



# **Media literacy research and policy in Europe**

## **A review of recent, current and planned activities**

**Report of a meeting of the COST Action,  
*Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies*,  
held on 12 September 2013**

The meeting was organised by Sonia Livingstone, LSE and EU Kids Online. This report was prepared by Monica Bulger, Oxford Internet Institute and Sonia Livingstone, LSE, with the help of Rafal Zaborowski, LSE. We thank Geoffroy Patriarche for hosting the event at Université Saint-Louis, Brussels.

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## About COST: Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies

The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST<sup>1</sup>) was established in 1971 to reduce fragmentation among research projects in Europe by supporting networks of scientific communities. Among its goals are to connect policy-makers and researchers in ongoing dialogue, opening channels of communication and improving the availability of research to policy-makers and private sector stakeholders. While COST does not directly fund research, it supports pan-European networks of research communities, which are referred to as *Actions*.

*Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* (Action IS0906) was established in March 2010 to coordinate research in response to the changing media and communication environment. With a focus on media engagement, it has established working groups on (1) new media genres, media literacy and trust in media; (2) audience interactivity and participation; (3) the role of media and the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) for evolving social relationships; and (4) audience transformations.<sup>2</sup> A strength of this Action is its holistic approach, involving media researchers as well as policy-makers and regulatory bodies, industry experts in ICT, media producers, media educators, media-oriented non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and representatives from citizen initiatives.

Working Group 1 launched its Media Literacy Task Force in 2011. Under the leadership of Sonia Livingstone the group has looked at 'the ways in which people relate to the overall media landscape of old and new media, and the various sense-making strategies they bring to bear on the media ensemble, as well as on the individual media and their content'.<sup>3</sup> To engage academic, policy and industry stakeholders in dialogue around media literacy, the Task Force hosted a panel at the COST conference, *Transforming Audiences*, held in Zagreb in 2011; published a report from that panel;<sup>4</sup> published a special journal issue reporting on the state of media literacy research, initiatives and interventions;<sup>5</sup> and published a book chapter that situated media literacy in the changing media.<sup>6</sup> As part of its 'Building bridges with stakeholders' phase, the Task Force hosted the present one-day dialogue with invited panellists to discuss the progress of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) in relation to media literacy.

Media literacy is a central theme in the work of the 33-country EU Kids Online network,<sup>7</sup> and members of this network have been working closely with the COST Action.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cost.eu](http://www.cost.eu)

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description, see [www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/1#attachments](http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/1#attachments)

<sup>3</sup> From a September 2011 meeting in Zagreb:

[www.cntv.cl/prontus\\_cntv/site/artic/20120410/asocfile/20120410190800/medialiteracy\\_sonialivingstone\\_.pdf](http://www.cntv.cl/prontus_cntv/site/artic/20120410/asocfile/20120410190800/medialiteracy_sonialivingstone_.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Livingstone, S. (2011). *Media literacy: Ambitions, policies and measures*. London. Retrieved from [www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/223](http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/node/223)

<sup>5</sup> Livingstone, S., Papaioannou, T., Grandío Pérez, M., and Wijnen C. W. (2012). Critical insights in European media literacy research and policy. *Media Studies*, 3(6). Retrieved from [http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id\\_broj=7793&lang=en](http://hrcak.srce.hr/index.php?show=toc&id_broj=7793&lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> Livingstone, S., Grandío, M., Wijnen, C., Costa, C., and Papaioannou, T. (2013). Situating media literacy in the changing media environment: critical insights from European research on audiences. In N. Carpentier, K. Schroeder, and L. Hallett (Eds), *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* (pp.210–227). Bristol: Intellect.

<sup>7</sup> See [www.eukidsonline.net](http://www.eukidsonline.net)

## Executive summary

This is the report of a seminar, 'Media literacy research and policy in Europe: A review of recent, current and planned activities', organised by the Media Literacy Task Force of the COST Action, *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies*, on 12 September 2013. Seminar participants were 25 media literacy experts from academia, policy and regulatory institutions. The aim was for participants to draw on each other's expertise to form an understanding of the current state of play and future directions for media literacy research and policy in Europe. It contributed the following key points and proposals:

- A starting point for discussion was the recognition that promoting and enhancing media literacy across Europe, for child and adult populations, was of growing importance, in a context of digital media convergence and a highly complex media and information ecology. Without efforts to enhance media literacy, European citizens have much to lose.
- While it was acknowledged that media literacy remained difficult to define, thus making it difficult to locate within policy and funding frameworks, this was precisely because of its wide relevance to the mediation of politics, commerce, work and private life. Strategically, there are advantages in formulating a focused agenda to incentivise politicians and other policy-makers to lobby for media literacy initiatives and funding.
- The context in which media literacy initiatives occur matters greatly. In addition to the multiple interacting layers of geography, culture, politics, economy, regulatory frameworks and education, the fast-changing media environment and the competing priorities regarding children's rights internationally further complicate implementation of media literacy efforts. Yet these same factors mean that policy makers are open to proposals to advance the media literacy agenda.
- In reviewing the history of media literacy policy, it appeared that, at European level, a diversity of small projects enabled considerable expansion in media literacy policy around 2006–10, but momentum was lost as this policy area moved from Directorate General (DG) Information Society to DG Education and Culture. Policy-makers and researchers were now reformulating their approach, often re-focusing on the challenges of locating media education in particular formal, semi-formal and informal educational settings. It is a challenge in this regard that education is largely a matter for member states rather than directed by the European Commission (EC).
- However, there is a range of obstacles facing media literacy implementation at the EC level, in particular, competing political priorities and the need to prove the value of future efforts if resources were to be forthcoming. There is also a lack of communication channels to share initiatives, opportunities and best practice, both at European level and with national and local practitioners. There is a need to build partnerships with education and to focus efforts on the development of curricula and training. Once implemented, such initiatives should be evaluated, which occurs far too rarely. Evaluations enable sharing best practice and learning lessons from problems encountered; they also provide case studies to advocate for further interventions and funding.
- Measuring media literacy has proved contentious, especially as regards the development of comparable, standardised indices. However, some advances in approach and measures were evident, with a growing collection of measures for media literacy that included not only access but also critical and creative engagement, also allowing for the relation between contexts and literacy levels. Still, methodological concerns persisted, as did scepticism that these measures would be used robustly, on a cross-national basis.
- There was general agreement that the reporting requirement for member states had not been communicated well at the national levels, with several participants stating their

countries were either not aware of the requirement or had not received sufficient direction to move forward.

- In looking to the future, participants urged the need for greater coordination within and across countries, with improved visibility of experts and initiatives, and better communication among them. The research and policy community needed committed advocates who could push forward a clear agenda and leverage opportunities to advance media literacy objectives.
- Participants recommended inclusion of other actors, including industry representatives from across the media and communications sector, and regulators, civil society and teachers. Yet they advocated multiple directions for future research and policy, with no easy consensus emerging.
- It was noted positively that there was a genuine political consensus in favour of media literacy in the EC, Council of Europe (CoE), and other national and international organisations.
- For the research agenda, it is more important than ever to ask the pressing questions: What do citizens need to know in a mediated society? How are their knowledge requirements changing as the processes of mediation and the social practices around mediation continue to change? What is the downside or detriment if they don't know what they need to know?
- An alternative to settling on a focused agenda would be to sketch a broad agenda with many future directions. Provided that each had its champion, that they did not contradict each other, and that there was a good degree of communication, cooperation and collaboration, this could usefully broaden the agenda for media literacy. There are even disadvantages to stabilising the agenda too soon, given the context of technological, social and policy change. The result could be an inclusive agenda moving ahead in multiple directions, as befits the many ways in which media, communication and information technologies now underpin almost every domain of our lives.
- The meeting concluded with agreement to widen the circle of those engaged in the present discussion, to share upcoming plans for events, reports and consultations, and to sketch the first steps towards an action plan for media literacy in Europe.
- This should prioritise a focus on empowerment, to embrace a positive view of media literacy than one centred on the risk and safety agenda, so as to motivate a wider array of experts and others to participate in promoting media literacy. It should also recognise that since the media environment fundamentally changes people's lives, we should think bigger – seeing media literacy on the same level as reading and writing and calculating, and pursuing a broader education campaign rather than thinking of media literacy as a simple tool or optional add-on.
- There was also a call for an evidence-based approach within the EC that conceives of media literacy as a vital 21st-century skill that links strategically to the overarching innovation discourse. This could even advocate a media literacy directive to ensure actions to advance media literacy in all member states.
- While the long-term ambitions for media literacy are important, there is also a need for a shorter-term, pragmatic plan that works with current policies and funding opportunities. Thus participants also suggested a range of practical next steps, as listed in the conclusions of this report.

