

Resolution 2314 (2019)¹
Provisional version

Media education in the new media environment

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly notes that digitisation, mobility and online communication have brought indisputable benefits for the public, who today can enjoy a wide range of sources of information and unprecedented access to cultural, historical, political, economic and technical information. Furthermore, the open nature of digital platforms facilitates participatory, transparent and effective democracy.
2. At the same time, in the digital age, threats to fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law are increasing. Large segments of the public, and especially young people, are turning to social media as their main source of news, but they are vulnerable to information disorder. Hate speech and incitement to violence hamper social peace. Disinformation and propaganda influence not only elections and referenda, but also daily life; they have a negative effect on citizens' political commitment and on their trust in traditional media.
3. People have a right to be properly informed in order to make informed choices, and member States must protect this right. In this context, media education is a key tool for strengthening media pluralism and the quality of media content, which are essential for the safeguarding of our democratic societies.
4. Action must be taken to raise awareness among members of society, and among young people in particular, regarding the challenges and risks brought by the new media environment; to increase their ability to distinguish information from opinion and objective facts from propaganda or false news; to make them conscious of possible manipulation, disinformation or hate speech; and to immunise them against indoctrination and radicalisation. It is equally necessary to step up the training of journalists: responsibility and professional ethics should be a priority for journalists in their work, as they are prerequisites for people's trust in the media and in quality journalism.
5. Media education should address all members of the public. It should start at school and continue as part of a life-long learning process, aiming to enable all individuals to exploit the potential of media for access to culture, entertainment, learning and intercultural dialogue, to help them acquire a critical approach to media as regards both quality and accuracy of content, to develop their digital skills and knowledge of existing protection tools, and to improve their online behaviour.
6. Although in several member States media education is part of the school curriculum, it is not always clear exactly how this education fits into the syllabus. Every so often, there is no consistency in the methodology and objectives pursued. Media literacy needs are evolving at a rapid pace, at times faster than media literacy curricula are developed and delivered in classrooms. Teachers need more support and training, but initial and in-service teacher training is not always provided and not always updated.
7. Moreover, the promotion of media literacy is not a task that the education system and teachers or the media themselves could perform alone. States' policies should not be limited to the educational sector, but take a cross-sectoral, multi-actor approach, seeking to involve other relevant actors that could play an important role, for instance, media regulatory authorities and social media. All relevant stakeholders in the process of media education – public institutions, ministries, schools, universities, media (in particular public service media), media regulatory authorities, civil society, private initiatives, internet intermediaries – need to

1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 29 November 2019 (see [Doc. 15002](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, rapporteur: Ms Nino Gogvadze).*



enhance co-ordination of their strategies and actions, and proceed to a multi-actor collaboration. However, effective co-ordination is hampered by the lack of comprehensive up-to-date information and overviews of ground activities regarding member States' policies and best practices in the field and by the absence of platforms which could facilitate cross-sectoral co-operation at national level.

8. Funding is usually "heterogeneous", with a complex interplay between different types of financing, and it often lacks transparency. Sometimes no precise actor has the overall responsibility for the whole process; this can make it difficult to secure long-term funding for media and information literacy projects and can make it hard to see which sector or organisations should be providing leadership. Funding initiatives by tech giants are welcome but they are wholly voluntary and random; the focuses of these initiatives, the selection of applicants, the amounts, frequency as well as terms and conditions of the financing awarded are decided according to corporate interests. These initiatives should be complementary to, rather than a substitute for, structured systems and schemes of non-commercial funding. Without adequate resources, media education will remain contingent on private and voluntary endeavours, whereas sustainable solutions are needed.

9. In this context, the Assembly recalls to member States [the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)1](#) on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership, [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)2](#) on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries, and [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)7](#) on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment. Also building on guidelines therein, the Assembly recommends that member States:

