

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON MEDIA LITERACY

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0. Executive Summary

The public consultation on media literacy took place in the last quarter of 2006. Its objective was to identify the existing and possible approaches to media literacy and to provide a description of its emerging trends throughout Europe. The response to the consultation was extremely satisfactory both in quantitative terms and in the quality and variety of the respondents.

From the analysis of the replies it fully emerged how media literacy is considered to be a very important factor for citizenship in today's information society. It is a life-long skill not only for young generations but also for adults and elderly people, parents, teachers, media professionals. Also, the picture shows that there are different practices and different levels of media literacy throughout Europe. It would be, therefore, extremely important to be able to analyse, highlight and spread good practices in the field throughout the European Union. At the same time, it is recognised that there are no agreed criteria or standards for assessing media literacy, and there is an urgent need for larger-scale, longer-term research to establish a body of evidence, on which such criteria could be based.

The respondents mostly agreed with the Commission's working definition of media literacy, proposing thus to add values like the ability to create and communicate messages as it is considered essential in enabling people to make effective use of media in the exercise of their democratic rights and civic responsibilities. In some countries media literacy has for many years been an important component of the school curriculum (e.g. UK, Ireland, Germany, France, Sweden, Malta, Hungary), whilst in others there are only very few and sporadic initiatives taking place within a more informal context. According to the large majority of respondents, funding for media literacy initiatives should come primarily from public institutions. However, partnership with civil society and the industry is important as long as the support is clearly specified and transparent in order to avoid bias.

The Commission will take into account the above conclusions of the public consultation in pursuing its activities in the field of media literacy, together with those of a recently commissioned study on "Current trends and approaches to Media Literacy in Europe", which are expected to be delivered in the third quarter of 2007. In particular, the Commission intends to adopt a Communication on Media Literacy, in the second half of 2007. This represents an important step towards a European policy on Media Literacy and it would add a further building block to European audiovisual policy under the overall i2010 initiative. Its main objective will be to highlight and promote good practices in media literacy at European level and to propose possible actions in the field. The Communication will also build on the results of the work of the Media Literacy Expert Group.

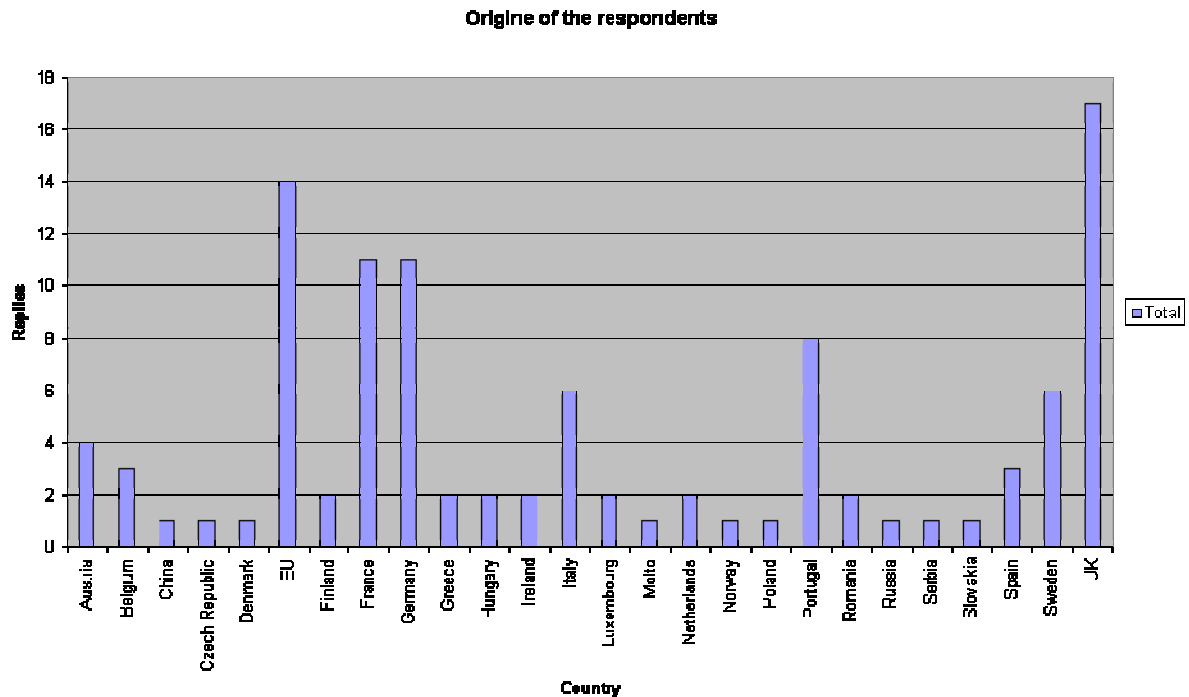
1. The public consultation - Objectives

In order to nurture reflection on Media Literacy and gain from the experience of all those concerned with this issue, the European Commission decided to launch a public consultation in October 2006. A questionnaire was published in order to seek the public's views on media literacy and information about specific initiatives in commercial communications, film and the online world. The consultation, which supplements the current work of experts under the chairmanship of the European Commission, lasted three months (from October to December 2006). The consultation was open to all parties (replies received included media organisations and industry, formal and non-formal education institutions, content providers and producers, research and cultural institutions, regulators and citizens' and consumers' associations). The findings will be of great help to guide discussions, notably within the Media Literacy Expert Group.

The objective of the questionnaire was to identify existing and possible approaches to media literacy and to provide a description of emerging trends in this field throughout Europe. The questionnaire was composed of four sections: in the first section it addressed general questions about media literacy, while in the other three it aimed at collecting information about initiatives and projects in specific areas of media literacy (commercial communication, film, online environment, including press and publishing).

