareness about the goals and importance of the activities on national, local and institutional levels, and raise the issue to the national level. The definition of media literacy does not need to necessarily come from a national policy; what is more important is the concept of media literacy that will be relevant and understandable to the entire society, and put media literacy forward as one of the citizens' key competences for living in the 21st century. Different stakeholders oftentimes experience the definition of media literacy quite differently, resulting in confusion and misunderstandings of its concept and goals. Globally speaking, there is currently no consensus on a unique media literacy definition; what matters is that the discussion continues and that these definitions are continually adapted to people's needs and the local context (level of social, democratic, cultural and media development). The starting point for formulating a definition could be the definition unveiled in 2016 by the European Commission's Media Literacy Expert Group, which described media literacy as an umbrella expression that includes all the technical, cognitive, social, civic and creative capacities that allow a citizen to access, have a critical understanding of the media and interact with it, and participate in the economic, social and cultural life of a society and play an active role in the democratic process. Media literacy is an accepted concept in the European Union and should be viewed as a concept integrating not only information literacy but also digital and IT literacies (which should not be favored or singled out), and all the skills and competences necessary for living and civic participation in the 21st century, with an emphasis on the development of critical thinking.

Furthermore, what is more important than a generally accepted definition is having a national policy describing and establishing a media literacy framework, and focusing on recognizing and formulating the necessary knowledge and skills that the citizens need to live in a digital media world. The outcome of that should then be the goals of media literacy and methods with which they are to be achieved. That is why it is necessary to have a broad social discussion, but also research, to determine the understanding of the concept and the citizens' level of media literacy, and define the needs of the society. Furthermore, media literacy needs to be developed cross-sectorally and be integrated in other strategic national documents, from the educational, media and cultural policies to youth policy. To implement a national strategy, it is very important to have a cross-sectoral, horizontal and vertical cooperation. Additionally, having in mind the complexity of the media literacy concept, it is vital that a number of actors be involved in its development. The national policy, i.e. the media literacy concept, needs to be broad enough so that many different stakeholders can recognize their needs in it and align them with their own strategic goals. As regards its implementation, it is of great importance that the concept can be understood in different contexts and situations, and by different stakeholders. Finally, media education should be viewed as a lifelong learning effort, seeing as all the citizens need skills of using the modern media and communication technology, but also protection from disinformation, propaganda and manipulation.

## • Setting up a media literacy institutional body

When implementing the media literacy policy, it is important to determine the lead, i.e. establish an institutional body or give a mandate to an existing one so it can coordinate other state bodies, initiate and gather the educational, academic, media, cultural, civil society and broader social communities, and create a platform for long-term, self-sustainable projects. That body should also run and coordinate the adoption of the national policy, which is the most effective approach, allowing a wider social engagement in the adoption process. This means that the first step should be to establish such a body or to give a mandate to an existing one, and then to prepare and pass the national media literacy policy (strategy). That body could form an expert group that will prepare the proposal, conduct a public discussion, and produce the final draft of the national media literacy policy (strategy) and its goals.

Following the adoption of the national policy, the body in question should then monitor its implementation, secure a platform where all the stakeholders can come together, implement public awareness-raising campaigns, and organize the necessary research that will be used to further develop the country's media literacy. As the platform for gathering the wider social community, the competent institution could also form a coordinating body that would, on a voluntary basis, gather all the organisations in Serbia that are in any way engaged in media literacy, so they could share experiences and best practices, set up a database, and create cooperation opportunities.

Based on the Finnish model, the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) could be that media literacy body in Serbia. However, the Finnish model is not an isolated case and electronic media regulatory bodies in the European Union are oftentimes very active in the field of media literacy, a case in point being the Irish BAI. In any case, the said body should encourage innovative, creative and participative ways of developing media literacy, promote a broad concept of media literacy, gather and strengthen various stakeholders, provide a platform for their cooperation, and carry out research and public discussions.

It is important to have an institutional organisation responsible for media literacy. It gives media literacy an important position and facilitates the coordination of a wide network of stakeholders as well as the implementation and financing various projects. Having a national media literacy body enables long-term planning, project sustainability and relevancy, and projects' alignment with the national policies.

## • Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM)

Serbia's Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) is not required under law to encourage media literacy and has not been greatly involved in media literacy either, apart from a few sporadic cases (such as the media campaign implemented in cooperation with UNICEF). Whether established as a national interdepartmental body for media literacy or not, REM should assume a more active role in encouraging and reinforcing media literacy in Serbia, not only because of social responsibility, but also because the issue is nearly complementary to some other aspects of regulating media content and protecting minors and consumers, and because of the common preventive approach.

