Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Increasing transparency of media ownership

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2074 (2015)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has noted with interest Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2074 (2015) on "Increasing transparency of media ownership". It has received comments on the recommendation from the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) and from the European Audiovisual Observatory of the Council of Europe.

2. The Committee of Ministers considers media pluralism and transparency of media ownership to be basic requirements for a viable media system and a healthy media environment. It agrees with the Parliamentary Assembly that knowledge about ownership relationships in the media field enables the public to critically evaluate the information and opinions circulated. Increasing transparency of media ownership is all the more desirable in a rapidly changing media environment where traditional media compete with new media services, intermediaries, aggregators, search engines and telecommunications operators. For this reason, the Committee of Ministers considers that the Council of Europe standards in this field should be updated and further developed, while taking account of its Recommendations No. R(94)13 on measures to promote media transparency and CM/Rec(2007)2 on media pluralism and diversity of media content. For the next budgetary biennium (2016-2017), it has entrusted the CDMSI with the preparation of a draft recommendation to member States on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership.

3. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the importance attributed by the Assembly to the MAVISE database, which is an invaluable source of information about the European media landscape. The Committee notes that the European Audiovisual Observatory for its Action Plan 2016 will propose to its governing board, the Executive Council, to improve the data collection in MAVISE along the lines suggested in the Assembly's recommendation.

4. The Committee of Ministers considers it important to co-operate with other organisations, such as the European Union, in the field of media pluralism and transparency of media ownership. The Committee considers that the European Platform for Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) would be a good partner for the exchange of information, cases and best practices. Therefore, it supports further co-operation in particular on the topic of transparency of media ownership.

5. The Committee of Ministers recalls that the Council of Europe is promoting media pluralism and transparency of media ownership through its co-operation activities as well as in the context of other technical assistance activities.

6. Finally, the Committee of Ministers agrees with the Parliamentary Assembly that it would be a welcome measure if associations of media outlets would set up ethical standards on transparency of media ownership.

1. Adopted at the 1245th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (20 January 2016).