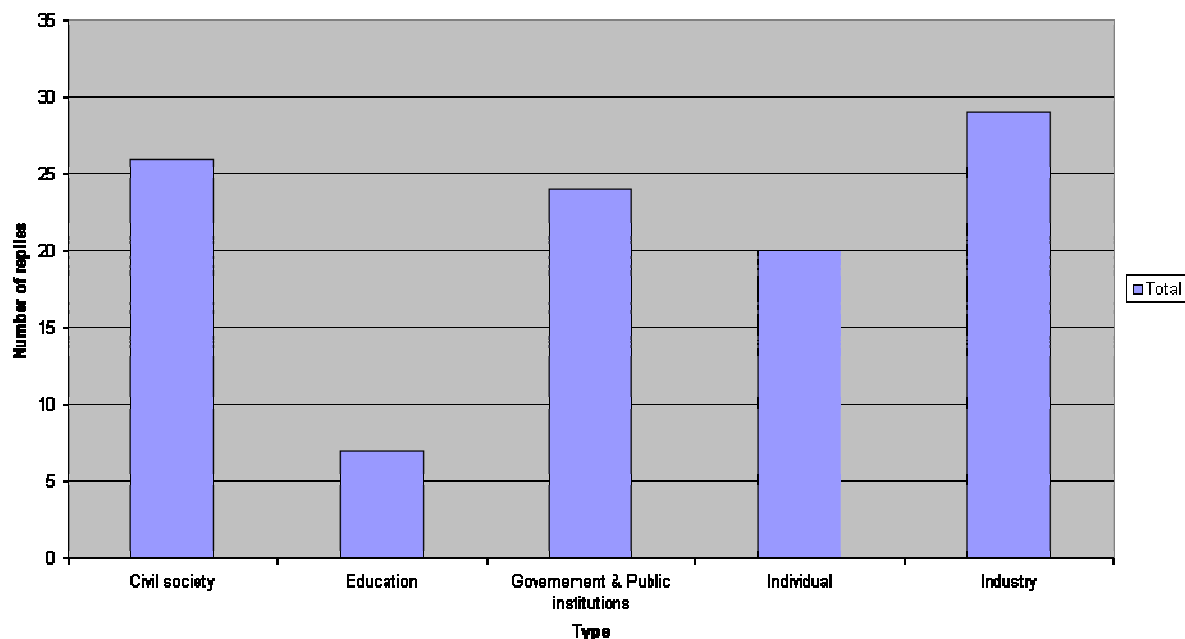
2. The public consultation results: a global overview

106 submissions were received from 23 EU Member States, as well as from China, Russia and the USA. European actors and associations were also extremely active (16 replies).



Some 27% came from the industry, 25% from civil society, 23% from government and public institutions, 19% from individuals, and 7% from the education sector.

Respondents



2.1 Industry:

The high degree of concern in media literacy shown by the industry is encouraging for many media literacy projects looking for financing. Publishers, broadcasters and telecoms are interested in having media-educated and interactive clients, many of them have already undertaken actions in this direction.

Publishers	13
Broadcasters	7
Telecoms	5
Advertisers	2
Music industry	2
Total	29

2.2 Civil society:

Answers from civil society came mainly from associations, many of which operate in the media literacy sector, but also from associations representing interests of consumers, viewers, journalists and libraries. 3 replies came from religious groups, who show great concern about media literacy.

Associations	23
Religious groups	3
Total	26

2.3 Government and public institutions:

Media literacy is a matter of public concern as well. Many responses came from national film institutes, media literacy institutions, ministries of education and culture and different public institutions operating in the cultural sector. Some answers came from local authorities (especially from Germany and Italy).

Film institutes	8
Media literacy institutions	5
Ministries	3
Regulators	1
Other	7
Total	24

2.4 Individuals:

Many answers came from professors (7), teachers of media literacy (4) and students answering on an individual basis. 6 individual replies came from people working in media literacy-related institutions, such as film institutes (many of which also sent a collective answer).

Professors	7
Professionals	6
Media educators	4
Students	3
Total	20

2.5 Education:

The education sector is very well represented, although less collective responses were received. 6 collective replies came from universities, and one from a think tank. Taking into account both individual and collective replies, the education sector is represented by 7 replies.

Universities	6
Think tanks	1
Total	7

3. Results of the public consultation on Media Literacy

The results of the public consultation are divided into four sections: the first section addresses general questions about media literacy, while the other three focus on initiatives and projects in specific areas of media literacy, i.e. Commercial Communication literacy, Media Literacy for audiovisual works and Media Literacy in the online environment, including press and publishing.

3.1 General questions on Media Literacy

3.1.1 Definition of Media Literacy

The public consultation proposed a working definition of media literacy as being "*the ability to access, analyse and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages which we are now being confronted with on a daily basis and are an important part of our contemporary culture, as well as to communicate competently in media available on a personal basis*".

The vast majority of respondents agreed (35 %) or partly agreed (46 %) with the proposed definition, whilst a minority of nine per cent of the respondents did not fully agree with the definition. A number of respondents suggested alternative definitions or additional phrases to extend (or limit) the Commission's working definition. The most commonly expressed concern among the respondents was the importance of adding to the definition the ability to *create* and *communicate* messages, as this aspect of media literacy is viewed as fundamental in empowering people to become active and informed consumers of media. Moreover, the communicative aspect of media literacy is considered essential for enabling people to make effective use of media in the exercise of their democratic rights and civic responsibilities. Several respondents also stressed the importance of including *critical literacy* as part of the definition. Again, this aspect of media literacy is regarded as crucial in the creation of an active and discerning citizen.

"We would also stress the importance of critical literacy as part of the evaluation component of the definition, for accessing and analysing media messages are not effective if one cannot also critically evaluate those messages, distinguishing the honest from the deceptive, the public interest from commercial persuasion, the objective and trustworthy from the biased or partisan".

Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics, and Andrea Millwood Hargrave, UK Media literacy Task force

"There exist many definitions of media literacy around the world. More and more often they include the ability 1) to access the media, 2) to understand/critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents, and 3) to create media contents/participate in the production process. It is not unusual that the definitions also include aspects of learning to use the media in order to participate in the process for social change, for development, towards increased democracy."

Cecilia Von Feilitzen, The International Clearinghouse on Children Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University

"Media Literacy is the ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts."