## Introduction

On Thursday, 12 September 2013, the COST Media Literacy Task Force hosted a meeting of 25 media literacy experts from academia, policy and regulatory institutions at the Université Saint-Louis in Brussels. Titled 'Media literacy research and policy in Europe: A review of recent, current and planned activities', the aim of the meeting was for participants to draw on each other's expertise to form an understanding of the current state of play and future directions for media literacy research and policy in Europe.

**Professor Geoffroy Patriarche** opened the event by describing the role of the Media Literacy Task Force within the larger context of COST initiatives. A key focus of the Task Force is the interplay between media literacy research, practice and policy and the ways in which stakeholders in academia, policy and industry engage with and influence current practice. Patriarche emphasised that the event was intentionally smaller than usual COST events, with a balance of academics and policy and regulatory institutions. The aim of the event was meaningful dialogue between these groups to clarify the current state of media literacy initiatives in Europe and to identify next steps.

In her introductory address, **Professor Sonia Livingstone** set out the purposes of the meeting, which were to:

1. Review the current research agenda regarding media literacy in Europe and internationally;
2. Review the state of play regarding the agenda, infrastructure and upcoming actions in media literacy policy at European level, including how countries are meeting the reporting requirement on media literacy for member states as part of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD);
3. To look ahead in terms of the remit and positioning of media literacy and media education policies, including identifying problems in promoting media literacy and possible next steps.

She described the current state of media literacy initiatives in Europe as a jigsaw for which each participant held a piece, but no single group or individual had a sense of the whole. While much interesting work was occurring in Europe, there did not seem to be a collective awareness among the actors as to past success, current initiatives and next steps. Livingstone established for the day's discussion an overarching goal of better understanding the state of media literacy research and policy in Europe. She acknowledged the significant country differences and the accompanying difficulties in identifying key players and infrastructure. For researchers, Livingstone urged a better understanding of how they could contribute, what initiatives they might evaluate and how they might direct their research to inform policy and initiatives. She invited participants to address problems and challenges robustly, noting that gaining clarity on research and policy agendas, infrastructure and direction would be a useful outcome.

Livingstone established a framework for discussion by outlining five linked challenges currently facing media literacy policy and research in Europe:

- *What? The challenge of definition:* Livingstone acknowledged that definitional debates around media literacy continued for good reason: "we are trying to address questions in a fast-changing domain. The technology is changing, the European environment is changing, and the social practices that surround uses of media and communication technologies are also changing." While frustrations about definitions remained, Livingstone believed the debate was meaningful, as it was a way of talking about the

“problematic sociotechnical environment which is itself converging, diverging, complicating.”

- *Why? The challenge of purpose:* Livingstone described how different purposes for media literacy initiatives could divide communities, drawing on examples of child protection, civic participation and the digital future workplace. Each of these issues had their attendant arguments and directions, and could potentially draw efforts and attention away from other media literacy initiatives, yet Livingstone believed that these divisions kept the debate lively and could compel decision-makers to focus on issues critical for communities. She further acknowledged that differences in purpose and priorities existed for stakeholder groups, describing academics (emancipation, democracy, participation) and industry (implementable skills, concrete approach).
- *Who? The challenge of level:* Livingstone questioned at what level media literacy should be promoted. Was the EC the right level for media literacy initiatives, or might the national level of action be more dynamic than the European level? Livingstone believed the question of level was a significant one when considering its direct implications for stakeholders, ministries and bodies charged with this responsibility.
- *Who for? The challenge of target audience:* Livingstone asked whether we were promoting media literacy for everyone or whether we were only interested in some groups. In the field, there are groups interested only in schools/children or vulnerable groups, but Livingstone emphasised that at the European level the specification was to promote media literacy for everyone. Here Livingstone described the “untold story of how adults are managing the complex media landscape” and the struggles that potentially were not addressed by current initiatives. She acknowledged the enormous and complex challenge of reaching the general public and of educating them.
- *Whether? The challenge of assessing progress:* Livingstone challenged participants to consider how they would know whether media literacy was being promoted and implemented. She addressed a gap in evaluation, with no clear metrics for success. She described efforts to measure media literacy at national and European levels and by UNESCO and other international bodies, briefly highlighting the accompanying methodological challenges. She asked, “What would it look like if we were successful in promoting media literacy? What does *good* look like? Are things getting better or not, and how do we know this?”

Livingstone then provided a brief overview of recent activities in media literacy research and policy. There is much enthusiasm around media literacy and media education, with many initiatives occurring at the country and school levels; however, these efforts are often local, not very well-connected with other initiatives, and difficult to sustain or scale. She recommended evaluating whether local enthusiasm was sufficient to promote media literacy at the European level.

A key driver was the EC AVMSD (2007,<sup>8</sup> 2010<sup>9</sup>), requiring ‘the development of media literacy in all sections of society’, including an effort to measure progress every three years. Livingstone asked whether these requirements were still a key point for those in the room to return to, to consider what was happening, how it was happening, how the participants contributed, and what the next steps were.

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<sup>8</sup> For full text, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32007L0065:en:NOT>

<sup>9</sup> For full text, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32010L0013:EN:NOT>

While it was difficult to accurately account for all of the efforts in the field in the past five years, Livingstone urged the group to identify key developments that could be taken forward. She recognised efforts to assess and test measures of media literacy, while acknowledging that the European Parliament was not satisfied with progress made in this area. While further developments followed, the scale of these was not immediately clear. Returning to the jigsaw, she invited participants to bring their pieces to the discussion so that together they could identify the various pieces, how they fitted together, where the gaps were, and what the resulting picture looked like.

## **Panel 1: Reviewing the state of play in the European Union**

*The first panel consisted of Aviva Silver, Matteo Zacchetti and Paolo Celot, and was chaired by Sonia Livingstone.*

**Aviva Silver** described the political framework in which the AVMSD was developed, stating that in the beginning, media literacy received very little political support. She explained that: “the political environment shapes to a greater or lesser extent everything that the EC can do in this area.” Silver described the initial challenge in making decisions about policy, to set objectives and, in light of these, asked “how,” “what” and “why” of a particular issue or effort. She then described how this unfolded for media literacy.

She credited Zacchetti with building support for media literacy initiatives by starting a range of small projects. Media literacy policy had developed in three phases. Silver described the first phase as the most challenging: creating space in the EC agenda for media literacy. She cited a colleague as saying “Media literacy is like apple pie and motherhood: it’s very important, but why would the Commission want to be involved with it?” Silver credited the press in raising awareness about the importance of EC involvement. The second phase resulted in adding media literacy to the AVMSD. When evaluating progress toward realising goals set by the AVMSD, Silver found that media literacy efforts had been disappointing, showing a lack of direction in the first implementation report and a lack of commitment to turn it into something more meaningful. Yet she pointed out that Articles 4 and 5 established in 1989, addressing independent European audiovisual work, had progressed similarly.

In the current phase, the EC has established a member states experts group to create a strong partnership and to examine the role of formal and informal education in promoting media education. This strategic decision has led to moving media literacy efforts from DG Information Society and linking with EC efforts in education. Silver explained that policy was shaped by a pragmatic approach and the EC focus on education fitted well with efforts in media education.

Silver believed that the EC could best serve media literacy efforts as a facilitator, particularly in the domain of education. While the EC did not directly influence education at the national level, she believed that there was potential for the EC to identify opportunities for media education linked to future directions in education more generally.

**Matteo Zacchetti** further elaborated on the development of media literacy policy and evaluation initiatives by describing the three phases in more detail:

- Phase I (started in 2002): as part of the learning initiative, the EC funded 30 small projects in three years and organised conferences and meetings, which helped to develop a panel of experts for future stages.



- Phase II (2006–10): this occurred during European Parliament hearings designed to tackle media literacy issues. Described by Silver as a more expansive phase and Zacchetti as an organic phase, during this phase the EC built a body of research, policy documents and expanded their network of experts. Similar to academic efforts at this time, the EC discussed definitions and methodological issues while building expertise. Zacchetti found the content of the first communication policy document (2007)<sup>10</sup> unsatisfactory, but Silver believed it was a logistic milestone that could be built on. Zacchetti reported that in 2009, the EC presented important recommendations that opened new paths for future work with the education sector, recognising that both the EC and member states have a responsibility to open debates on the inclusion of media literacy into the compulsory curriculum.
- Phase III (2010–present): in the EC, responsibility for media literacy moved from DG Information Society to DG Education and Culture. Since then, three key topics of focus are:
  - a) Relation between media and education. Zacchetti reiterated that while the EC could not require education policies for member states, it could foster debates about inclusion of media literacy in the compulsory curriculum and also support case study assessments.
  - b) Assessment of media literacy. Zacchetti reported that the EC had collaborated on research with universities, and together with its expert group, was now launching small pilot projects and assessing media literacy levels on specific local projects. Member states had been invited to propose projects, for example, to measure media literacy levels within a specific geographic area or as a result of an intervention.
  - c) Starting in 2014, there may be a possibility to fund media literacy initiatives through the new EC Creative Europe programme.