Before doing any work on media literacy, it would be good if REM were to formulate its own **internal policy** on the matter, clear up the way the media literacy concept is understood within the organisation, identify potential partners and tools, and define communication channels and goals. Their internal description of media literacy should include all the issues of media literacy that come from the social, cultural and media environment as well as the changing technological and communication environment. After that, it would be good if REM could order and carry out a **research** on the media habits of children and parents in Serbia, and their attitudes toward and understanding of media literacy, in order to gather data and gain insights into what projects and with which partners they should be working on. On the whole, REM should find funds for regular annual research into the citizens' media literacy and media habits, indicating the successfulness of the projects being implemented, but also greatly helping decisionmakers and all those who making media literacy plans.

One of the most important roles that REM should have when it comes to media literacy is finding, encouraging and **involving different social stakeholders** in media literacy and media education projects. Significant results can only be achieved when there are more partners involved, and when there is a common understanding of the problem and the goals, as well as a sharing of knowledge and resources. That is how opportunities are created for a continued development of media literacy projects, their maintenance and financing. Partners can be found in a number of sectors:

- Media sector (from traditional to digital media, from public to commercial media);
- Educational and academic sector (kindergartens, schools, universities);
- Civil society (NGO's);
- Libraries;
- Professional associations (for instance, press and film associations or the self-regulatory body, the Press Council);
- Government bodies and local authorities;
- International organisations (UNICEF and Council of Europe, for instance).

It is also important that REM cooperates closely with the Ministry of Culture and Information and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development on certain projects, thus gaining a stronger institutional support and establishing a common understanding of the media literacy concept.

The Finnish example clearly shows that **media participation** in media literacy projects is important. That is why the media need to be involved in the development of media literacy, which so far has not been the case very often in Serbia. The media should and can be involved in the development of media literacy and related awareness raising in a number of ways:

- By promoting media literacy and informing the citizens about its importance, and providing good-quality and timely information about the

challenges of living in a digital media environment (for instance, privacy protection, the problem of disinformation, hate speech and cyberbullying, etc.);

- By raising the level of transparency and strengthening journalistic and editorial standards;
- By produce and choosing programme, especially good-quality content for children and youth, and appropriately classification media content (age ratings);
- By organizing workshops and projects for children and youth.

It is especially important to **include the public broadcasters**, Radio Television of Serbia (RTS) and Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV), in all the efforts. As a public services, they should actively work on raising the level of the citizens' media literacy skills. Understanding the way the media work and produce media content is one of the preconditions for a good-quality, fitting development of media literacy and, in that respect, the media should be at the service of the citizens, through either specific projects (common projects such as the Day of the Newspapers or the Day of the Media) or continued ones in case of the public media service. The media need to take into account their specific and influential position in the society, remain aware of their considerable social responsibility, and contribute to the welfare of the society with what they do. Apart from social responsibility, which can be viewed as the media's obligation, what is important for the media is their participation in media literacy projects as that way they also raise and educate their future consumers, promote content production and indirectly affect the development of the country's audiovisual and creative industry and media scene. As regards the relationship between the media and its consumers, in particular children and youth, REM can be both intermediary and initiator of cooperation and projects that both schools and the media are involved in, i.e. the agent that enables and creates a platform for such a cooperation. As far as its relations with the media are concerned, REM should treat them not only as partners but also as project consumers, seeing as strengthening media literacy skills is an integral part of education and improvement of professional journalistic and media standards.

Another important aspect is the cooperation between REM and a self-regulatory body, such as the Press Council, and professional journalistic associations, particularly through cooperation and projects encouraging good-quality journalism and media content, and improving journalistic standards and professionalism. Educational institutions, from kindergartens to universities, are also the stakeholders to have an efficient cooperation with. Kindergartens and both elementary and high schools are attended by children and youth who should be among the main targets of the projects by REM, while the cooperation with higher-education institutions, particularly those equipping students for media-related professions (Faculty of Dramatic Arts and journalism studies, for instance) can be project-based. Finally, it is important to cooperate with the scientific and academic communities, especially on carrying out and processing relevant research.

**Protection of minors from potentially harmful media content** is one of the most important aspects of work carried out by the electronic media regulators.