Ofcom, UK

A number of respondents made reference to the definition developed by the European Charter of Media Literacy¹, which they claim is more structured and broader in scope, and suggested its adoption at a European level. Other respondents, mostly film agencies and cultural centres, felt the definition was too negative, in that it did not include an aspect of enjoyment of media, like moving image media. In their view the definition should encompass both aspects: critical reflection and appreciation of media texts. The Association for Commercial Television in Europe (ACT) noted that the term "confronted with" was unnecessarily pejorative and should be replaced by images which the citizens "choose to consume". A few respondents also suggested greater emphasis on cultural diversity and the preservation of it in the definition.

Several stakeholders, especially those coming from specific sectors of the media industry, stressed that a broad approach to media literacy might not be appropriate for every sector of the media. The European Newspaper Publishers Association (ENPA), for example, expressed some scepticism regarding the viability of an over-arching definition of media literacy:

"how media literacy is defined depends on the specificity of the different media types: a general approach to media literacy might not be one that is suitable for all sectors of media."

Other stakeholders from the industry suggested greater emphasis on particular skills, knowledge and understanding, such as the ability to retrieve information (European Association of Database and Directory Publishers), the ability to interact with media (Federal Association of Interactive Entertainment Software) or the understanding of copyright issues (British Music Rights).

3.1.2 Aim and target audience of Media Literacy initiatives

As regards the aim of media literacy initiatives, the general view is that media literacy should ultimately be about empowering people to participate actively in society and to prevent the creation of social and geographical divides. Enjoyment, exploration and active and critical consumption of the media are also identified as essential aims.

¹ See : <http://www.euromedialiteracy.eu/index.php?Pg=charter&id=3>

We believe that media literate people should be able to:

- Use media technologies effectively to access, store, retrieve and share content to meet their individual and community needs and interests;
- Gain access to, and make informed choices about, a wide range of media forms and content from different cultural and institutional sources;
- Understand how and why media content is produced;
- Analyse critically the techniques, languages and conventions used by the media, and the messages they convey;
- Use media creatively to express and communicate ideas, information and opinions;
- Identify, and avoid or challenge, media content and services that may be unsolicited, offensive or harmful;
- Make effective use of media in the exercise of their democratic rights and civic responsibilities.

As regards who should be the target audience of initiatives on media literacy, the respondents are evenly split in two groups. 40 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that the aim of media literacy is to give all citizens, regardless of age, the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to participate in the knowledge society;

"Every European citizen of any age should have opportunities, in both formal and informal education, to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to increase their enjoyment, understanding and exploration of the media. There should be no limits on target groups at European level, in order to encourage diversity of approaches."

The Steering group for the European Charter
for Media Literacy

This group of respondents believe that media literacy should embrace all media user groups: children and young people, parents, teachers, disadvantaged, elderly, disabled, media professionals, politicians, etc. Many of the respondents, who agree with an all-age media literacy, believe so in order to avoid a widening generational divide in reference to knowledge around technology and media functioning. Media literacy is linked to the human rights issue and is viewed as a basic skill set to be acquired by all citizens.

An equal proportion of respondents are in favour of mainly targeting children and young people with media literacy initiatives. As argued by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute, media literacy initiatives should primarily be aimed at young people because *"they are the most vulnerable in assessing, scrutinizing and hence, adopting a critical reflection against all incoming information from the new digital media"*.

Views are evenly split as to whether special attention should be devoted to digital media. Almost one third of the respondents are of the opinion that special attention to digital media is important. An equal proportion of respondents is sceptical about such an approach and believes media literacy should embrace all kinds of media which contribute to people's understanding of the world in which they live. A special focus on digital media might also involve a risk of limiting media literacy to digital literacy which is more concerned with technical than analytical skills.

"Media literacy is from our perspective the main concept and includes all media forms. It has been confused with initiatives that promote "digital literacy" or "information literacy", as if the concept "media literacy does not exist. The Swedish government and the Swedish municipalities have made big efforts to develop the digital communication and the ICT-movement, but it has to be seen as a technological investment in order to develop media literacy, teaching methods and the learners' activities."

The Swedish Film Institute

40 of the respondents did not answer the question.

As regards the question on whether media literacy initiatives should be combined with initiatives to increase media consumption, the vast majority of the respondents are of the opinion that these should be kept separate. The general view is that "the aim of media literacy is not to increase consumption but to enable people to consume with personal discretion and critical awareness whether this increases media consumption or not"².

² Helen Doherty, Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Dun Laoghaire, IRELAND

3.1.3 Media creativity and production skills

A large majority of the respondents share the opinion that media production skills should be an essential feature of media literacy. By taking part in the media production process, children and young people will acquire a critical understanding of how media constructs the world and of the interests and aims behind media messages. Learning through practical experience is seen by the respondents as a very valid - and enjoyable - way of learning. However, production skills should be a part of but not the sole structure and framework in which to teach media literacy, as many of the respondents agree that *"theory without practice is acceptable but practice without theory is not"*.

However, a concern raised by a number of respondents related to the teaching of production skills is the lack of competent media educators. Teachers find it hard to keep up with the digital media skills of their students and often their students are much quicker to apply new media tools than they are. Adequate training for media educators is therefore essential if this aspect of media literacy is to be successfully implemented within the formal educational system.

Due to the lack of training for teachers, and also to the meagre financial means for the investment in technical equipment within the school system, the teaching of production skills are often run by non-profit organisations, cultural centres and film agencies, often in collaboration with the industry. Some examples of good practices in the field of media production skills are the following (more examples under 3.2.2 Media literacy for audiovisual works):

- Both **German** public service broadcasters **ARD** and **ZDF** have been very active contributors to initiatives teaching children how audiovisual content is created. They put special emphasis on the production of programmes that set standards and inspire confidence and trust in parents, educators and children when it comes to responsible media usage. Best practice examples are their "making-of" films in the children's programme "Sendung mit der Maus" or CD ROMs which engage young viewers in the making of music or animated movies. Additionally, there are a number of formation projects³ for children and young people on the active use of new media that are developed through a collaboration of the national media centres of two Landers (Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz) and the MKFS foundation (MedienKompetenz Forum Südwest).
- The **Newspaper in Education** initiatives are run in countries throughout Europe: e.g. the **Danish** newspaper Jyllands-Posten is involved in projects in its "media lab" designed to demonstrate to students the need for a free press in a democratic society. In **Finland** a completely renovated **Junior Journalist**⁴ online degree programme, aimed mostly at 8-13 year olds, was launched in 2005 (the first one already in 1997). It is a game-like site in which participants can try their hands at various tasks related to the making of a newspaper. Once these tasks have been completed, the junior journalists can start editing their own titles on set layouts that can be printed with their PCs.
- In **Hungary**, the integration of formal media literacy practices with informal initiatives is implemented to improve media production skills among young people. In a secondary school in Budapest (Szent László Gimnázium), which specialises in media production, the media literate students of this school then help a group of international students during a week-long conference in producing (writing, shooting and editing) videos in five genres. In parallel there is a teacher training session for the European media educators accompanying the student groups about the methodology of this way of teaching media.

