

HELPING THE MEDIA TO REFLECT A MUCH WIDER AUDIENCE

At the very beginning of October, members of the European Broadcasting Union's Intercultural and Diversity Group and representatives of certain EQUAL Development Partnerships spent a very constructive two days in Budapest, putting the final touches to a Diversity Toolkit. There was also time to review the arrangement for the launch of this resource and to exchange new ideas about promoting diversity in the media.

An eloquent explanation of the reasons behind the development of a Diversity Toolkit for the Media is provided by Fritz Pleitgen, the President of the [European Broadcasting Union](#) (EBU) and also, until March 2007, the Director General of the German broadcaster [WDR](#). He believes that, *"events like the disturbances in the French suburbs, the Danish cartoon row and terrorist attacks in several European countries are clear warning signals showing us that integration, equal rights and a peaceful dialogue between cultures do not happen automatically. We must all actively promote dialogue and mutual acceptance. The media, and in particular public service broadcasting corporations, have a really important contribution to make."*

Over the last 10 years, a number of professionals from European public service broadcasting corporations who work with, and for, cultural and ethnic minorities have met regularly under the auspices of the Intercultural and Diversity Group (IDG). This enabled them to exchange ideas and successes and plan co-productions. In addition, a number of EQUAL Development Partnerships (DPs) had been pioneering new developments in using the media to combat discrimination during the 2000 - 2006 operational period of this Community Initiative.

There had been some exchanges between these DPs and the EBU but then early in 2006, the European Commission outlined its proposals to promote the best of EQUAL good practices through a series of European level mainstreaming platforms. This provided the opportunity to launch a concerted attempt to capitalise on the approaches of EQUAL media projects and broadcasting companies in promoting diversity. A media platform was established and it is this platform that has developed the Diversity Toolkit through a series of four seminars organised by the Swedish ESF Council and financed by EQUAL. The format of the Toolkit really took shape at the [third of these meetings](#) which was held in Barcelona, in early 2007.

GETTING IT RIGHT

The Toolkit concentrates on the representation of ethnic and cultural minorities and especially their portrayal in news and current affairs programmes. It is aimed first and foremost at journalists and teachers and students of journalism but it also provides useful information for producers and programme makers, as well as HR departments and the management of broadcasting organisations.

After Barcelona, Lynne Polak, who has had a long association with EBU in coordinating the activities and co-productions of the IDG, worked extremely hard to put the first draft of the Toolkit together in time for the Budapest meeting. In fact all of the first day of the meeting was spent poring over the text and suggesting amendments to make the Toolkit as clear and unambiguous as possible because initially, an English version will be produced and the majority of users will have to read it their second or third language.

The selection of additional film clips to be included in the kit. was another aspect to be tackled during these sessions at the [European Youth Centre Budapest](#) (EYCB). The intention of these short excerpts is to demonstrate both good and bad practices. In this way, it is hoped to challenge the preconceptions and assumptions of the users and to help them to think more deeply about the representation of ethnic minorities and the reporting of issues that concern such groupings.



One viewing panel deciding which clips to include

SWAPPING INSIGHTS AND INITIATIVES

Apart from the discussion on the Toolkit, another regular feature of these seminars is the master class. This time the master class took place on the second day which was hosted by [Magyar Televízió](#) (MTV). The first topic to be tackled was Roma and the participants heard from Kata Bársony about the Romédia activities of an organisation called Mundi Romani. Then, Judit Klein from MTV explained how, with a signed agreement between her company and the Hungarian Ministry of Social Affairs and Equality, it had been possible to hire and train five young Roma people during each of the last two years. Finally, Lajos Puporka of the [Equal Opportunities in the Media DP](#) in Budapest outlined how this project had trained 35 disadvantaged, but mainly Roma, people as media professionals and he also explained his hopes for the creation of a European Roma Television Network.

Then the focus switched to England and to English regions in particular. Elonka Soros, Diversity Editor, gave a very interesting and comprehensive explanation about how these [BBC regions](#) were promoting diversity through nominating diversity champions in each broadcasting hub, organising a range of outreach activities and incorporating a strong emphasis on diversity in their management and monitoring procedures.

Another important contribution was made by Marc Gruber who outlined the activities of both the [European Federation of Journalists](#) and the [International Federation of Journalists](#). He also introduced a recent paper on the [Ethical Journalism Initiative](#), which is a new programme that aims to raise awareness amongst journalists about the challenges they face in reporting from within an increasingly polarised world.



The former Hungarian stock exchange, which is now home to MTV

PRODUCING AND PROMOTING IN PARTNERSHIP

In keeping with the EQUAL principle of partnership, a number of individuals and organisations will be involved in these processes. To produce the Toolkit, the Marketing Department of [TV3 - Televisió de Catalunya](#) will be responsible for the graphic design while the [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(FRA\)](#) will arrange the printing of the text.

The "première" of the Diversity Toolkit will be at an international conference organised by [France Télévisions](#) and [UNESCO](#) in cooperation with WDR, [ZDF](#) and EBU. The title of the conference is: "Diversité/Intégration: Rôle majeur pour les médias et défi pour les audiovisuels public en Europe" (Diversity/Integration: A major role for the media and a challenge for public broadcasters in Europe). *"To safeguard the future independence of media, it is vital to create editorial teams*

whose compositions guarantee different perspectives on issues and opinions and particularly those that relate to ethnic or cultural minorities," says Frans Jennekens, the Chair of the IDG who will launch the Toolkit at this event. Then, Frans adds, "I hope that the Diversity Toolkit will contribute to this process, as it can help media professionals become more aware of their own prejudices and initiate a discussion on the veracity of the information that they relay and, perhaps more importantly, on the impact of the images that they portray."

At another event in Paris, on the same day, Jacob Schulze who has coordinated the work of the Media Platform will present the Toolkit to an [EQUAL Policy Forum on the topic of "Action against Ethnic Discrimination in the Workplace"](#). Finally, Johannes Wikman from the Swedish ESF Council will introduce the Toolkit to his peers in other national missions, at the ESF Management Committee to be held in Brussels on the very next day, 24 November.

From the beginning of December, the Toolkit will be downloadable from the [European Broadcasting Union](#), the [European Federation of Journalists](#) and the [International Federation of Journalists](#) web sites. This information might be of particular interest to all those organisations that have been involved in EQUAL, as whilst the Toolkit has been produced for the world of media, it will also be very useful for a range of projects that would like to work with broadcasters to promote the involvement of minority or diverse groupings.