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## Media responsibility and ethics in a changing media environment

**Reply to Recommendation<sup>1</sup>:** Recommendation 2075 (2015)  
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has noted with interest Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2075 (2015) on “Media responsibility and ethics in a changing media environment” and has communicated it to the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI), for information and comments. The Committee considers that the recommendation recalls important principles and initiatives concerning media accountability and training.

2. The Committee of Ministers supports the Assembly’s call on member States to ensure that individuals have an effective right to reply and considers that this could be enhanced by the use of information and communication technologies. The three texts adopted by the Committee of Ministers to which the Assembly refers constitute a basis for fostering accountable and professional media and journalism in the digital age.<sup>2</sup>

3. While underlining the importance of media independence, the Committee of Ministers has, on many occasions, emphasised media self-regulation as an alternative or complement to media regulation. Human rights norms have to underpin the self-regulatory mechanisms and bridge human rights and special media standards as a sound basis of journalism. An important point to be stressed is that although a diversity of media accountability rules already exists, their practical implementation is of crucial importance. In this regard, strengthening practical activities aiming at improving self-regulatory, ethical standards for media professionals and their consistent implementation is a goal to be pursued by the media and their associations.

4. The Committee of Ministers agrees with the Assembly about the need to strengthen programmes aimed at raising self-regulatory ethical standards among journalists and the media. It notes that the Council of Europe has launched a number of initiatives aiming at boosting professional and ethical journalism through its co-operation activities. In this respect, it recalls for example the support provided for the establishment of a network of media self-regulatory bodies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (2011) as well as in South-Eastern European countries (2015). Seminars with journalists have also been organised and support for the elaboration of codes of ethics has been provided in a number of member States.

5. In view of the above, the Committee of Ministers does not consider it necessary at this stage to produce guidelines for governments in order to support media self-regulation nationally. It will continue to pay attention in its future work to media responsibility and ethics and to how they are affected by a changing media environment.

6. The Committee of Ministers takes note of the Assembly’s recommendation that the Council of Europe should engage in more practical activities. It agrees about the usefulness of the initiatives enumerated in this respect and assures the Assembly that it will keep this in mind when considering future activities.

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

2. Resolution Res(74)26 on the right of reply – position of the individual in relation to the press, Recommendations CM/Rec(2004)16 to member States on the right of reply in the new media environment and No. R(97)21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance.