³ www.ohrenspitzer.de

⁴ www.edu.fi/svenska/laromedel/juniorjournalisten/ (Swedish)

- In the **UK, Scottish Screen** has developed a model that encompasses all aspects of moving image education. The best resourced and most developed example is a 4-year funded programme in Brechin, a small town in Scotland, where moving image education is being embedded within literacy in both primary and secondary schools⁵.
- **Roaming Reporters** is a EU funded pilot project in Greece, Italy and Austria. By setting up training hands-on workshops and in conjunction with kid-centred media events, the project sought to turn the act of reporting into a language of communication among young people, turning them into intelligent users of the mass media with critical viewpoints and media production competence.

3.1.4 Media Literacy in formal and non-formal education

The modalities and inclusion of Media Literacy in school curricula at all levels is of course the Member States' primary responsibility. However, in order to nurture reflection and to help guide the Commission's planned activities in this field, the public consultation also called for information on how media literacy is taught in the context of the formal educational system in Europe.

In general, the respondents believe that formal education has an important role to play in the promotion of media literacy. The majority of the respondents (46%) are of the opinion that media literacy should be *mostly* addressed by school-based educational environments, as this will assure that *all* children are covered by the initiative and that media literacy is taught in a systematic and disciplined way. However, as several respondents pointed out, the focus on the school-based environment does not rule out other initiatives in different environments as a supporting structure to the school one.

More than one third of the respondents are of the opinion that media literacy should cover a range of approaches both inside and outside the formal educational system to make sure that all citizens benefit from media literacy initiatives. Respondents from Germany highlighted the importance of focusing on *parents* and *educators* as well as children, and the majority of UK respondents consider media literacy as a life-long learning process that should be placed within as wide a framework as possible. Also, the European Broadcasting Union and the Association of Commercial Television pointed out that the elderly population is in need of assistance as it represents an important share of the total TV viewing time.

There is a great variety as to how media literacy is taught in the context of the formal educational system. In some countries media literacy has since many years been an important component of the school curriculum (e.g. UK, Ireland, Germany, France, Sweden, Malta, Hungary), whilst in others there are only very few and sporadic initiatives taking place within the formal context of the school or even no initiatives at all.

As regards *how* media literacy should be taught, 34 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that media literacy should be taught *both* as a specialist subject and as integrated element within the context of the existing subjects. 27 per cent of the respondents opt for an integrated approach, whilst only 12 per cent of the respondents think media literacy should be taught as a specialist subject only.

"Like literacy itself (as traditionally defined), media literacy is a means of communication and cultural exchange. It is not really appropriate, therefore, to regard it as a subject. Rather, it is a

⁵ www.admc.tv/mie.htm

'medium of learning'. In the UK, all teachers, whatever their specialist subject, are responsible for literacy too. The logical result of this position is that all teachers should be responsible for media literacy."

Scottish Screen, UK

"From our wide experience on this field we strongly believe ML must be taught as a specialist subject, in which the different media languages and basic contents on ML start to be revealed. Integrating ML within the context of existing subjects would involve training teachers on media literacy and this is a major problem, since teacher training courses in Spanish universities totally misunderstand this area. Consequently, the best way to introduce ML in formal schooling is with a specialist subject and a specialist teacher whom we call "educommunicator"."

Aula Media, Spain

The consultation reveals a wide range of activities outside the formal educational systems which contribute to improved media literacy, especially in the field of practical production skills. Many respondents are aware that training of educators outside the formal educational systems is really important for media literacy to be effective. The initiatives taking place are often conducted by not-for-profit organisations in close collaboration with the industry, mostly newspaper publishers and television stations. Cultural centres and film agencies throughout Europe (Nordic countries, UK, Ireland, Greece) are also very active in conducting workshops, arranging film festivals and administrating websites in the field of film education.

Some examples of activities outside the formal educational system:

- In **Spain** media literacy is absent in the schools system, but civil society organisations are very active in this field. The not-for-profit organisation AulaMèdia for instance is responsible for the so-called CampusMedia Workshops⁶ addressed to secondary school teenagers and specifically designed to help improve their production skills. The activities are organised in cooperation with local television stations in villages that are concerned with the importance of media literacy.
- The **Austrian** institution Medien padagogische beratungstelle gives support to parents and teachers and offers special "parents' evenings" with different media literacy subjects. The institution also organises workshops during children's holidays with various training opportunities covering areas like awareness of media literacy, production, presentation and promotion of animation works.
- For the last ten years, the **Romanian** Centre for Independent Journalism has offered journalism courses for high school and university students, in parallel with those for professionals. The activities for the young people have proved to be very successful judging by the attendance, the steady demand, the post-facto evaluations and by the tracking in time of the alumni.
- Népszabadság, **Hungary's** principal daily, has launched courses in secondary schools about how to read newspapers. The courses are accompanied by an online game. The game has given rise to virtual student groups, that is, virtual discussion forums that discuss various issues related to the content of the newspaper of the day. Some of those issues are ethics in the media, press photo, advertising, attributes of print and online media, etc.
- The **French** civil society organisation Centre d'entrainement aux méthodes d'éducation active (CEMEA) has developed actions and initiatives for the training of interested citizens, for the strengthening of pedagogical competences and for informing and familiarising the local

⁶ www.aulamedia.org/campus/

political sector with the concept of media literacy. This has been done through a network of public libraries and mediatheques but also through vocational and leisure centres.