Zacchetti concluded his presentation by describing an upcoming pilot study of film literacy in urban and rural classrooms across member states. Students aged 14–16 will be asked to maintain a media diary for one week describing the frequency, content and type of media they engage. At the end of the week, the students will be invited to view a film and discuss it.

As founding member and Secretary General of the European Association for Viewer Interests (EAVI), **Paolo Celot** has considerable experience working with the EC on media literacy research and policy initiatives. In his presentation, Celot identified trends in media literacy research, problematic detours and promising directions for research and policy in Europe.

Celot asked “which media literacy are we talking about?” He cited a growing focus of European research on technical skills and access. He expressed concern that media literacy efforts focused on the commercial dimensions of the market and on basic technology skills at the expense of more critical questions of how people evaluated media messages. He used a recent BBC media literacy strategy document<sup>11</sup> as an example, explaining that its focus was on encouraging people to use a diverse range of platforms and devices, without helping “people to reflect on what kind of content is broadcast.” Celot was concerned that this lack of focus on critical areas of media literacy was evident throughout Europe.

<sup>10</sup> EC (European Commission) (2007). *A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment*. COM(2007) 833 final. Brussels: EC. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-content/media-literacy/c\\_2007\\_833\\_en\\_1.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-content/media-literacy/c_2007_833_en_1.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> BBC Media (2013) *BBC media strategy document*. London. Retrieved from [www.bbc.co.uk/learning/overview/about/assets/bbc\\_media\\_literacy\\_strategy\\_may2013.pdf](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/overview/about/assets/bbc_media_literacy_strategy_may2013.pdf)

Celot believed that this shift toward technical skills and commercial interests was partially the fault of the experts: “Media literacy is about too many things, the experts never agree.” This uncertainty among experts might be creating a gap that other interests were stepping in to fill. Celot argued that competing definitions of media literacy reflected personal opinion more than research. He urged the event participants to develop a clearer agenda, to recognise what they wanted to do and how they wanted to move forward. He argued that, “it is important to give up the idea that we are separate ... academics, societies, policy-makers, international institutions ... with re-focusing, positive results can be achieved.” Celot felt that it was important to acknowledge that even experts had knowledge gaps on this topic, and felt that arrogance did not contribute to real progress. He believed debate was healthy as long as there was constructive contribution and legitimate criticism.

Celot concluded by saying that the timing was good to advocate for the media literacy agenda, given growth in digital connectivity and use. In meetings with the European Parliament, he found that members were asking what they could do to contribute, which Celot believed was a promising direction. He felt that if experts were more united, much could be accomplished.

## Discussion

**Sonia Livingstone** prompted panellists to describe the third (present) phase in more detail. Since the ambition of the second phase to develop comparable measures of media literacy across European member states appeared problematic enough, what did the EC see as its core aim in the third phase? Taking up Celot’s points, she further asked if the EC would follow particular demands of the market, or possibly combine with the agenda on digital inclusion.

**Aviva Silver** responded that media literacy efforts were always linked with education. As a cross-cutting strategy, media literacy supporters attempted to link with health and other policies of the EC, which had proved impossible. She said this was not surprising, “a joined-up government doesn’t exist, a joined-up academia doesn’t exist either.” Silver returned to her earlier description of pragmatic efforts to develop sustainable policy, stating that after attempting to build bridges across different policy areas, education best fitted with their aims. “It has always been one of our aims to develop stronger links between a media literacy policy based on AV and ICT, and an education policy which, in the EC, is built on a facilitating role.”

Silver acknowledged obstacles facing media literacy implementation at the EC level, in particular competing priorities and the need to prove the value of future efforts. She emphasised the need to connect media literacy research with policy impact, to make visible the ways different groups could benefit from media literacy, such as using the EC’s training offerings for the unemployed. Silver saw the next steps as building stronger links to these issues, to look for gaps and opportunities to take forward their policies. She saw media literacy in formal and informal education as a promising direction. She emphasised the need for research on media education to help move these efforts forward.

**Matteo Zacchetti** supported Celot’s concerns about the changing nature of media literacy initiatives. He expressed a wish that discussions of media literacy could move past disagreement on definition. Zacchetti felt that much of the problematic aspects of the media literacy agenda were personal and political, citing that there were many networks working in parallel with similar objectives. Even though many networks shared members, a lack of communication among the networks might be preventing meaningful progress. He added that the work occurring was rarely successful and was often carried out at a personal, rather than institutional, level. Zacchetti recommended stronger communication among networks as a way to move the media literacy agenda forward meaningfully.

**Ralph Catts** raised the issue of budget, saying that UNESCO had extreme difficulties with the budget which was causing an increased workload and making communication with outside networks difficult.

**Aviva Silver** returned to her earlier point about the political environment shaping results, stating that institutions were reluctant to pool their resources as this relinquished control over the quality of the output as well as credit for the work. She did not see this particular issue as something that would be resolved soon, but believed that communication among networks could limit the negative effects of existing practice.

**Josef Huber** added that even at the country level, little coordination existed; however, “in the rare cases where communication happens and they work together at the country level, we are able to push much more easily in the right direction.”

**Zacchetti** observed that in conversations with the EC expert group, it seemed that many member states had yet to establish a clear agenda or set of priorities for media literacy.

**Silver** responded by comparing media literacy efforts to digital literacy, in which a focus had been a computer for every child. She expressed concern that a focus on access had resulted in a lack of benchmarks for critical use: “The obsession with technology and infrastructure is really at the expense of media literacy, not only in the field of audiovisual.”

**Livingstone** returned to Celot’s point about the market as a key driver, stating that “The effort behind media literacy is still to get people engaging with the technologies rather than about the content.”

**Zacchetti** concluded the discussion by asking whether the lack of planning was a weakness or a strength, stating that “Very often when you have a defined policy in a changing environment, the policy comes too late and is already obsolete – maybe the lack of plans is an opportunity?”

## Summary

A starting point for discussion was the recognition that promoting and enhancing media literacy across Europe, for child and adult populations, is of growing importance, in a context of digital media convergence and a highly complex media and information ecology. Without efforts to enhance media literacy, European citizens have much to lose.

The focus of the first panel was on the drivers behind EC strategy and the challenges and obstacles related to funding and cooperation. Members of the EC and those working on EC-funded projects discussed progress of the media literacy agenda and future directions. Participants disagreed over the relative success of plans and strategies. Clearly, media literacy remains difficult to define, conceptually and methodologically, making it difficult to locate within policy and funding frameworks. This difficulty may explain part of the agenda’s struggles to thrive. The challenge of locating media education in terms of groups, location, formal and informal educational settings, and so on presents challenges for implementation.

At European level a diversity of small projects enabled considerable expansion in media literacy policy around 2006–10, but momentum was then lost as this policy area moved from DG Information Society to DG Education and Culture. Policy-makers and researchers are now reformulating their approach, often refocusing on the challenges of locating media education in particular formal, semi-formal and informal educational settings. For instance, providing access continues to overshadow providing more substantial training in critical interpretation.

However, there is a range of obstacles facing media literacy implementation at the EC level, in particular competing priorities and the need to prove the value of future efforts. There is also a lack of communication channels to share initiatives, opportunities and best practice, both at European level and with national and local practitioners. There is a need to build partnerships with education and to focus efforts on the development of curricula and training. Once implemented, such initiatives should be evaluated, which occurs far too rarely. Evaluations enable sharing best practice and learning lessons from problems encountered; they also provide case studies to advocate for further interventions and funding.

## **Panel 2: Positioning European Commission actions in a wider policy context**

*The second panel consisted of Josef Huber, Lee Hibbard, Wouter Gekiere, Divina Frau-Meigs and Andrea Millwood Hargrave and was chaired by Kirsten Drotner.*

**Josef Huber** opened the panel by describing the CoE's training programme for education professionals, which he directs. The overall aim of the programme is to promote democracy, human rights and participation in education, which CoE believes is enacted through cooperation and respect for diversity combined with the skills, technological aptitudes and attitudes necessary to live in a diverse society. The CoE believes that teachers must develop these practices themselves before they can teach them to their students. A key competence developed as part of the training is the use of the media environment in a critical, responsible and beneficial way. In the six years of running the programme, Huber observed that interest was high, although competence was low. His definition of competence included both technical and critical understanding. He found teaching professionals to have low technical skills, but identified as a larger problem their lack of a critical understanding of the wider contexts of the digital world.

Huber said that they don't ask the 'what for' question of technologies, addressing how they could be useful. Without this understanding, he found that teachers lacked the motivation to learn the technologies: "As we know, the evolving media environment is much more than a tool just for retrieving things. It has the potential to change different spheres of our lives – the relationship to knowledge, relation to learning, relation to interaction, the relation to personal development, social interaction, social participation, democratic participation and so on. Also for the professional life, I'm not talking only about the use of this around and in your professional life but also the creation of new opportunities to actually satisfy your material needs, new ways of envisaging jobs." Huber argued for intentional inclusion of media in educational settings to promote understanding of the diversity of use and discussions about the purpose and potential of technology in students and teachers' daily lives.

