2016 Annual Colloquium on fundamental rights Public consultation* on "MEDIA PLURALISM AND DEMOCRACY"

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Media freedom and pluralism are essential safeguards of well-functioning democracies. Freedom of expression and media freedom and pluralism are enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and they are at the core of the basic democratic values on which the European Union is founded.

The second Annual Colloquium on Fundamental Rights will take place on 17-18 November 2016. It will provide the stage for an open exchange on the many different aspects of media pluralism in a digital world, and the role of modern media in European democratic societies.

The colloquium should enable policymakers at EU and national level and relevant stakeholders — including NGOs, journalists, media representatives, companies, academics and international organisations — to identify concrete avenues for action to foster freedom of speech, media freedom and media pluralism as preconditions for democratic societies.

The Commission's objective with this public consultation is to gather broad feedback on current challenges and opportunities in order to feed into the colloquium's discussions. The questions asked are thus meant to encourage an open debate on media pluralism and democracy within the European Union — without, however, either prejudging any action by the European Union or affecting the remit of its competence.

Wichtig - Offentliche Konsultation (auf deutsch) / Important - consultations publiques (en français)

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IMPORTANT NOTICE ON THE PUBLICATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

*Contributions received from this survey will be published on the European Commission's website. Do you agree to the publication of your contribution?

- (●) Yes, my contribution may be published under my name (or the name of my organisation);
- ( ) Yes, my contribution may be published but should be kept anonymous (with no mention of the person/organisation);
- ( ) No, I do not want my contribution to be published. (NB — your contribution will not be published, but the Commission may use it internally for statistical and analytical purposes).

For further information, please consult the privacy statement [click below]

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A. Identifying information

1. In what capacity are you completing this questionnaire?

- (●) Individual/private person
- ( ) Civil society organisation
- ( ) Business
- ( ) Academic/research institution
- ( ) Other (please specify)

2. If you are answering this consultation as a private citizen, please give your name.

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Antigoni Themistokleous
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3. If you are answering this consultation on behalf of an organisation, please specify your name and the name of the organisation you represent.

Is your organisation included in the Transparency Register?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate your Register ID-number

If your organisation is not registered, we invite you to register here. Please note that it is not compulsory to register to reply to this consultation. Responses from organisations that are not registered will be published as part of the individual contributions.

Citizens have a right to expect that European institutions' interaction with citizens associations, NGOs, businesses, trade unions, think tanks, etc. is transparent, complies with the law and respects ethical principles, while avoiding undue pressure, and any illegitimate or privileged access to information or to decision-makers. The Transparency Register exists to provide citizens with direct and single access to information about who is engaged in activities aiming at influencing the EU decision-making process, which interests are being pursued and what level of resources are invested in these activities. Please help us to improve transparency by registering.

4. If you are an individual/private person:

a) What is the country of your nationality?

- [ ] Austria
- [ ] Belgium
- [ ] Bulgaria
- [ ] Croatia
- [x] Cyprus
- [ ] Czech Republic
- [ ] Denmark
- [ ] Estonia
- [ ] Finland
- [ ] France
- [ ] Germany
- [ ] Greece
- [ ] Hungary
- [ ] Ireland
- [ ] Italy
- [ ] Latvia
- [ ] Lithuania
- [ ] Luxembourg
- [ ] Malta
- [ ] Netherlands
- [ ] Poland
- [ ] Portugal
- [ ] Romania
- [ ] Slovak Republic
- [ ] Slovenia
- [ ] Spain
- [ ] Sweden
- [ ] United Kingdom
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

b) What is your age group?

- ○ Under 18
- ○ 18-30
- ◉ 31-40
- ○ 41-50
- ○ 51-60
- ○ 61-70
- ○ Over 71

B. Media freedom and pluralism

5. In the context of media freedom and pluralism, what should be the role of the State, if any, in the regulation of media? What should be the role of self-regulation?

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Mass media have always been regulated even though ideas of freedom of
expression and press freedom predominate in media discourse and that
limitations are often regarded with skepticism. Notwithstanding the
significance of media freedom and pluralism still certain restrictions on
these freedoms are potential under specific circumstances. As a powerful
social institution the media cannot be exempt from the need for regulation to
ensure acceptable standards and so any debate about media regulation concerns
the amount of regulation and how it should be enforced.  Within this context
the role of the State is to ensure that principles of media freedom and
pluralism are protected and encouraged; to guarantee that all voices and
opinions are heard within the public sphere.