- The **Italian** ZAFFIRIA proposes media workshops to schools in the context of school autonomy, trying to develop the link between school and territory. Zaffiria organizes training about media literacy for parents and teachers, and also projects for disadvantaged children. Zaffiria has agreements with the Universities of Bologna and Urbino.
- The **German** Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women in participation with ZDF offer an ever-evolving website⁷ in collaboration with ARD, Arcor (Telecom industry), a TV magazine (TV Spielfilm) and some civil society associations. It proposes media literacy initiatives covering a wide number of services whether for citizens or schools. These services cover analysis and counselling to parents for better use of internet, mobile and television, safe internet use for children through practical exercises, data protection, etc.

3.1.5 Financial support of Media Literacy initiatives

The large majority of respondents believe that funding for media literacy initiatives should come from public authorities, either exclusively – mostly from the education budget - (27%) or in conjunction with private sector (37%) Several of the respondents welcome private-public partnership, such as, for example, the project *"Newspaper in Education"* run by the European Newspaper Publishers' Association. A very small minority of the respondents said that financing for media literacy initiatives should derive from the industry only⁸. Many respondents also pointed out the importance of funding by NGOs, especially foundations.

As regards the question whether financial support from media organisations raises issues, the great majority of the respondents answered yes to this in principle. However, such support is not categorically rejected by the respondents, but it needs to be clearly specified and transparent in order to avoid bias. Some respondents highlighted that support from private media players can often favour short-term initiatives with minimal provisions for evaluation and poorly defined learning outcomes, and such actions should hence always be carried out in partnership with media literacy professionals in order to ensure its quality and value.

"I strongly believe that such initiatives should be supported by both the states and the industry. Media – especially the press – are vehicles for the exercise of a fundamental human right: the access to information. As such, despite – or beyond – their commercial nature – most media also play a role of public service. Therefore, the increase in the media competence of the citizen should be a concern for the states – and for the media themselves. Support from the industry may stir some controversy, as it may be perceived as a being commercially motivated. But with the proper "buffer" mechanisms (foundations, independent bodies, etc), such hidden agendas can be avoided."

Centre for Independent Journalism, Romania

"ML initiatives are already supported financially and morally by the print media in Europe, either directly by media companies or indirectly by media organization or representative bodies. Any complementary financial support from the EU can only further draw the attention on the importance of media literacy as well as media consumption diversity."

Amimprensa (the Portuguese Editors and Publishers Association), Portugal

⁷ www.schauhin.ZDF.de

⁸ 34 % of the respondents did not reply

3.1.6 Assessment criteria in Media Literacy

The assessment of people's media literacy is a complicated task as noted by the UK regulator Ofcom:

"the development of media literacy in a person often occurs in unstructured, informal ways and it would be inappropriate to correlate too closely changes in media literacy as a result of single interventions or even the application of proactive policies at a national level"

This is also confirmed by other replies to the questionnaire: only seven per cent of the respondents declared that there are assessment criteria to measure people's media literacy level. Some 44 per cent of the respondents are of the opinion that no effective criteria are currently available, whilst 48 per cent of the respondents did not answer the question or did not know whether such criteria existed.

"There are no agreed criteria or standards for assessing media learning, and there is an urgent need for larger scale, longer-term research to establish a body of evidence on which such criteria could be based."

Susanne Krucsay - Bundesministerium für Bildung,
Wissenschaft und Kultur, Abt. Medienpädagogik/
Bildungsmedien/Medienservice

The respondents widely agreed that there is a need for more research to establish criteria to assess people's media literacy. In the UK, the Media Literacy Task Force⁹ has commissioned a research project to develop an evaluation framework that can be used across projects and media literacy schemes. The aim of this framework will be to offer examples of good practices and criteria against which measuring the efficacy of work undertaken in this area. In Greece, no adequate criteria have been noted down on a national level, but the project "Audiovisual Education for Children and Young People¹⁰" could be a starting point for an applied qualitative research on the formal education system based on the level of media literacy among youngsters. In Sweden the development of methods to assess young people's media literacy level is considered a key question for schools. Especially important and challenging is the need to find a way of assessing young peoples' own media productions and the evaluation of the creative work within the school.

Seven per cent of the respondents answered positively to the question and confirm the existence of qualitative and quantitative indicators to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of policies and media literacy activities. In Hungary, for instance, they measure the students' media literacy level in the framework of a final exam. The results from the test are examined and evaluated to ensure the effectiveness of policies and media literacy activities. In France, and to an extent also in Germany, evaluation of media literacy competences and knowledge within the framework of formal education is carried out, but the evaluation exercises are few and mostly unknown. In Belgium the situation is similar to that in France, criteria and evaluations exist but are rarely put together and used due to lack of means. The existence of CEM (Council on Media Education), a body responsible for research, pedagogical

⁹The Media Literacy Task Force was established in 2004 by the UK Film Council, British Film Institute, Channel 4 and the BBC in response to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport's call for industry to help promote media literacy.

¹⁰ A project initiated by the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute, the Greek General Secretariat of Communication and the Greek public service broadcaster ERT.

cooperation and advice to the Parliament, should also give the possibility for further criteria and evaluation in Belgium.

3.1.7 Best practices

In general, not many replied to the question about initiatives carried out in their country which could be singled out as best practices. The small number of replies reflects the need to develop best practices through exchange of common assessment criteria.