- 9.1. develop a co-ordinated national media literacy *policy* and ensure its operationalisation and implementation through annual or multiyear action plans and by providing adequate resources for these purposes;
- 9.2. support the creation of a co-ordinated national media literacy *network* comprising a wide range of stakeholders, or the further development of such a network where it already exists;
- 9.3. actively exchange and promote in relevant international forums positive practices developed within national networks;
- 9.4. encourage internet intermediaries to support media and information literacy strategies;
- 9.5. proceed, together with relevant actors at national level, to a mapping of media literacy practices, ensuring that it is repeated at periodic intervals, is promoted accordingly and its outcome is made available online;
- 9.6. promote media education at all levels of formal education and post-school ongoing education, embedding media literacy in educational establishments and curricula;
- 9.7. ensure adequate training for teachers, particularly as regards initial and in-service training;
- 9.8. support journalism education and trainings through an independent adequate funding mechanism while ensuring an equitable distribution of the financial support and fully respecting professional and academic independence in the organisational matters;
- 9.9. introduce in the mission of public service media, where this is not yet the case, the duty to provide media literacy, to fight digital divide, to ensure safety for young audiences in the online environment; in this context, allocate to the public services media the resources necessary to develop media education projects and integrate them in their programmes;
- 9.10. enlarge the mandate of media regulatory authorities, for the latter to be more actively involved in the field of media education, notably in the promotion of media literacy in the audiovisual sector; in this connection, ensure that media literacy become an integral part of the mandate of media regulatory authorities, taking as a source of inspiration the Guidelines on how to establish Media Literacy Networks, adopted by the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities in May 2018 may be useful;
- 9.11. support national campaigns for media education as a complementary lever to raise awareness of the importance of the issue and boost co-operation among various stakeholders.

10. The Assembly calls on public service media organisations to:

- 10.1. follow the guidelines on media literacy developed by the European Broadcasting Union, notably in its News Report 2018, "50 ways to make it better", and take inspiration from extensive examples which involve media literacy and education initiatives;

- 10.2. develop media literacy projects individually and in co-operation with other stakeholders such as community/private media, newspapers, civil society initiatives, internet intermediaries, and in this connection, share best practices with national and European partner institutions;
 - 10.3. provide specialist educational content addressed to children and teenagers, also using new techniques adapted to young audience behaviours, in order to develop with them critical approach to information and the media in general, provide advice and tips around digital safety and ethical behaviour online, using young presenters, explaining how to distinguish opinions and facts, how to spot disinformation, manipulation and propaganda, how to check sources, to enable the young to act responsibly as both consumer and creator of content in the digital space;
 - 10.4. develop online video news services suitable for use on mobile devices, using formats that appeal to and engage specific target audiences, especially youth;
 - 10.5. develop focused programmes offering guidance to teachers on how to make, interpret or decode content;
 - 10.6. provide in-house training to journalists and other media workers on various professional matters, including ethical aspects and quality journalism.
11. The Assembly calls on the European Broadcasting Union to:
 - 11.1. continue to promote its guidelines regarding media and information literacy, and encourage European public service media to fully apply them, keeping in mind their particular role vis-à-vis the public of all ages and social categories;
 - 11.2. further develop innovative collaborative media literacy initiatives among its members, looking for synergies with other quality news partners;
 - 11.3. provide its members with advanced strategies regarding media and information literacy in their projects and encourage active co-operation between the latter;
 - 11.4. organise systematic workshops and trainings for its members on media literacy and encourage the exchange of good practices in the field;
 - 11.5. actively take part in, and contribute to, targeted studies focusing on media and information literacy.
 12. The Assembly calls on the Association of Commercial Television in Europe to:
 - 12.1. encourage its members to consider the crucial importance of media literacy and to develop specialised programmes targeting the young audience in particular;
 - 12.2. develop in this field co-operation with public service media and other types of media and proceed to exchanges of good practices that may be fruitful and useful.
 13. The Assembly calls on professionals and organisations in the media sector to:
 - 13.1. consider complex challenges faced today by journalists and other media actors in the multi-media ecosystem, and develop professional training focused on legal, digital, ethical, verification/fact-checking, security and other dimensions, organised either by media organisations themselves or by journalists' unions or other partner organisations;
 - 13.2. ensure that professional education organised by journalism schools or as specialised programmes offered by universities is available for journalists on a permanent basis;
 - 13.3. co-ordinate efforts between the main journalists' organisations, such as the European Federation of Journalists, the European Journalism Training Association, the Ethical Journalism Network, the European Journalism Centre, the Global Editors Network, in order to enable members to collaborate on exchanges and teaching and research projects in the field of journalism education, and to elaborate a clear, accurate, detailed and up-to-date overview of journalism education and training programmes at national and European levels.
 14. The Assembly calls on internet intermediaries to:
 - 14.1. actively co-operate with public, social and private entities to promote and support media literacy, notably to counter disinformation, hate speech, including sexist hate speech targeting women, and online misbehaviour;

14.2. support the development of appropriate programmes and tools in the domain of media and information literacy and, in particular of specific tools to be used in the process of media education in schools and during journalists' training;

14.3. further expand support for independent networks of fact-checkers and tools to stimulate quality journalism.