However, apart from approaching the protection of minors from the legal and regulatory standpoints, the matter should also be approached through **prevention,** i.e. **strengthening of media literacy**, especially that of children, parents and educators. Empowering children and youth by giving them knowledge and skills that are part of media literacy helps their protection against potentially harmful media content, something that is quite important in a digital and internet environment that is mostly outside the regulatory reach. Still, the key question here is how to reach the children, that is to say, how to work on their media literacy. The main "channel" should be their parents and caregivers, and all those participating in the educational process (educators, teachers, professors), and they should all be enabled to broaden and improve their knowledge and be given a platform to follow the best practices and experiences, and keep up with the continued changes in the media, communication and technological world. One of the effective tools for something like that is a **web portal** giving an overview of the best practices and providing answers to all the questions on children's media-related upbringing. However, for that web portal to be sustainable and maintain a better and more lasting reach, it is of vital importance to involve as many different stakeholders in its functioning as possible. That way they can share the content, and technical and financial aspects of the portal, and make their resources and knowledge available.

Furthermore, it is also important to develop a platform that will encourage and engage stakeholders at the local level, and provide them with technical, promotional and communication-related help, and, where possible, even financial support. That is to say, children in major urban centers have more opportunities for developing media literacy skills, which is why those in charge should try and secure the same chances for the children in other communities. In doing so, it is important to **cooperate with the civil society and associations** involved in media education. The civil society should be encouraged to develop projects and create conditions for cooperation and implementation of common projects (from various activities, workshops and lectures to publishing brochures), as well as to work together on finding opportunities for the projects' financing. **Libraries** are also one of the major stakeholders in promoting media literacy as they have a well-developed network across the country. Even though in need of adapting to the digital age, libraries are places where various media literacy projects, workshops, seminars or playgroups can be organized, and not just for children but for young people and even the older citizens who need the society's help to find their way around the IT and digital space.

The media literacy projects that REM should be implementing include **awareness-raising campaigns**, as they can illustrate the importance of media literacy to a large number of people. There could be campaigns targeting specific elements of media literacy or associated regulatory aspects (for instance, protection of minors, age-based ratings, consumer protection, disinformation issue, etc.). To implement all those projects or at least some of the projects or segments of media education, it would be great if REM could secure funds and launch a **fund to co-finance media literacy projects**.

Active **international cooperation**, sharing experiences and best practices with other regulatory bodies, and participating in the work of international organisations and associations (EPRA, ERGA, CERF, MNRA, etc.) are all critical for REM's gain-

ing of knowledge and monitoring of the best practices when it comes to the media literacy approach. This recommendation concerns not only the regulatory body, but all the stakeholders, as it is extremely important to monitor how media literacy is being approached in other countries, compare and gather the best practices, follow various media literacy surveys and research, develop international projects and encourage cooperation with partners from other countries.

Cooperating with and gathering stakeholders on national, local, regional and international levels is a way of effectively working on media literacy, seeing as, that way, the stakeholders get more information, knowledge and different perspectives, as well as possibilities of cooperation and media literacy development.

- **Media literacy's stronger inclusion in educational curricula**

Continued development of media and communication platforms and their integration in everyday life call for a stronger inclusion of media literacy in the national educational policy. The *Strategy for Education Development in Serbia 2020* as well as *Guidelines for Improving ICT Use in Education* and document *Digital competence framework – A Teacher for the Digital Age*[54] highlight both information and digital literacy, without more closely integrating or better understanding the more comprehensive concept of media literacy. Especially significant is the greater integration into curricula, development of critical thinking, i.e. critical media literacy, and understanding of the media, their structure, influence and the way they shape reality.

54 Based on the analysis of the EU-UNESCO project: *Preparatory Document on National Media and Information Literacy Policies and Strategies in Serbia (2017).*

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# Author's Biography

## ROBERT TOMLJENOVIĆ

Robert is the Vice President of the Electronic Media Council and Deputy Director of the Agency for Electronic Media, an independent regulatory body for the electronic media in the Republic of Croatia. Since his appointment (2013) at the Electronic Media Council, he has, among his other responsibilities and activities, launched a number of projects related to the protection of minors in electronic media and media literacy. Among other things, in cooperation with UNICEF, he has developed and launched a web portal, www.medijskapismenost.hr, and a project titled *Media Literacy Days*. Before joining the Agency, he spent his entire professional career in the electronic media and the audiovisual industry, working as a journalist, editor and television producer. Over the course of his career, he gained a valuable combination of direct in-depth knowledge of the media, media processes and rules, as well as considerable experience in managing and running teams, complex projects and businesses, as well as a broad knowledge of media regulation. Among other things, he worked as a reporter and news editor for Radio 101, acted as the editor in chief of the news program at Obiteljski Radio, and spent years as the Zagreb-based correspondent for the BBC World Service. He was also one of the founders and editor of the award-winning daily news show *News of the day* on CCN (a network of local TV stations), and the first Head of the news of RTL Televizija, where he set up the whole system and developed the concept of the news programme. He also worked as a television producer, producing documentaries and drama series, such as *Adriatic's Deepest Secrets* and the first season of the drama series *Rest in Peace*, which he also co-authored.