In the following we have listed some activities taking place to encourage the sharing and spread of best practices locally and nationally. The initiatives are mostly administered by government bodies, but civil society and industry players are also to a certain extent active in this work:

- In the **UK** Ofcom is given the duty to promote media literacy at home and abroad. They work together with the Media Literacy Task Force, the Media Literacy Networks and a number of other professional bodies to stimulate debate and raise awareness of important media literacy issues. Ofcom intends, with the support of the national networks referred to above and other key partners, to build a map of media literacy activity across the UK. The media literacy map will be an online database describing which organisations are active in this field and summarise their projects and activity. The information available in the database will encourage the sharing of best practice.
- In **Germany**, a lot of work is being done on many levels of society. By implementing the principle of education to citizenship (or civic education), the Federal Ministry of the Interior has started to develop strong links between Länder, public broadcasters, the industry and civil society on the subject of media literacy. This has given way to a large number of interconnected portals that generate a wide network of different initiatives that are currently active in the country. Also, the German State Minister for Culture and Media will launch a portal on media literacy and best practices in the field during the German EU-presidency. On a Länder level, with the "Medienoffensive Schule II"¹¹, the Baden-Württemberg Land brings forward a vast initiative in order to integrate new media in school curriculum and to deliver a modern media literacy framework that meets actual needs: educational programmes, delivering material to schools and outside schools, etc.
- In **Greece** the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute is working on defining the best practices and the criteria on implementing media literacy on a national level.
- The Ministry of Education in **France** publishes annual results in collaboration with CLEMI¹² in order to develop the innovative processes of media literacy by following the everyday work of educational teams working in schools. However, although there are many initiatives in France in this field, there is a general view that there is not much communication and sharing of experiences between them.
- In **Hungary** the County Pedagogical Institutions of Educational Services regularly organize classroom presentations held by the best teachers; 120-hours accredited teacher training courses in moving image and media literacy all over the country; provides advisors who visit the media classes and provides possibility for consultation; organizing an international teacher training "Creative Methods in Media Education" for media educators coming from 11 European countries, etc.
- In **Sweden**, the Swedish Agency for School Improvement has been commissioned by the Swedish Government to run a network-based national resource centre for educational media

¹¹ www.medienoffensive.schule.de

¹² Centre de Liaison de l'Enseignement et des Médias d'Information

since 1998. The resource centre runs today among other things the websites Multimediasbyrå and PIM. The websites offers an extensive amount of good examples, courses, video, audio and music archives, meeting rooms, video films and articles providing tips and ideas from teachers throughout Sweden.

- The educational programme **Newspaper in Education** run by the European Newspaper Publishers' Association referred to earlier do their own annual evaluation on the success of their projects. For example, they do surveys amongst students and educators to gain feedback on what they need to improve in future. Best practices are also highlighted through the Young Reader conferences run by the World Association of Newspapers and the continual exchange of practices between members in the international network.
- The national site, administrated by the **French Ministry of National Education**, on cinema and audiovisual teaching practices "Quai des Images"¹³ appears to be very effective in this field.

3.1.8 Common set of principles for media literacy

More than one third of the respondents answered positively to the question whether it is possible to define a common set of principles for media literacy in relation to textual and audiovisual material. The view that media literacy should be defined in such a way that its principles can be applied across all different media forms is generally shared.

A small minority are of the opinion that a common set of principles is difficult to define, mainly because the purpose of each type of media form is very different. A number of industry players share this view, including the ENPA¹⁴. Some respondents believe there is a need to differentiate between textual literacy and technological literacy, because media users interact with different media in different ways, reading skills (textual) are different from seeing/hearing or watching/listening skills (audiovisual) and the information consumed is absorbed in different ways. However, they stress that common principles should certainly include measures to educate media users about the nature and background of the content they are consuming and at the same time encouraging a critical viewpoint of the media content.

The majority of the respondents (39 %), however, did not provide an answer to this question which indicates the difficulties surrounding it.

Where media literacy is defined in terms of critical concepts, these can be applied across different media forms such as print and audiovisual. While it is important to define and study the specific characteristics and attributes of different media forms, it is also productive to examine and compare the ways in which they all handle concepts such as narrative, modality and representation; the ways in which their products are made and circulated; how they address their audiences; and through what kinds of institution they are developed and financed.

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¹³ <http://www3.ac-nancy-metz.fr/cinemaav/index.php>

¹⁴ European Newspaper Publishers' Association

3.2 Media literacy in specific areas

The objective of the second section of the public consultation was to collect information about initiatives and projects in specific areas of media literacy, such as commercial communication, audiovisual works and the online environment, including press and publishing.

3.2.1 Commercial Communication Literacy

Commercial communication literacy initiatives aim at helping children and young people to acquire the necessary skills to decipher and evaluate advertising and other forms of commercial communication. Only a few respondents submitted examples of initiatives focusing on commercial communication literacy only, of which the most frequently mentioned is *Media Smart*, a UK initiative which now also operates in several other European countries. However, commercial communication literacy is often an important part of the media education curriculum, ranging from the audiovisual language conventions used in advertising to their commercial importance to the media and the organisational framework of the advertising industry. Broadcasters are also active in managing initiatives where teaching children how to think critically about advertising is an essential element. Though, according to the Association for Commercial Television, most initiatives emerge in response to parental concern and safety issues rather than a need for critical approach towards audiovisual content.

"(...) there are, or have been, a range of initiatives taken by broadcasters to improve children's viewing experience. Again, the objective of these schemes is not usually expressed in the terms used in the question, but rather as a response to parental concern. For example, Mediaset has run a popular on-screen cartoon campaign "TV is a friend, use it wisely" designed to ensure that children's viewing is carefully structured, identifying which programmes are suitable to watch and which should be watched with an adult present."

Association for Commercial Television

- Launched in the UK in November 2002, **Media Smart**¹⁵ is a non-profit media literacy programme for school children aged 6 to 11 years old, focused on advertising. The initiative is funded by the advertising business in the UK and is supported by the UK and EU governments. Since the programme's launch in the UK, it has been taken up by the advertising business across Europe and is now operating in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, UK, Finland and Sweden. The programme is also being developed in Italy, Portugal and Hungary. Media Smart develops and provides educational materials to primary schools that teach children to think critically about advertising in the context of their daily lives.
- **Media Starter**¹⁶, a programme run by the **Polish commercial broadcaster** Canal+. This programme was created to help teenagers to use the media in a conscious and effective way. The project aims at familiarising teenagers with the roles and objectives of media, differences between various types of mass media, working techniques within the media, the influence of

¹⁵ Media Smart is not for profit and is funded by corporate sponsors and partner organisations. It is supported by the UK government and the EU. www.mediasmart.org.uk/

¹⁶ www.mediastarter.pl

media on society and the individual, and is also designed to instruct young people on how to be a conscious recipient of advertising.

