



Resolution 957 (1991)¹

Situation of local radio in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Freedom of expression and information is a human right secured by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and a fundamental aspect of democracy.
2. Radio broadcasting has a major part to play in the development of culture and the freedom to form opinions.
3. The Assembly considers that local radio is an ideal potential means of fostering freedom of expression and information, the development of culture, the freedom to form and confront opinions, and active participation in local life.
4. Member states not yet having done so should accordingly permit local radio to exist.
5. However, the disorderly proliferation of local radio stations could have the effect of disrupting the airwaves and thus even represent an air traffic hazard. It may also impair programme quality.
6. Member states which already have regulations in this area should therefore ensure that they are observed, particularly as regards the use of airwaves.
7. In allocating frequencies and issuing broadcasting licences to local radio stations, member states should ensure that the following criteria are observed :
 - 7.1. objectiveness ;
 - 7.2. quality in preference to quantity ;
 - 7.3. diversity in respect of information, culture and entertainment, and plurality in the ideas conveyed.
8. As far as the contents of their programmes are concerned, local stations should be independent both from the political authority and from the press, publishing companies and financial consortia ; moreover, the exercise by local radio networks of a monopoly in broadcasting at any level is best avoided.
9. In order to ensure their independence, their sources of finance should be diversified.
10. They may receive subsidies from central, regional and local government and also resort to advertising, provided that this does not exceed a specified percentage of broadcasting time.
11. The content of the programmes presented by local radio should meet the following requirements :
 - 11.1. the quality of local radio must be of the same standard as for public radio ;
 - 11.2. a certain standard of professionalism must be provided ;
 - 11.3. local radio should observe the public service code of ethics and in particular the principles set forth by the European Parliament in its report of 21 April 1989 on radio broadcasting, namely :
 - a. "objectivity, integrity and impartiality in the presentation of news ;

1. Assembly debate on 31 January 1991 (24th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6343](#), report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Rapporteur : Mr Columberg ; and [Doc. 6344](#), opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur : Mr Soell). Text adopted by the Assembly on 31 January 1991 (25th Sitting).



- b.* the separation of news from opinion, the naming of those who express opinions and freedom of expression, within the limits laid down by the law of each member state ;
- c.* respect for political, religious, social, cultural and linguistic diversity ;
- d.* respect for the dignity, reputation and private life of individuals and for all rights and liberties recognised under international treaties signed by the member states or recognised by the Assembly ;
- e.* the protection of young people and children ;
- f.* respect for principles of equality, thus excluding discrimination on the grounds of race, culture, sex or religion."

12. Where it does not exist, co-ordination between the authorities of frontier regions should be established in order to achieve a harmonious allocation of airwaves, provide conditions for fair competition and foster mutual knowledge of regional cultures.

13. A body responsible for supervising the application of all the principles set out above should be established in each country.