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| Programme | **Reinforcing Judicial Expertise on Freedom of Expression and the Media in South-East Europe (JUFREX)** |
|---|---|
| Countries/locations | Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, "The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Kosovo* |
| Funding | European Union and Council of Europe |
| Implementation | Council of Europe |
| Duration | April 2016 – May 2019 |
| Objectives | The overall Programme objective is to promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media in line with Council of Europe standards, with a specific focus on the Judiciary in South-East Europe.<br>The programme comprises one major component: judiciary/legal professionals and two additional components - regulators and media actors relating to the interconnected segments, which are of significant importance for freedom of expression and exercise of human rights, in line with Council of Europe and European standards. |
| Specific objectives | • **Main component: Support to Judiciary**<br>Specific objective 1: To enhance the application of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case-law in the field of freedom of expression in the daily work of the judiciary through the interpretation and implementation of the legislation in line with European standards.<br>Specific objective 2: To strengthen the capacity of national training centres, judges' and prosecutors' academies and bar associations to train legal professionals on the ECHR, the case-law of the ECtHR and other European standards on freedom of expression.<br>Specific objective 3: To increase the awareness and capacity of judges, public prosecutors and lawyers dealing with freedom of expression issues on CoE standards and the case-law of the ECtHR.<br>• **Additional components: Regulatory authorities and media actors**<br>Specific objective 4: Support to media regulatory authorities<br>To enhance the independence and effectiveness of the bodies responsible for broadcasting regulation, in line with European standards.<br>Specific objective 5: Training of media actors<br>To promote rights and responsibilities of journalists and other media actors to develop professionalism, responsibility and respect of ethical rules based on the ECtHR case-law and other CoE legal instruments. |

* "This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence."

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|---|---|
| Partners | All activities will be implemented in consultation and co-operation with the relevant public authorities and media professionals in the beneficiary countries/locations. Main partners are Judicial Academies/Centres, Bar Associations, Regulatory authorities for electronic media, Associations of journalists and media outlets. |
| Target groups | Judges, prosecutors, lawyers, employees of media regulatory authorities, journalists, other media actors and students. |
| Final beneficiaries | Citizens and society as a whole. |
| Expected results | **Support to Judiciary**<br>**ER/SO 1:** Domestic judgements reflecting application of Article 10 and ECtHR case-law are increased;<br>**ER/SO 2:** Training curricula on Article 10 are developed and capacity of the national training institutions with regard to freedom of expression and the media are improved;<br>**ER/SO 3:** Regional forum of legal professions is established and regularly meets to exchange good practices and provide mutual support for the development of domestic case-law in line with ECtHR case law on media issues, namely Article 6, 8 and 10.<br>**Support to Regulatory authorities for electronic media**<br>**ER/SO 4:**<br>• Studies on independence and effectiveness of the regulatory authorities continue to be provided upon request of the national authorities;<br>• Regulatory authorities employees' professional capacities are strengthened;<br>• Regional co-operation between regulators is developed; exchange of good/bad practices is established.<br>**Training of media actors**<br>**ER/SO 5:** Structured dialogue between media actors, self-regulatory bodies, judiciary, politicians, parliamentarians and human rights defenders is established at national and regional level. Media actors are aware of their duties and responsibilities and their professional capacities are strengthened. |
| Main activities | Expert meetings, assessments, workshops, trainings and awareness-raising activities, seminars, round tables, regional forum and networks, curricula development, training of trainers, studies, publications, study visits, expert opinions, lectures for students. |

The study analyses and indicates challenges and issues that come with living in a digitalized, hypertechnological mediated world, in which we are faced with a countless of information, issues of disinformation and fake news, algorithmic separation in ideological echo chambers, hate speech, clickbait journalism, and decreased trust in both mainstream media and the level of journalistic professionalism. With such a media ecosystem, it is vital to define the position of a regulatory authority for electronic media as well as its responsibilities and obligations, and stress the regulator's role in promoting and developing media literacy, one of the key skills for living in the 21st century and the answer to many questions and challenges that come with the modern era.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

**www.coe.int**

The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

**http://europa.eu**

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