- **Mediakompassi**¹⁷, a media literacy sight developed by the **Finnish** Broadcasting Company YLE's has a section focusing on advertising for youth, parents and teachers alike.
- The **Swedish Consumer Agency** has produced several books and co-financed educational material about commercials in television.

3.2.2 Media Literacy for audiovisual works

Initiatives to encourage young audiences to develop a critical approach to audiovisual content are mostly found in formal education, often conducted in partnership with national film bodies and various NGOs working with children. A number of stakeholders, in particular broadcasters, are also active promoters of initiatives to help young people develop a critical awareness of media content.

- In **France**, the INA (Institut National de l'Audiovisuel) has developed a series of pedagogical DVDs available for schools and other establishments on how to 'read' TV news (**Apprendre la TV – le JT**).
- Since 2003, there are in **Germany** joint initiatives between the **BPB** (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung - Federal Agency for Civic Education) and the **FFA** for FILKOMPETENZ in schools that include the elaboration of a series of codes for deciphering images. Also, Filmkompetenz is to become an integral part of teachers and educators at university level. Also on the agenda is the formalisation of exchanges in this field between cinema schools, universities and schools.
- The project "**School & Cinema**" is a private initiative by a **Greek** non-profit organisation, YOUTH PLAN, for the development of young people's audiovisual communication and expression¹⁸. It incorporates a range of activities extending from the simple acquaintance of children and young people with the art of cinema to a further theoretical exploration. The project includes "The Parallel Network" for the distribution of quality films made by children and young people with organized screenings of selected Greek and foreign films.
- **FÍS**¹⁹ is an initiative from the Department of Education and Science in **Ireland**. Through FÍS, children have developed their understanding of film as a medium of expression and have acquired key skills in communication, teamwork, problem-solving and critical thinking. They have drawn up storyboards, written scripts, learned to use the latest digital film technology, and engaged in the challenging decision-making processes involved in editing their own films. FIS has proved to be a great success in Ireland and since its launch in 2000 hundreds of children and teachers have embraced FÍS with enthusiasm.
- The **Finnish Filmihillo**²⁰ is a pedagogical resource initiative that promotes film education and which aims at raising the awareness and appreciation of films for children and young people.
- In **Germany**, the **ZDF** Katalog für Unterricht und Medienarbeit " (also available online), concentrates on television and is primarily destined for school teachers. While it also gives an

¹⁷ <http://mediakompassi.yle.fi/>

¹⁸ Youth Plan is the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Culture, the Prefecture of Ilia and the Local Union of Municipalities of Ilia, in Greece. It is also supported by the General Secretariat for Youth, the Greek Film Centre, ERT S.A. and the municipalities where events are being held. Source: (<http://www.olympiafestival.gr/>)

¹⁹ www.fis.ie

²⁰ www.filmihillo.fi

insight into collaboration with foundations for the promotion of reading practices, it also presents actions made for adults. Finally, there is a specific programme targeting children and young people called "Kinderkanal". This programme teaches how to differentiate genres as well as understanding and recognising quality in television.

- The **French public television** also has a series of programmes that permit dialogue with the audience on subjects of actuality like news or reports. « L'Hebdo du médiateur » (**France 2**) is a weekly programme where journalists explain their work in reaction to the audience, the way the news are elaborated and the existing constraints proper to the audiovisual sector. « Votre télé et vous », (**France 3**) is a daily programme about the reaction of people to the 156 daily editions of news on this channel. Finally, once a month, this programme is dedicated to a debate and dialogue between the audience, professionals of the sector and an expert on the role of television, its impact and deontological questions linked to the treatment of news.

As regards to initiatives in this field and their potential to raise the awareness of the European film heritage and to enhance the taste for quality audiovisual works among European audiences, the respondents share the opinion that media literacy should not be linked to teaching *good taste*. However, media literacy should encourage *curiosity* for *culturally diverse* audiovisual works and many film bodies across Europe are active in promoting cultural diversity and enjoyment of European films.

"Media literacy is not about establishing a preferred taste. The main objective of media literacy should be to generate the ability to decipher and understand media content and its context and take into account all types of media expressions. Diversity is important, in form as well as origin. The Swedish Film Institute stresses the importance of not ignoring the cultural expressions of they young but to explore that media world as well. We believe that with a heightened understanding come a deeper and broader curiosity, and a more varied taste, for yond and old."

The Swedish Film Institute

As far as video games/on-line games are concerned, there seems to be a divergence of views about their possible effects on children. According to Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), many child psychologists agree that video games enhance a sense of community among players, adding a social development aspect to the value of games.

"From an educational standpoint, interactive software will provide users with problem-solving tasks that have an inherent intellectual or educational value, unlike the more passive forms of entertainment provided by traditional content."

ISFE

Initiatives in this field seem for the most part to be managed by various national selfregulatory bodies like for instance the Entertainment & Leisure Software Publishers' Association in the UK and the Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle in Germany. On a European level, the Interactive Software Federation of Europe has started the EU-funded project *PEGI Online*²¹. The underlying concept of *PEGI Online* is to provide European parents with information likely to inform their decisions regarding their children's access to online gaming. The rules enshrined into a PEGI Online Safety Code (POSC) provides European parents with information regarding how their children are protected when they play online through gateways carrying the PEGI Online label.

²¹ www.isfe-eu.org

3.2.3 Media Literacy in the online environment

This section focuses on important and effective initiatives in Europe aimed at implementing and encouraging a critical approach to content, especially information material, available online. The examples submitted by the respondents are predominantly concerned with internet safety issues, many of which have been supported by the European Commission's "Safer Internet Programme"²². There are also a number of initiatives taking place at national level in the *Newspaper in Education* programmes to stimulate young people's awareness of the diversity of online news sources.