**Lee Hibbard** offered a quick tour de force of the context of media literacy practice in Europe. He addressed technical use and the regulation environment as well as shifting notions of media and competence. Hibbard encouraged a more global approach to media literacy, stating that the distinction between offline and online was gone. Drawing on a recent human rights ruling in the Turkish case of blocked internet sites, Hibbard asserted that media literacy was about making users aware of the legal and political contexts of media use and helping them make informed choices.

Hibbard reported that the 47 member states of the CoE were ready to reach a political consensus on the topic of media literacy, and were seeking international coordination to implement further initiatives. He argued that the rights and freedoms of internet use had a media literacy component, and the CoE and EC should coordinate their approach to states and regions in this regard. A disparity in conduct related to these rights remains in the

European Union (EU), which was something Hibbard saw as a media literacy issue. Using net neutrality as an example, he said, “If you discriminate content, that’s a technical thing but it means the user would have to make decisions about whether they understand they have content which they’re not able to access.” He found that in countries such as Indonesia, where users might be accessing the internet for the first time through mobile phones, there was a potential for this lack of awareness to be exacerbated.

He referred to the fast-changing nature of media consumption and its effects on advertising and sales revenues as well as pluralism and information quality. He used the example of how Google in France was affecting the quality of journalism, and encouraged participants to consider plurality and diversity as media literacy issues.

Hibbard further addressed how, in the face of global websites such as Facebook, Amazon and Twitter, member states were limited in the extent to which they could affect compliance with national policies. “In many respects, the whole landscape is divided and ruled by different actors, particularly by business. The internet is revealing that it’s very hard to regulate in the way we regulate or as the Commission has done in the past.”

Hibbard felt that these new challenges created a strong need for media literacy. In 2014, the CoE plans to issue a draft compendium on rights for internet users, “which is going to consolidate all the media literacy elements in these standards in the past and to try to give people the ability to understand what they do, what choices they have to make, what they can expect from their rights and certain freedoms, and how they can challenge that, meaning effective remedies either before the companies or before the state, before judicial authorities etc.”

**Wouter Gekiere** concurred that “literacy is the centrepiece of the debate on convergence and internet opportunities.” He reported that the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) was finalising a response to the EC Green Paper on convergence in which they echoed this position.

Addressing members of the EC, Gekiere acknowledged that theory and awareness-raising had been useful, but argued that, “in the end we represent organisations that deal in daily reality.” In 2012, the EBU issued a statement on their viewpoint of media literacy. Feedback from members at their annual event indicated that both large and small broadcasting networks increasingly needed a media literacy strategy. Although Gekiere used two networks in Belgium to illustrate the challenge of developing a corporate media literacy strategy, he predicted that broadcasters in Central and Eastern Europe would face similar requirements, and urged participants to consider including the crucial role of public service media in their frameworks for media literacy.

In December, the EBU will offer a ‘master class’ on building a media literacy strategy, as part of a series of such events. These bring together 15–20 experts from partner and outside organisations to discuss what type of expertise is needed and how they can develop tools to help members develop their media literacy strategies.

**Divina Frau-Meigs** briefly took up the issue of definition, arguing that the EC’s definition was politically effective because it was open. But she agreed that more research was needed to understand the role of media education in schools, and that schools and public institutions would be at a disadvantage if they did not move fast enough. She was concerned that the educational system would be marginalised and monetised if no action was taken.

Frau-Meigs believed that media literacy researchers were at a crux where they needed to reposition for the next phase. She pointed to past phases in which media literacy was attached to e-learning, information and society, and most recently, as part of the EC’s creative

agenda. Frau-Meigs then addressed current pressure to attach media literacy to employability, and was critical of the unfulfilled promise of a demand for knowledge workers. She warned that these shifts toward technology and industry might potentially modify formative education without a clear sense of the benefits or consequences.

Addressing Matteo Zacchetti's question, Frau-Meigs pointed to examples in France where stabilising national policy had led to much-needed development of competencies, though they were in the early stages.

She supported Paolo Celot's claim that in defining media literacy, operational skills could not be separated from content skills and management of knowledge skills. She further argued that two essential skills for media literacy were (a) ability to editorialise content, to interpret meaning and (b) to transfer this skill regardless of medium. Although she saw current EU media literacy efforts as fragmented, she believed that a focus on these key skills could cross sectors and build a strong media literacy initiative.

Frau-Meigs called on the EC to start a Media Literacy Initiative independent of the AVMSD, building on expert input, research and projects from the past 10 years. She saw an opportunity to embed it in the upcoming creative agenda, a positive step away from the AVMSD, which she viewed as narrow and limiting.

**Andrea Millwood Hargrave** drew on her background in content regulation to argue for the need to keep industry involved. She agreed with previous comments about the need to develop new relationships that circumvented state power and crossed national boundaries. She agreed that economic drivers did push agendas forward, which supported the strategic importance of partnerships with industry.

She was careful to specify that most media literacy efforts internationally were referred to as 'objectives' rather than 'requirements,' an important distinction in terms of implementation.

She offered three examples of media literacy policy development:

- Singapore has a long history of trying to educate parents and young people about technology. The Media Literacy Council, formed in 2012, addresses issues of cyber-wellness, including risk and also positive engagement with media. The Council identifies media and digital literacy as essential life skills in the information age. The Council's goals are to encourage the public to become discerning media consumers, with the ability to evaluate media content effectively and to use, create and share content safely and responsibly.
- Qatar has a national ICT plan that by 2015, 90% of their population, which includes a high number of migrant workers, will have adopted ICT. A number of targeted initiatives are aimed primarily at the adult population, particularly disadvantaged groups such as older people, women (who are often housebound) and migrant workers. Qatar's skills-based approach consists of three tiers: (1) access and basic computing; (2) how ICT is of benefit to the individual; and (3) critical usage, which addresses evaluation and creation. The communications regulator is responsible for developing material to build awareness and develop materials in the Arabic language around these skills. Of particular interest are the ways in which the communication regulator develops relevant material for its population and the cultures within which they live. While drawing from media literacy practices in Europe, a focus of Qatar's approach is to build local competency.

- In Australia, a skills-based media literacy curriculum is currently proposed. Millwood Hargrave specified that the curriculum focused on increasing access rather than addressing appropriate use. A strong research programme is supported by the regulator and, Millwood Hargrave pointed out, starts from a position of default filters.

Millwood Hargrave spoke about the target age of 15- to 16-year-olds in the Australian programmes as problematic, that intervention must occur at earlier ages. She acknowledged the challenge of introducing media literacy at earlier ages, especially in emerging countries struggling to determine at what technical baseline to aim (such as teaching PowerPoint). Millwood Hargrave acknowledged Frau-Meigs' earlier point that media literacy training should address the new worlds created by these technologies and the need to adapt. She emphasised that training should focus on using media in an appropriate way.

She concluded by agreeing with earlier speakers that more interaction was necessary between public policy, education and industry; however, she did not feel that it was a feasible hope.

## Discussion

**Kirsten Drotner** summarised themes emerging during the sessions. The first returned to Sonia Livingstone's original question of level: was the group primarily focusing on local or global levels? What would be their levels of actions? Where should they address their focus? She further asked how the EU was straddling the local, national and international positions.

Drotner also addressed the issue of context, stating "that we cannot think of media education in splendid isolation." She drew on speakers' discussion of the cultural, legal and political context in which media education was occurring. Drotner further recognised that several had mentioned harnessing education resources to promote media literacy.

Drotner concluded her summary by addressing Frau-Meigs' concerns of the ramifications of moving an education agenda forward without considering the consequences and benefits of the shifting focus. She added that Frau-Meigs' point about promoting immediate application of a re-focused, clarified media literacy agenda was valid and had deep policy implications.

**Paolo Celot** reminded the group of the need to be pragmatic and realistic, recognising that technology had created a completely different world and a media literacy response was essential. Appropriate funding was necessary for a meaningful impact, and Celot recommended allying with the media, congratulating the EBU for their success.

He additionally urged the group to recognise the limits of what the EC could implement, stating that "the EC is, by definition, to facilitate the freedom and the circulation of goods", and that the responsibility for education was national. He thought an action plan was absolutely essential in moving forward, and that while a new directive would be nice, pragmatic considerations of the time and effort to lobby should be weighed against other opportunities. Celot felt that some developing countries provided interesting models for approaching the funding and political support of media literacy initiatives.

**Millwood Hargrave** responded that while media literacy was a global issue, in truth most individuals and countries did not address it. She asserted that regionally, media literacy awareness differed, saying that Qatar differed from Bahrain and Egypt, and similarly Singapore's approach was very different from what else was happening in the region. While economic and cultural drivers played a role, she agreed with earlier statements that the technology was global and the content – particularly if it was in English – was global, but not necessarily the frameworks, and that was a point the group should consider.

