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Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community  
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## **Issues Paper for the Liverpool Audiovisual Conference**

### **Media Pluralism - What should be the European Union's role? - Part Five**

Response by the Working Group on Information Society, Communication and Media Policy of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE)

It is clear that media pluralism is an essential value which needs to be upheld in EU audiovisual policy. It also appears that in spite of the efforts of the European Parliament, notably in the Boogerd-Quaak report (A5-0230/2004), there is little likelihood of a Directive on media pluralism and the issue will remain firmly as a competence of the Member States.

We agree that it would at least be helpful to the ongoing debate on media pluralism, concentration and transparency if the Commission were to adopt the monitoring proposals put forward by the European Institute for the Media (EIM) report, The information of the citizen in the EU (Düsseldorf, 2004). The Commission should also prepare an annual report on media pluralism as recommended by the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament.

The EU should also work with the Council of Europe to draw up a minimum set of standards for media pluralism which should be observed by all Member States.

The EIM report has also highlighted the difficulties faced by public broadcasting in a number of states and indicated that its status and independence is 'in no way assured' in some EU states. We believe that the EU needs to consider, as a priority, how it might best contribute to supporting the status and independence of public broadcasting in Member States. It should seek to work closely with the Council of Europe to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Council of Europe's Recommendation No. R(96)10. A strong and independent public broadcasting sector is a cornerstone of media pluralism.

Finally, we would wish to see the EU acknowledge the contribution to media pluralism that is made by a strong and vibrant non-profit community media sector. This is another area in which the EU and the Council of Europe could work together to help reach broad agreement among all stakeholders on the characteristics and scope of the sector and to facilitate its growth and development.