- The **Dutch Newspaper in Education** project has developed the website www.dedigitalekrant.nl where students can become familiar with the various dimensions of online news (comparison between newsources).
 - The **Child Exploitation and Online Protection** (CEOP) Centre was established in the **UK** to work with parents, young people and children to safeguard their online experiences. It has a website 'Think U Know'²³ aimed at young people to raise awareness of some of the dangers when online.
 - **SafeNetHome**²⁴ is the **Greek** awareness node funded by the European Commission's 'Safer Internet Action Plan'. SafeNetHome is member of Insafe, a network of 23 awareness-raising nodes in 21 countries that co-ordinate Internet Safety awareness in Europe. Its mission is to promote a safer use of the Internet and of new technologies in Greece, and to awaken the Greek public concerning the Internet and dangers hidden in new technologies, through a multi-channel awareness campaign.
 - In **Finland**, the **Information Security School**²⁵, a joint effort of the public administration, business and non-profit organisations is developed to help kids, parents and teachers understand the practices of the net and information ethics through various practical tasks, such as competitions, story telling and games.
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- The **BBC** offers users a very wide range of opportunities for interactive engagement, including online message boards, comment fora, blogs, blog comments, and audio and video contributions, including personal views, reviews, criticism, discussion and debate. The topics include comment on BBC content itself and debate about news and current affairs issues generally. The BBC has also recently completed a pilot of the Creative Archive (CA). It generated a significant level of engagement from licence fee payers with nearly 100,000 regular users. The Creative Archive pilot enabled people to download, re-edit, use and share appropriately cleared content clips for their own, non-commercial creative purposes within the terms of the Creative Archive Licence Scheme in partnership with other organisations (ITN Source; British Film Institute; Channel 4; Open University; Museum, Libraries and Archive Council; Teachers' TV; and Community Channel).
 - The **INA** in **France** has an online programme called «Jalons pour l'histoire du temps présent»²⁶, that proposes around 1000 audiovisual archive documents on contemporary history for teachers, students and any educational institution. The purpose of this site is to systematically propose a double contextualisation with respect to raw historical documents presented by historians and specialists in the media. This site is a good example for online media literacy for audiovisual works in the sense that it helps its users to put into perspective the historical and media contexts of any given period. Giving thus the possibility to understand

²² See http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/projects/index_en.htm for a complete list of funded projects under the Safer Internet Programme

²³ <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

²⁴ www.saferinternet.gr

²⁵ <http://www.tietoturvakoulu.fi/>

²⁶ <http://www.ina.fr/visite/education/jalons/index.fr.html>

its mode of production (economy, direction and censorship), analyse the setting and discourse, as well as measure the stake and impact of a given document. Thus the document ceases to be considered as a simple report of events and becomes material for media and historical analysis.

As regards the critical use of search engines and evaluation of sources and content, respondents are aware of the benefits and disadvantages of search engines, notably on the origin and accuracy of the information gathered. General information and prevention on this subject is usually given by the educators. There are not many specific initiatives, except those concerned with internet safety issues.

- **ICRA** (Internet Content Rating Association) based in the **UK** are partners in the EU Safer Internet Action Plan funded programme Quatro (Quality Assurance and Content Description project). This project aims at helping internet users in finding what they want, trust what they find and avoid material that, for whatever reason, they choose not to see. This will be achieved by devising a common method that can be used by labelling schemes, privacy and security policies, classification and discovery metadata and rights management systems.
- **Web Detective of the Week**²⁷, a **Swedish** project done in cooperation between the teacher magazine "Computers in Schools" and the Awareness Node Sweden (Internet Safety node). A tricky problem is presented every week where the assignment is to solve the problem in question by searching for the answer on the Internet. The competition is open for students from the fifth to the ninth grade. The purpose of the competition is to stimulate creative problem solving while teaching source criticism online and practise evaluation of sources.

3.2.4 Copyright

According to the large majority of respondents, media literacy initiatives should also include a dimension of awareness of copyright issues. This is considered to be part of a "culture of legality" which is important for young generations. However, it is also suggested that awareness is already good.

"We believe that people should be aware of the value chain in media consumption and the important role played by intellectual property in protecting the livelihood of those working in the creative industries and the rights of the individual over their own creative property.(...) However, Ofcom research suggests that awareness of the issue is high."

OFCOM

"Copyright industries are already carrying out education campaigns in the different Member States but more support from Governments (both at national and community level) is needed to raise awareness and understanding of copyright and to fight the myth of "free access to information and culture".

Federation of European Publishers

Also, some respondents, especially media educators and associations, highlighted the importance of freedom of use of copyrighted material for educational purposes so that media literacy practices can be more effective.

"In our view the most important issue for media educators in relation to copyright is the restriction in many countries on the use of audiovisual material in the classroom. There needs

²⁷ www.diu.se/sokmastare/

to be a consistent, liberal approach across the EC which recognizes the distinction between educational use and commercial exploitation, and which allows and encourages the former as a key element of cultural policy."

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- An independent review has been published by the **United Kingdom's economics and finance ministry** (HM Treasury), setting out a number of targeted, practical recommendations to deliver a robust Intellectual Property framework fit for the digital age. Amongst the recommendations, there is one based on reforming copyright law to allow individuals and institutions to use content in ways consistent with the digital age.

4. Next steps

The Commission will take into account the findings of the public consultation in pursuing its activities in the field of media literacy. In particular, a study on "Current trends and approaches to Media Literacy in Europe" has been commissioned recently to UAB (Universidad Autonoma de Barcelona). The final report of the study will be delivered in the third quarter of 2007. Also, the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive, includes a recital on media literacy stating the need for it to be promoted and monitored²⁸.

Finally, in the second half of 2007, the Commission intends to adopt a Communication on Media Literacy. This would represent an important step towards establishing a European policy on Media Literacy, and it would add a further building block to European audiovisual policy under the overall i2010 initiative. It will include a stocktaking exercise on the development of Media Literacy in Europe and will analyse and define media literacy objectives and trends. Its main objective will be to highlight and promote good practices in media literacy at European level and propose possible actions in the field. The Communication will build on the results of the work of the Media Literacy Expert Group and on the findings of the public consultation.

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²⁸ Audiovisual Media Services Directive – recital 25a and article 26 : Media literacy refers to skills, knowledge and understanding that allow consumers to use media effectively and safely. Media-literate people will be 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 will be better able to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive material. Therefore development of media literacy in all sections of society should be promoted and monitored."