**Sonia Livingstone** complemented the discussion of global implications with a question about local contexts. She asked how a school in the north of England, the south of Portugal or in Croatia would know about the work that Huber was doing with teachers in media literacy, or how they were impacted by Aviva Silver's vision of what the EC would do to facilitate media education. She asked how the group saw those connections working. While Livingstone felt that the group was successful in promoting best practice and networking, she expressed concern that much of this work depended on committed individuals, and "feels fragile where the political will takes the spotlight away." She asked if the EC members could map these connections.

**Matteo Zacchetti** agreed that there was a lack of connection between national and regional plans. He explained that the EC did not have the resources to directly reach those teachers, so instead it relied on regional governments, local organisations and policy frameworks. To do so systematically was beyond the role of the EC.

**Josef Huber** believed that international organisations could not work only with standard setting and recommendations, but also needed the knowledge of working with grassroots organisations to inform their recommendations. The CoE's training programme for education professionals takes a bottom-up approach, working with teachers, teacher trainers, school heads and other actors involved in the practice of education. Huber suggested that training the teachers had impact built in – by teaching teachers, they returned to their local communities and shared the training, while also establishing a line of communication for the CoE.

**Ralph Catts** cited a statistic that 80% of adult learning was not formal and was mainly happening in the workplace. How, then, could adults and children be reached through informal learning? He pointed out that Singapore and Qatar were highly regulated societies, and in a democracy, there was an enormous challenge to organise a cohesive media literacy response. He argued the importance of international agreements and practices since the media actors were international. He further argued that "we do need local initiatives, but they need to be sustained beyond national boundaries, because otherwise individual countries, especially smaller ones, get played off whenever they dare to stretch the context beyond the narrowest interests of the market."

**Lee Hibbard** argued that, because literacy was such an unclear issue and did not have a clear direction or focus, politicians did not see a clear path to success or incentive for involvement. He compared the discussion about literacy with ongoing debates about privacy and data protection between Europe and the US. He wondered to what extent literacy was being integrated into recommendations. Hibbard saw a failure among media literacy actors to make the topic meaningful for politicians and stakeholders, and advised a more aggressive integration of media literacy into current debates about privacy, surveillance, data protection and censorship.

**Aviva Silver** responded to Frau-Meigs' earlier questions about why media literacy was embedded in the AVMSD. Silver said it was a political decision that allowed for the inclusion of what they considered an important issue in an area that would have the least obstacles. She said there was a lack of political will to address new media in hard law, with decision-makers arguing that if it could not be enforced, they shouldn't have it.

She asked the group what they wanted to do in terms of coordination, saying that until they established a position that was shared by member states, moving forward was difficult. She acknowledged that there were many ways to address media literacy, agreeing with Hibbard's suggestions, but explaining that a coherent policy was needed, one that representatives could show others and then coordinate on the different issues where media literacy was an important component. In a climate of competing interests, from business and national needs,



Silver argued that the EC focused its resources on promoting issues that had a strong, long-term impact.

**Monica Bulger** returned to Livingstone's earlier point about the challenge of sharing best practice from the CoE or EC with widely dispersed teachers. She described the National Writing Project (NWP<sup>12</sup>) in the US as a potential model for the EU. The NWP is a way of building communities of support and sharing best practice.

## Summary

The challenge presented by the context in which media literacy initiatives occur emerged as a key issue during the session. In addition to the multiple interacting layers of geography, culture, politics, economy, regulatory frameworks and education, the fast-changing media and shifting norms for international rights frameworks further complicate implementation of media literacy efforts. Additionally, disparities between countries related to rights result in differing stakes for uninformed use.

Concerns were raised about the need for a focused agenda that could incentivise politicians to lobby for media literacy initiatives. EC representatives emphasised the importance of a cohesive position, stating that the uncertainty surrounding the topic undermined efforts to promote it. Participants discussed the ways in which global debates around data privacy, net neutrality, censorship, child protection and education had media components, and how and whether to use them as entry points for media literacy in policy and interventions. Issues of funding and support were also raised, with suggestions to better align with industry and consider funding models from developing countries. Participants conceded the need for a focused agenda, and perhaps this could be an output for a future COST event.

Programmes mentioned during this session, while promising, seemed nascent, not joined-up, and not evaluated. Panellists agreed that access continued to overshadow training in critical use. Addressing access was a more achievable goal than that of critical skills, since it could lead to easily measurable improvement and was an actionable issue. Yet when considering that some users were accessing content that was either limited through political censorship, by technical platform, or intentionally misinformed, critical use was essential.

There is a clear need to consider partnerships with education and to focus efforts on the development of curricula and training. The discussion raised an important point about the lack of communication channels to share initiatives, opportunities and best practice from the EC and CoE with local teachers. Participants debated who was responsible for dissemination and agreed that these channels needed improvement.

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<sup>12</sup> This is a system of local groups, usually organised by universities, which hosts six-week summer institutes for teachers who are nominated in recognition of teaching excellence by their colleagues. The teachers are paid to attend, spend the time learning and sharing best practice, and then they bring the training back to their schools (ranging from kindergarten through university). Alumnae of the institutes serve as expert facilitators and institutes exchange facilitators across regions to cross-pollinate practices and ideas. They are responsible for keeping up to date on the latest policy initiatives and research findings, and for sharing them across projects. Established in the 1980s by teachers in California, the NWP receives US\$25.6 million of federal funding annually, and operates across the US. For more information about the National Writing Project, see [www.nwp.org](http://www.nwp.org)

### Panel 3: Measuring media literacy (concepts, metrics, implementation)

The third panel was composed of Alison Preston, Ralph Catts and Monica Bulger and was chaired by François Heinderyckx.

**François Heinderyckx** introduced this session on measurement by describing the difficulty of measuring literacy, comparing its conceptual complexity to efforts to measure intelligence. Observing that the EC had made a committed investment of time and money into developing measurements for media literacy, Heinderyckx reported that along with a certain level of success, the EC had also faced controversy in their efforts. Despite the AVMSD requiring reporting every three years, there remained an absence of measures for most member states.

**Alison Preston** focused her presentation on the UK's Office of Communication's (Ofcom) approach to measuring media literacy. She described it as pragmatic, starting with what was workable in a survey and developing measures around core elements of media literacy. Ofcom takes a broad approach to their survey research, choosing a simple definition of media literacy that they feel would be workable, inclusive and effective when involving a diverse group of stakeholders.

Preston described Ofcom's ongoing survey process. Ofcom fields two main surveys annually,<sup>13</sup> one for adults (aged 16 and over) and one for children (5–15) and their parents. They interview around 2,000 UK adults, UK children aged 5–15 and UK parents, for a total of 6,000 interviews per year. In the past couple of years, they have surveyed the media habits of younger children, starting at age three, through interviews with their parents. In addition to the quantitative survey, Ofcom carries out the *Media Lives* qualitative longitudinal study of about 15 participants who have been interviewed about their media use since 2005.<sup>14</sup> Preston says Ofcom found this qualitative research "to be a useful bellwether and fascinating insight into how life stage impacts people's attitudes and media literacy over time." She viewed the *Media Lives* study as providing a rich picture that complemented Ofcom's survey work.

Describing the survey analysis, Preston preferred to limit aggregation. Given the range of definitions of media literacy and options for measuring it, Ofcom's survey includes a wide range of questions. Preston reported that this approach afforded Ofcom a granular understanding of particular types of online practice, attitudes and areas of critical understanding. This broad approach additionally allowed for flexibility in analysis. Preston used the example of examining how a select demographic group performed on these measures over time. She compared this with a more segmented, targeted approach, for example, a single measure for critical understanding. Preston reported that this approach was too narrow and limited the base studies for segmented groups, so Ofcom did not find this approach as useful.

Preston believed that the most useful output of their surveys was the identification of trends over time. Because of the long-term nature of the survey, Preston said they had been able to iterate questions, remaining responsive to and anticipatory of current events. Areas of considerable change in recent years included social networking and privacy. Ofcom has developed questions around digital participation and citizen interests, a key agenda in the UK. More recently, Ofcom has added questions about data privacy.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/media-literacy-pubs>

<sup>14</sup> [http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/Media\\_Lives\\_report.pdf](http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/Media_Lives_report.pdf)

Key findings for Ofcom are that, over time, the largest areas of increase in online activities have been entertainment and leisure-based. Activities related to civic participation and creative abilities have not grown at the same rates. In terms of people sharing personal details online, people's comfort levels have not changed over time, yet concerns about using the internet have dropped considerably. Preston reported that there had been relatively little change in people's evaluation of their critical understanding, with one-fifth of adults believing that, if a result appeared on a search engine page, it must be true.

