

Resolution 2314 (2019)¹

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, threats to fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law are increasing in the digital age. Large segments of the public, 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 can influence not only elections and referendums, but also daily life; they have a negative effect on citizens' political commitment and on their trust in traditional media.
3. People have the 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, in particular among young people, 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 improve 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 lifelong 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 media education is part of the school curriculum in several member States, it is not always clear exactly how this education fits into the syllabus. Often there is no consistency in the methodology and objectives pursued. Media literacy needs are evolving at a rapid pace, sometimes faster than media literacy curricula are developed and delivered in classrooms. Teachers need more support and training, because initial or in-service teacher training in media literacy is not always provided or updated.
7. Moreover, the promotion of media literacy is not a task that the education system and teachers, or the media themselves, can perform alone. States' policies should not be limited to the educational sector, but should take a cross-sectoral, multi-actor approach, seeking to involve other relevant stakeholders 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 –

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).*



need to enhance co-ordination of their strategies and actions, and engage in a multi-actor collaboration. However, effective co-ordination is hampered by the lack of comprehensive, up-to-date information and overviews of 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 there is no entity or person with the overall responsibility for the whole process, which can make it difficult to secure long-term funding for media and information literacy projects and can make it hard to see which sectors or organisations should be providing leadership. Funding initiatives by tech giants are welcome, but they are wholly voluntary and random. The focus of these initiatives; the selection of applicants; and 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 non-commercial funding schemes. 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. Building on the 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 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. create, together with relevant actors at national level, a map of media literacy practices, ensuring that this is repeated periodically, is promoted accordingly and that its outcome is made available online;
- 9.6. promote media education at all levels of formal education and continuing education, integrating media literacy into 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 training programmes through an independent and adequate funding mechanism while ensuring an equitable distribution of financial support and fully respecting professional and academic independence in 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 combat the digital divide, and to ensure safety for young audiences in the online environment; in this context, allocate to the public service 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 context, ensure that media literacy becomes 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;
- 9.11. support national campaigns for media education as a complementary means to raising awareness of the importance of this 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, and take inspiration from extensive examples of media literacy and education initiatives;
- 10.2. develop media literacy projects individually and in co-operation with other stakeholders such as community or private media, newspapers, civil society, internet intermediaries, and in this context, 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 the behaviour of young audiences, in order to develop with them critical approaches to information and the media in general, provide advice and tips about digital safety and ethical behaviour online, using young presenters to explain how to distinguish opinions and facts; how to spot disinformation, manipulation and propaganda; and how to check sources, to enable young people to act responsibly as both consumers and creators 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 young people;
 - 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 professionals on various topics, 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 with regard to 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 them;
 - 11.4. organise systematic workshops and training programmes 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 young audiences in particular;
 - 12.2. develop, in this field, co-operation with public service media and other types of media and exchange 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 professionals in the multimedia 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 training, 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' professional organisations, such as the European Federation of Journalists, the European Journalism Training Association, the Ethical Journalism Network, the European Journalism Centre and 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 draft 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 encourage quality journalism.