Self-regulation has also a significant role in ensuring media freedom and
pluralism. The fundamental objectives of self-regulation as an industry-based
regulatory structure are the protection of editorial independence and the
security of the accountability of the press to the public and the established
codes of practice. Press self regulation has been seen as the right of the
press to set standards to govern and dominate its own activities and practices
and therefore compliance with this standards is expected to be higher; hence
self-regulation can considerably enhance media freedom and pluralism.
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6. Could you provide specific examples of problems deriving from the lack of independence of media regulatory authorities in EU Member States?

7. What competences would media regulatory authorities need in order to ensure a sufficient level of media freedom and pluralism?

8. What should be the role of public service media for ensuring media pluralism?

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Public service media have a pivotal role in ensuring media pluralism. They
should remain impartial and operate in the service of an informed citizenship
by providing access to the widest possible range of different views and
opinions, unrestricted public access to information source. They should also
consider the provision of a varied range of programs, such as information,
culture, education and entertainment for every group in society - including
minors, elders and minority groups. Hence, public service media programs
should not aim only at large audiences.
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9. How should public service media be organised so that they can best ensure the public service mandate?

10. Have you experienced or are you aware of obstacles to media freedom or pluralism deriving from the lack of independence of public service media in EU Member States?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

11. Are you aware of any problems with regard to media freedom and pluralism stemming from the lack of transparency of media ownership or the lack of rules on media ownership in EU Member States?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

12. Please indicate any best practice on how to ensure an appropriate level of transparency and plurality of ownership in this area.

13. What is the impact of media concentration on media pluralism and free speech in your Member State? Please give specific examples and best practices on how to deal with potential challenges brought by media concentration.

14. Are you aware of any problems related to government or privately financed one-sided media reporting in the EU?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

15. Please indicate any best practice to address challenges related to government or privately financed one-sided media reporting while respecting freedom of speech and media pluralism.

C. Journalists and new media players

16. What is the impact of media convergence and changing financing patterns on quality journalism?

17. Have you ever experienced, or are you aware of, any limitation imposed on journalistic activities by state measures?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples and further information, including justifications given by authorities and the position taken by journalists.

18. Please indicate any best practice that reconciles security concerns, media freedom and free speech in a way acceptable in a democratic society.

19. Have you experienced, or are you aware of, limitations related to privacy and data protection imposed on journalistic activities?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples and further information.

20. Have you experienced, or are you aware of, problems linked to hate speech and threats directed towards individuals exercising journalistic activities?

21. Are you aware of cases where fear of hate speech or threats, as described above, has led to a reluctance to report on certain issues or has had a generally chilling effect on the exercise of freedom of speech?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples and further information.

22. Have you experienced, or are you aware of, problems concerning journalists' safety and security in the EU?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

23. Please indicate any best practice for protecting journalists from threats against their safety and security.

24. Have you ever experienced or are you aware of pressures put by State measures on journalistic sources (including where these sources are whistleblowers)?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

25. How would pressures on journalistic sources be best addressed?

26. Please indicate any best practice for protecting the confidentiality of journalistic sources/whistleblowers.

27. Have you experienced, or are you aware of, censorship (including self-censorship) in the EU?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

28. Have you experienced, or are you aware of, any obstacles to investigative journalism, which may include legal provisions in force or a lack of resources?

29. Do you consider that the level and intensity of investigative journalism, the number of journalists engaged in such activity, the resources available, the space in print and the time available in audiovisual media for the publication of results of investigations has changed over time?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please give specific examples.

30. Please indicate any best practice facilitating investigative journalism

D. Hate speech online

31. What would be the most efficient ways to tackle the trivialisation of discrimination and violence that arises through the spreading of hatred, racism and xenophobia, in particular online?

32. How can a better informed use of modern media, including new digital media ('media literacy') contribute to promote tolerance? Please indicate any best practice.

E. Role of free and pluralistic media in a democratic society

33. How do developments in media freedom and pluralism impact democracy? Please explain.

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Media freedom and pluralism
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34. Who do you think is the most suited to help increase media literacy? Please rank and explain why.