**Ralph Catts** addressed issues of measurement and definition. He cautioned against comparison studies using existing European data. He further problematised the EC's reliance on surveys, stating, "... if I want to measure media information literacy, it requires people to carry out an open search, and both the effectiveness and the efficiency of that search is necessary." He believed that appropriate measures of media literacy involved demonstration rather than self-assessment, creating a need for interactive assessment, which was more involved and challenging to develop than usual European surveys.

In response to questions from participants about the feasibility of these measures, Catts described identifying on a scale or several scales the indicators that should be measured. Catts stated that with very few items, he could develop tasks that would pinpoint where an individual performed on a proficiency scale and log their efficiency in completing these tasks. While the process sounded complicated, Catts described the need to adjust existing survey software to a more complex requirement, which was costly, but, in his experience, not prohibitively so.

**Sonia Livingstone** asked Catts to further explain the pool of measures he used for comparable measurement.

In response, Catts acknowledged the strength of Ofcom's approach, and recommended it as a starting point to benchmark media literacy. He believed Ofcom's measures worked both nationally and regionally in the UK, providing a strong model for Europe. Catts expressed concerns about much of the comparative research on media literacy, emphasising the importance of considering cultural differences and selecting equivalent communities for comparison. He used the example of looking at the Islamic community in two countries. If both countries had communities of immigrants learning to adjust and maintain their culture, a comparison would be possible of how different policies in different countries were supporting that evolution.

Catts additionally discussed definition. In his experience of speaking with different stakeholder groups for UNESCO, Catts found that definitions of media literacy were contentious across the groups and tended to relate to the group's specific function or focus; for example, librarians focused on the information literacy dimensions of media literacy, the management and finding of information. He compared this with communication specialists who focused on the creative and participatory dimensions. He emphasised the importance of seeking commonalities among the definitions, identifying overarching themes that might bridge differences in details. He urged the panel to "agree we are different faces or different sides of the same concept, of the same construct."

Catts' current research focuses on testing what is common in these definitions. His work is moving toward viewing the construct as media information literacy. Catts reported that his next steps were to determine whether the construct could be cross-cultural and identifying the culture-specific differences and their consequences for media information literate practice.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See UNESCO's just published report *Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework* (2013), available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002246/224655e.pdf>

**Monica Bulger** discussed the need for setting concrete goals to guide the development of survey measures. Drawing on her experience performing statistical evaluation for the EC's 2011 study,<sup>16</sup> she questioned whether media literacy was too large a concept and whether the EC was attempting to accomplish too much with the measures proposed for national surveys of member states.

As part of the statistical testing of 58 indicators listed in the 2009 study, she used Eurostat data to analyse correlations and relationships. To illustrate how concepts might not translate into practical measurement, Bulger showed how statistically the measures of use recommended in the 2009 report<sup>17</sup> did not form a single media literacy construct, but rather multiple, seemingly unrelated, constructs. Measures such as mobile phone use, computer use, film attendance, music downloads, online purchases and confidence in internet competency were included in the analysis. The indicators did not group together in a sensible or predictable way. In a table, Bulger showed that internet banking and buying online grouped in separate categories, as did computer skills and frequency of internet use. She observed that many of the use indicators seemed to have been selected based on the availability of Eurostat data rather than media literacy theory, which could explain the poor statistical fit.

To address media literacy as a multidimensional construct, the resulting report recommended thinking in terms of modules, where, depending on national priorities, different dimensions of media literacy could be measured separately over a series of surveys.

Bulger described that most studies of media literacy started with debates about definitions and which skills and competences people should have, while lacking clear goals for measurement. She argued that what was missing from these discussions was a conceptual endpoint, a clear vision of the skills and practices media literate people demonstrated. The end goal was not for all people to demonstrate advanced skills of critical analysis, but Bulger believed there did need to be a sense of an expected range. She offered the example that in science education for young students, the goal was not necessarily for all students to be 'Einsteins', but to teach people to discern false information in news, science or commercial claims.

Bulger urged that evaluators ask what the goals of measurement were. She recommended clearly defined and measurable outcomes. For example, testing whether an intervention developed for eight-year-olds had helped them distinguish factual or persuasive messages was feasible, but assessing implications for lifelong media literacy or employability was not. Bulger concluded by discussing the sustainability of initiatives, observing that she saw a "graveyard of programmes" when studying media literacy interventions. "I see a lot of promising programmes that were adopted for a specific time period and may have shown very impressive gains. But maybe they didn't. Maybe those gains were never measured." She argued that a likely part of the reason programmes did not continue was that they failed to establish plans for sustainability at the start, including measurable outcomes and a plan for measuring them.

## Discussion

Given time constraints and the many comments, more issues were raised than could be individually addressed by the panellists.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-content/media-literacy/studies/final-report-ml-study-2011.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-content/media-literacy/studies/eavi\\_study\\_assess\\_crit\\_media\\_lit\\_levels\\_europe\\_finrep.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-content/media-literacy/studies/eavi_study_assess_crit_media_lit_levels_europe_finrep.pdf)

**Alison Preston** addressed the topic of endpoints by warning that there were dangers in defining practice as ‘good’ or ‘bad’. She agreed that there were certain things that people ought to understand, but segmenting might narrow the data collected and reduce possibilities for analysis.

**François Heinderyckx** asked Matteo Zacchetti and Aviva Silver whether member states would be reporting on media literacy levels.

**Matteo Zacchetti** believed the studies of 2009 and 2011 developed useful assessment criteria. He described the reporting of media literacy by member states as a small part of a wider obligation. He envisioned using the criteria in pilot assessments over the next year. While his team was committed to supporting member states in their reporting obligations, their time and resources for this effort were limited.

In this connection, Paolo Celot recalled the studies that EAVI had carried out on behalf of the EC on measuring media literacy levels.<sup>18</sup>

**Aviva Silver** agreed, adding that while their current media literacy research was a “blunt tool, it does give legitimacy to primary research carried out by the Commission,” and was one of the main foundations that enabled ongoing media literacy research. She explained that with more research and more testing at the national level, the EC would be able to demonstrate how member states could achieve the reporting goal. While the EC had not yet found the best space for media literacy in their policy structure, they continued to put tools in place and sought to determine how they could make their efforts more effective and more useful in terms of research and evidence-based policy-making. Silver further described an aim to develop a robust research base that would stand up to the scrutiny of academics.

**Sonia Livingstone** noted that she had held earlier conversations with national experts who had discussed the reporting obligation with their ministries, and concluded that awareness of the reporting requirement among member states was very low.

**Pierre Fastrez** addressed points raised by Bulger, questioning that if the analysis she performed did not highlight any means of grouping different types of items into meaningful categories that were statistically supported, how did the media literacy community move forward? He asked how these categories and different dimensions should be defined.

**Ellen Helsper** described her current research in digital skills,<sup>19</sup> in which she encountered methodological challenges similar to those of media literacy. As she stated, “unless you know why people need to have these skills, with what outputs and outcomes, then we’re never going to be able to measure those skills.” She noted the concerns about the lack of strong theoretical developments within research into digital inclusion, and the limitations of the measures typically used in this research, in particular, those around skills, engagement and impact of use. Her project aims to address these criticisms through an in-depth cross-country study that: (1) develops theoretically informed measures of people’s digital skills, starting from the desired tangible, every day, positive outcomes of internet use, working back through the ways in which the internet needs to be used to achieve these outcomes, and, finally, incorporating measures of skills that make these uses possible; and (2) pilot-tests these measures on internet users through qualitative, cognitive interviews and larger-scale testing of the improved questionnaire in three different versions in the UK and the Netherlands.

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<sup>18</sup> Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-literacy/studies\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/media-literacy/studies_en.htm)

<sup>19</sup> October 2013 to July 2014, in collaboration with the Universities of Oxford and Twente, and sponsored by the John Fell Fund.

Helsper saw this focus on outcomes as a way to cross sectors and begin dialogues around employment, education, leisure participation and civic participation.

**Ralph Catts** believed that some of Bulger's sample measures addressed cultural capital, and felt that this concept warranted more attention. Catts felt that a 21st-century vision must consider the "omnicultural" dimension, in which some people could work across several cultures.

**Sirkku Kotilainen** agreed that measures that addressed media literacy were important, and used an example from Finland to describe how, despite much thinking about criteria, when they conducted their study, they were able to determine basic differences but did not meaningfully progress in their understanding of media literacy levels.

**François Heinderyckx** raised a provocative point that while everyone agreed there would be a huge societal cost to not having enough media literacy, it did not appear that anyone had attempted, even intellectually, to measure that cost. He asked whether there were any figures for how much states invested in media education. He argued that financial investments indicated importance, just as some sort of assessment of importance was necessary to justify costs.

**Josef Huber** believed that media literacy actors were "over obsessed with assessment and ranking", and believed that work could progress positively without this focus. He returned to Catts' earlier point that assessment needed to change. Huber predicted that research would continue as it had previously and would not progress meaningfully.

