



Recommendation 1789 (2007)¹

Professional education and training of journalists

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe believes that free and independent media are one of the fundamental backbones of democratic society, one of the engines of democratic transition and one of the requirements of democratic stability. For the media to function properly, journalists must show responsibility and professionalism, and this calls in turn for professional education and training.

2. The Assembly is aware of the challenges faced by media and journalists in Europe, in particular the transition from totalitarianism to democracy throughout Europe, the technological progress of new digital media as well as the growing globalisation of information flows and markets. The media in Europe work more and more without national borders: journalists move between states and deal with subjects from abroad or with relevance to an audience abroad, and media products are disseminated across borders. These developments both open up new opportunities for journalists and place new demands on them, such as requiring new skills, greater knowledge and ongoing training.

3. In this context, the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1003 \(1993\)](#) and [Recommendation 1215 \(1993\)](#) on the ethics of journalism, [Resolution 1165 \(1998\)](#) on the right to privacy, [Resolution 1438 \(2005\)](#) and [Recommendation 1702 \(2005\)](#) on freedom of the press and the working conditions of journalists in conflict zones, [Recommendation 1706 \(2005\)](#) on media and terrorism as well as [Resolution 1510 \(2006\)](#) on freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs.

4. The Assembly recalls the successful assistance and co-operation provided by the Council of Europe for more than a decade now in most member states in the field of media legislation and media training. Many of those activities have been funded by voluntary contributions of member and observer states as well as by the European Union. The Council of Europe, as the prime standard-setting organisation in Europe concerning freedom of the media, has thus been enabled to make its expertise available to all European states. This experience and expertise must be exploited further.

5. The Assembly welcomes the long-standing co-operation under the joint Council of Europe – European Commission programmes for media training in Europe and expresses the hope that the new MEDIA Programme and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership initiative under the EU budget for 2007-2013 will provide for opportunities to make greater use of the experience and geographic reach of the Council of Europe by continuing joint programmes at an intensified level.

6. The Assembly also recalls that the Council of Europe has set up a network of independent schools of political studies in many cities, which will familiarise journalists, among others, with the European project, based on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and civic values. Further targeted activities for journalists and the media are desirable in this framework.

7. In view of the globalisation of media and the differences in cultural and media practices, the Assembly is of the opinion that an intensified co-operation with non-European countries of the Mediterranean Basin is necessary in the field of media education along the lines mentioned in Assembly [Resolution 1313 \(2003\)](#) on cultural co-operation between Europe and the south-Mediterranean countries.

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 16 March 2007 see [Doc. 11170](#), report of the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, rapporteur: Mr R. Huseynov).



8. The Assembly also welcomes the training efforts for journalists pursued by many media companies in Europe and by professional organisations such as the International and European Federations of Journalists, the European Broadcasting Union, as well as the World Association of Newspapers and the European Newspaper Publishers Association. The professional education and training of their journalists is one of the most valuable assets for media companies in an increasingly competitive media environment. With regard to media content, quality should be promoted and such content should be prepared professionally by well-educated and trained journalists.

9. The Assembly notes, however, that not all media companies in Europe have the possibility of providing training to their journalists because of lack of funds and training schemes. While many institutions of higher education offer specialised courses and programmes for students wishing to become journalists, very few address the practical training needs of working journalists. Therefore, the Assembly is of the opinion that specialised courses should be created to provide vocational training and continuing education for journalists.

10. The Assembly refers to the emphasis placed on freedom of expression and the media in the commitments undertaken by the heads of state and government in their Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit in Warsaw (May 2005), as well as those undertaken at the 7th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy in Kyiv on 10 and 11 March 2005.

11. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:

11.1. call on all member states to support professional training courses of journalists nationally and through the Council of Europe, possibly in co-operation with the media and their professional organisations;

11.2. consider establishing Council of Europe chairs for media training, possibly through voluntary contributions from governments as well as financial support from media companies and in co-operation with universities in Europe;

11.3. establish, together with media companies and in co-operation with institutions of higher education in Europe, a network of training centres for journalists;

11.4. organise pan-European exchanges for journalists with educational institutions and media companies, possibly through joint programmes with the European Union, in order to promote European standards and understanding among journalists;

11.5. organise, possibly with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe in Lisbon, a conference on professional education and training for journalists in Europe and the Mediterranean Basin.

12. The Assembly resolves to provide assistance to the parliaments of member states in setting up departments responsible for relations with independent media in order to enhance the transparency of parliamentary work as well as the professionalism of media reporting about this work.