	The most important - 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	The least important - 8
Family	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Friends	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○
School	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Public authorities	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○
Media, including online providers	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Dedicated learning systems using e.g. radio, TV, mobile phones and the internet (please specify)	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○
Civil society	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○
Other (please specify)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Other - please specify

35. Please give specific good examples or best practices for increasing media literacy.

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According to the Audio-Visual Media Services Directives of 2007 and 2013,
Member States and particularly the independent regulatory authorities in
broadcasting sector are required to launch initiatives and to develop a
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variety of programs to promote media literacy, to ensure high levels and to upgrade media literacy levels in the member states. As the independent regulatory authority for broadcasting Cyprus Radio Television Authority has the mandate to design and coordinate the agenda for the enhancement of Media Literacy in the Republic of Cyprus.

The intention and the purpose of the activities of the CRTA as regards the media literacy policy is to empower citizens and to develop citizens' critical thinking and ability to evaluate the plethora of images and the multiple messages they receive on a daily basis. In addition, media literacy policy seeks to facilitate individuals to develop skills and abilities, which are required in order to effectively and efficiently use information and communication technologies

Current project implemented by the CRTA targets at educating students at primary and secondary schools. This social group is one of the most sensitive due to the fact that pupils' personality is still malleable. Hence, the project pays particular attention to educating this part of the population. The principal initiative in the context of media literacy project consists on delivering specialized workshops related to media literacy. This is a joint scheme, designed and applied by the CRTA and the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus. The scheme consists on delivering specialized workshops related to media literacy at the primary and high schools. For the purposes of this project, school life has been separated in three categories, as follows:

- Level 1 to Level 3 of Primary school
- Level 4 to Level 6 of Primary school
- High school (Level 1 to Level 3)

Thus, the project refers to the development of three different lesson plans/workshops, one for each of the above-mentioned categories.

The workshop for Level 1 to Level 3 of Primary school focuses on advertisement and particularly on food advertisement. According to the lesson plan, during the workshop subjects such as, the target audience of the advertisement and the marketing strategy adopted in the advertisements that are shown are discussed, while there is also an evaluative-creative activity. For the purposes of this last activity students are provided with ideas about a product and are asked to create their own advertisement.

The workshop of the second group (Level 4 to Level 6 of Primary school) refers, again, to advertisement and how media content, in general, contributes to the construction of public opinion and to the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes. Thus, in the context of the workshop it is attempted to deconstruct the stereotypes.

The main topic of the workshop delivered at the High school (Level 1 to Level 3) is the critical evaluation of the content disseminated through the various forms of mass media. Students are expected to develop their critical thinking and to realize the significance of assessing the credibility and reliability of news and information that is distributed by traditional media and the internet. It is also anticipated that students understand the importance of distinguishing between news reporting and commenting and discriminate between

accurate and misleading information and news reporting. Moreover, the workshop introduces the concept of responsible use of the internet and the online search engines.

In another perspective the CRTA proceeded in June 2014 to the production of a TV spot referring to the watershed and to the fact that during school holidays the watershed is at 22.00. The TV organizations were asked to broadcast this spot during summer school holiday in 2014. The spot is also available on line (http://www.crta.org.cy/default.asp?id=256)

36. What would be concrete ways for free and pluralistic media to enhance good governance and transparency and thus foster citizens' democratic engagement (e.g. self-organisation for political purposes, participation in unions, NGOs, political parties, participation in elections)?

37. What are best practices of free and pluralistic media contributing to foster an informed political debate on issues that are important for democratic societies (e.g. in terms of the nature of the content or in terms of format or platforms proposed)?

38. Which measures would you consider useful to improve access to political information across borders? Please indicate any best practice.

39. Do you consider that social media/platforms, as increasingly used by candidates, political parties and citizens in electoral campaigns play a positive role in encouraging democratic engagement?

- (●) Yes
- ( ) No

If yes, please give specific aspects and best practices that you would recommend.

If no, please give specific aspects and examples of negative impacts, and possible alternatives to address them.

40. Do you consider that there are specific risks or problems regarding the role of platforms and social media — in relation to pluralism of the journalistic press or more generally — as regards the quality of the democratic debate and the level of engagement?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

If yes, please give specific examples and best practices that you would recommend to address these risks or problems.

Contact

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