He asked Preston whether Ofcom considered social media use as part of social participation or creativity when reporting that leisure use was increasing while social participation and creative use had remained low.

**Conceição Costa** asked whether member states were aware of the EC's 2011 study, stating that while member states discussed reporting to the EC, there did not seem to be use or even awareness of the indicators.

**Veronica Donoso** used the EU Kids methodology<sup>20</sup> as an example of effectively employing a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures to address media use, and recommended that participants considered it as a model for future work.

**Aviva Silver** responded to Costa's question by stating that member states should be aware of the research, but they were not obliged to use it. Her second point addressed Donoso and presented discouraging findings. Silver reported that after recently reviewing the fifth edition of the media programme, 90% of the indicators were meaningless and not actually measurable. This finding generated a large internal discussion within the EC that included budgetary authorities determining how to make indicators 'smart'. She was concerned that to meet administrative expectations, her team would need to focus on outputs rather than impact, which was not a good way, conceptually, to achieve their goals.

**Matteo Zacchetti** responded to Heinderyckx's earlier question by adding that communities should measure opportunities to become media literate.

**Igor Kanizaj** reflected on his experience as Croatia entered the EU, saying that there was a lot of reporting required of member states, without workshops, direction, training or support for this reporting. At a practical level, he recommended improved communication tools for

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<sup>20</sup> [www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline](http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline)

the EC so that all countries and operations could email MPs directly, and that a 'cloud' should be set up to share documents.

**Uwe Hasebrink** addressed his concluding comment to the EC representatives, saying that they were not alone, that universities also struggled conceptually and administratively with measuring the impact of achievements.

## Summary

While methods remained a contentious topic, a progression in thinking and approach was evident. At the EC level, within the UK, and internationally, there is a growing collection of research that has tested measures for media literacy and that are moving past measures of access to questions of critical engagement, media literate activities and the relationship between context and literacy levels. Measures of access are still viewed as useful baselines, but are elaborated on to focus on activities and competences. As Ofcom demonstrates, iterating a measurement tool over time enables flexibility to address current concerns and opportunities, and provides longitudinal data of trends in use and understanding. Many discussants explored ways to measure critical use, with a suggestion to use mixed methods, scenarios, more technically advanced survey tools and demonstration.

There was concern about the comparability of measures, even when using the same survey, that cultural differences may affect results. While mentioned briefly and not taken up much in the discussion, definitions affect measurement. If literacy is defined by access, then once a population increases their broadband subscriptions, mobile phone use or number of computers in homes, they can be considered literate. The need for a coherent focus on critical approaches to media was reflected in Silver's urging that the group develop a cohesive plan for media literacy initiatives, otherwise, the market or popular culture, or political will could drive how media literacy was defined and assessed. Some participants argued for more clearly defined goals when approaching assessment, to ask why literacy was important, to demonstrate outputs and the relationship between training and practice.

There was general agreement that the reporting requirement for member states had not been communicated well at the national levels, with a few participants stating their countries were either not aware of the requirement or had not received substantial enough direction to move forward.

Respondents were generally more cynical than the panellists, expressing concern that progress would be made on measuring media literacy, stating that change would likely not happen, resources were not being allocated to support additional measurement, and that, in the case of the EC, many recommended measures were, in fact, not measurable.

Opinions were mixed regarding next steps, with those working in statistical analysis seeing progress and possibilities, building on earlier work and testing new conceptual and analytical approaches. Administrators saw a challenging path ahead, and national representatives felt that communication channels needed to be improved for member states to better understand measurement expectations.

## Panel 4: Future challenges and next steps

*The panel consisted of Sirkku Kotilainen, Brian O'Neill, Paolo Celot and Matteo Zacchetti and was chaired by Uwe Hasebrink.*

**Uwe Hasebrink** challenged panellists to take up the recommendation to plan or design the agenda for future activities, encouraging a discussion of innovative, creative and concrete steps for a media literacy agenda.

**Sirkku Kotilainen** started the panel by describing media literacy policy and research in Finland. In response to suggestions by the EC, the Finnish government has produced statements on media literacy and embedded media literacy in the core curriculum, starting with preschool education. Similar to other Nordic countries, the government has established media literacy councils, universities have established academic positions and broadcasting companies, private companies, public libraries and NGOs promote media literacy. Policy-makers, in collaboration with academics, have developed a child media barometer that measures media engagement from ages 0–12.

Kotilainen reported that, against advice from academics, the National Board of Education was shifting away from a focus on media literacy toward multi-literacies, saying that they viewed media literacy as an old-fashioned concept. Acknowledging Ralph Catts' earlier presentation, Kotilainen said it was a matter of identifying in which direction the initiatives would move and intentionally embedding media literacy.

In reporting on findings of the Finnish child barometer studies, she raised the issue of research communication across countries. This particular study was a strong example of academic and policy collaboration, and the empirical findings pointed to differences in practices between genders. Yet Kotilainen was uncertain how to connect this work with other ongoing research efforts in the EU. She said she would like to collaborate with others, but asked, "how do we know each other?" She concluded by asking, at the European and global level, how interested academics "get into dialogue and what is the reach and visibility of academic research and the integration of policy and academic research?"

**Uwe Hasebrink** concurred that these were questions asked across countries, and then asked Kotilainen whether she felt Finland should be considered a best practice case.

**Kotilainen** disagreed, saying that while Finland had made some meaningful progress, they had not critically evaluated their agenda. She observed that different groups were going in different directions, which undermined progress, offering the example of the National Board of Education choosing to ignore the advice of academics. Kotilainen expressed concern that media literacy actors might have proceeded too fast or had not involved enough other actors in the field, and believed the causes of the rift were worth future consideration.

**Brian O'Neill** acknowledged that several important questions had been raised, and first asked who should do what. He strongly supported multi-stakeholder action, and believed that in media literacy efforts there were multiple actors needed "to mobilise the media literacy portfolio of issues, the spectrum of challenges it addresses."

He additionally expressed interest in how the promise of technical sector jobs was driving an "obsession with the digital economy" and a prioritisation of media literacy. Using 3G and the banking collapse as historical touch points, O'Neill drew connections between the extraordinary changes and developments in the digital economy occurring in the past decade, and the engagement of governments and politicians. He situated media literacy in the broader political discourse surrounding the tech sector, and explained that the way the media environment was shifting from a traditional paradigm to a fast-changing new media environment generated the kind of concerns that motivated political action. O'Neill believed that the process of achieving the objectives of Europe 2020, with investment in ICT, new kinds of technical affordances, new kinds of access to communication and information and the acceleration of this process framed the kinds of media literacy challenges that could inspire political action and engagement.



O'Neill called for debate on the appropriateness and fitness for purpose of existing arrangements for managing a media environment when "convergence is driving ever forward and changing the rules of the game." In this light, media literacy was practised through user engagement and navigation of the changing environment. O'Neill reported that EU Kids Online had responded to a public EC consultation, addressing questions around public provision and public support for media literacy. He addressed other concerns raised during the day's discussion – privacy, e-safety and data protection – as issues gaining public attention and awareness. He described how this awareness translated into a public focus on the regulatory bodies involved. Despite the prominence of the issues, O'Neill found that engaging politicians with media literacy was still difficult. Using an example from Ireland, O'Neill said that even with legislation supporting media literacy initiatives, four years later politicians still did not have a clear agenda or understanding of the issue. He saw an important disconnect between what was trying to be achieved through media literacy and situating it within the urgency of these other issues.

Returning to his question of who should be doing what, O'Neill recommended that next steps involved multiple stakeholders. O'Neill recommended a focus on three stakeholder groups:

- In addition to those he mentioned earlier, he added the private sector. O'Neill saw the public dimension within the European media environment diminishing, saying it was under serious pressure and had key skill restraints. When considering that the public sector no longer had a dominant position in most media environments, he saw that a future focus must be on incentivising the private sector around issues and dimensions of media literacy. O'Neill described the use of tax breaks in Canada to encourage private companies to invest in public education and media projects.
- His second recommendation was that the regulator had an important role; regardless of confusion or unresolved issues around reporting responsibilities, regulatory involvement was important.
- O'Neill's third recommendation was to partner with civil society; although building a national consensus or alliance had been difficult because of a lack of national leadership in many instances, this group must be engaged.

**Paolo Celot** reiterated his earlier call for a pragmatic approach, a focus on clear objectives and clear messages that were easy for politicians to engage. Stating that "we will not change the future of the world, but there are a number of things that are achievable", Celot described EAVI as an example of what could be accomplished regardless of resources, saying they were a small organisation with limited resources, that worked on policy, research and measurement. He cautioned that a media literacy agenda should not be a recipe, and encouraged a less rational and more intuitive approach. Celot recommended identifying around 20 people who shared an interest in media literacy and represented the different stakeholder categories, and to invite them to spend a day brainstorming. He recommended including the media and businesses such as Google and Facebook. He encouraged moving beyond the usual points and exploring fresh interests. Celot additionally recommended seeking interested people, rather than the usual organisations, to find people motivated to develop and pursue media literacy actions.

**Hasebrink** observed that a few of the panellists had regarded it as a strength to not have a plan.

**Matteo Zacchetti** first addressed Hasebrink's question about the role of public powers. Zacchetti believed the main objective of public powers at the European, national, regional and local levels was to give citizens the opportunity to be or become media literate. He believed legislative means were a precondition for meeting this objective. He additionally

observed that school systems were not adequately addressing current societal needs, and that more must be done.

He agreed with Divina Frau-Meigs' assertion that media literacy must be more than a concept, but linked to a more significant purpose. He referred to Tatiana Merlo Flores' presentation at a UNESCO conference in 2002,<sup>21</sup> saying that, "media literacy does not have to be an antique concept, but it has to enhance the possibility for people to participate in the life of their community, whatever they consider their community, their local community, their group of friends or societies." Zacchetti concluded by observing that participation of citizens in public life in Europe was not widespread, and saw prioritising participation as a way forward.

## Discussion

**Ralph Catts** reported that UNESCO was interested in engaging with the EC and other agencies in efforts to promote a media literacy agenda.

**Igor Kanižaj** described efforts in Croatia in which DKMK had organised 153 workshops nationally, for primary and secondary school students and their parents.<sup>22</sup> He reported that his team worked for free because of their commitment, without additional resources, and he continued to travel throughout Croatia trying to raise awareness of media literacy, with a focus on cyberbullying.

Kanižaj believed a first step after the meeting would be to establish a communications working group, to continue meeting via Skype, pooling the group's collective digital literacy efforts. He recommended the development of recommended actions on media literacy for institutions, the EC and participants' own governments. Kanižaj pointed out that sometimes what was viewed as lack of interest might be lack of understanding. He similarly encouraged the EC to write letters to governments, noting that this was their greatest power. He encouraged something simple, like 'do you know about this directive? what have you done? please let us know every three months.'

**Aviva Silver** responded that the EC did solicit updates from member states, yet the responses were not always as constructive as hoped.

**Kanižaj** also recommended identifying at least ten possible indicators that could help the EC and further the objectives of the participants.

**Paolo Celot** illustrated the scope of the EMEDUS project, of which EAVI is a partner, on formal and informal media education across Europe.<sup>23</sup>

**Kirsten Drotner** recalled discussions during the conference in Zagreb, and recommended linking media literacy to discourses around creativity, productivity, a performative education system and crossing boundaries of learning. She saw an opportunity for researchers to map out new kinds of terrain in response to the several pan-European reports currently in progress. She envisioned improved dialogue between academics and politicians around these issues and a renewed focus on bringing together local groups.

**Christine Trültzsch-Wijnen** recommended two directions for next steps. First, she believed that experts needed more time together. Second, she saw teamwork as essential at national and international levels. She hoped this would reduce disagreements over definitions and

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<sup>21</sup> [www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/youth\\_media\\_education.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/youth_media_education.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [www.djecamedija.org](http://www.djecamedija.org)

<sup>23</sup> See [www.emedus.org](http://www.emedus.org)

lead to more clearly articulated agendas. She addressed the problem of experts in the same country not knowing each other and not being aware of who was representing their country as an expert.

**Josef Huber** proposed two strategies for moving forward. The first was to embrace a wider view of media literacy, “the breadth of what is meant and what is actually happening and highlight the positive.” He did not believe that the risks and safety discourse prepared people for the future because it did not draw people in. He thought that empowerment and positive dimensions of digital use should be placed in the foreground.

His second proposal was to think bigger. Referring to Divina Frau-Meigs’ assertion that the media environment had fundamentally changed people’s lives, Huber urged participants to think of media literacy on the same level as reading and writing and calculating. He encouraged participants to pursue a broader education campaign and to stop thinking of media literacy as a tool added on to other subjects. Without a dramatic effort in this direction, he felt that “things will make themselves”, and media literacy would be overlooked and the efforts by international, national and regional authorities would be “steamrolled by the development outside.”

**Alison Preston** voiced her support for ensuring that media literacy as a concept was included in a wide array of other policies and initiatives. For their part, Ofcom attempts to accomplish this by frequently inviting national and international experts to review and discuss their work. She reported that an aim of these conversations was to ensure that media literacy fitted into a range of areas for which Ofcom was responsible.

**Aviva Silver** said “we all need to be advocates, if we want to create circumstances for change and if we want to effect changes, we need to be convincing.” Silver described how the media diaries project started as a conversation. She believed media literacy needed advocates because it was distributed among many policies and needed people who could clearly articulate aims. She believed everyone needed to advocate at each level and try to be more joined-up.

## Summary

In this last session, two areas of consensus were clear, that media literacy efforts needed to be more joined-up and that they would benefit from clear objectives. Participants urged more coordination within countries, improved visibility of experts and initiatives and communication between them. Silver emphasised the great need for committed advocates who could push forward a clear agenda and leverage opportunities to advance media literacy objectives. While participants agreed that lack of clear aims undermined their national and international efforts, and that a cohesive agenda was necessary for moving forward, they continued to contend the specifics.

Panellists recommended inclusion of other actors, particularly from industry representing media generally, specific platforms (such as Facebook, Google and Twitter) and broadcasters/networks. Regulators, civil society and teachers were also viewed as important. Less mentioned were members of the public, children or students, and it is unclear to what extent their voices were included in the process, though ideally research programmes would address their collective experiences.

Panellists disagreed about whether to think more pragmatically and seek smaller, manageable wins, or to think more broadly and consider the larger impact of media literacy across sectors. Participants recommended shifting the discourse to creativity and productivity, others to participation, and others to address larger issues garnering public attention.

A recurring concern was the apparent disconnection among member states, with many reporting that their countries were poorly informed about the AVMSD reporting requirement.

## Conclusions

*Sonia Livingstone and Divina Frau-Meigs concluded the event with an overview of the discussion.*

**Divina Frau-Meigs** briefly described the progress of ongoing projects. In collaboration with COST, her research group in France was developing cross-country reports (22 countries) on the state of media education policies. The next steps included a meeting in Paris on 13 and 14 December to discuss preliminary findings, coordinating with EMEDUS colleagues to share results, and coordinating with policy-makers.

Frau-Meigs described EuroDIG<sup>24</sup> as a possible model for next directions. Focused on internet governance, EuroDIG serves as a multi-stakeholder platform that Frau-Meigs said “It’s not about decision making but it’s about decision shaping. It’s about interchanging and going back home, just the way you were saying, with new ideas, a renewed discourse, something to bring back to your politicians or to your association.” She recommended starting something similar called EuroMIL that might begin with 10 people and then grow incrementally at each event. Frau-Meigs viewed this as a way to renew involvement and involve new stakeholders.

She envisioned a long-term plan that involved opening discussions with the EU, developing a specific directive for media literacy, and re-committing to awareness-raising to improve connections with other networks. In terms of research, Frau-Meigs wondered whether traditional ways of research were not adequate for the cognitive changes desired by the group. Frau-Meigs said she had a difficult time with indicators that were “individually stacked”, asking how they accounted for collaborative processes and collaborative output.

She felt that a challenge for researchers was to convince decision-makers of the substantial change occurring in media use and the ways that education could also bring about change: “I don’t believe that spending eight hours a day with screens, the way young people do today in Europe, doesn’t have an impact on the way they produce or interact.” Frau-Meigs believed these new uses changed the configuration of people’s lifestyles, erasing traditional barriers between work, learning and leisure. This re-configuration was what should be communicated to policy-makers when convincing them of the need for and value of media literacy. Frau-Meigs saw the need for shaping a message that was politically clear and convincing without being simplistic. She wanted more publicising of positive outcomes and a focus on solutions.

**Sonia Livingstone** expressed that she was “heartened and reminded that media literacy ... is a particular topic that generates enormous enthusiasm and commitment from everyone who becomes involved with it.” She described how, in the past three years, when she asked people about current progress in media literacy initiatives, many people were not clear. An aim of the event was to find out what was currently happening, what different organisations were doing and what people were committed to. Livingstone observed that there was much intensity of plans and ideas discussed during the event.

Livingstone was encouraged by Silver and Hibbard’s reports that there was political consensus in favour of media literacy at the EC and CoE. While this may not result in large

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<sup>24</sup> [www.eurodig.org](http://www.eurodig.org)

amounts of funding, it did mean that there was support and interest in what was possible and how it would happen.

Livingstone suspected that participants differed in how much could be done by enthusiastic individuals, noting that throughout the meeting, colleagues had expressed their hope that the group would agree on x, but Livingstone pointed out that x was different for everyone. She recommended seeing this as a strength, and even though participants would go away and do x and their x would be different, that was part of the broadening nature of media.

As ICT becomes more embedded in daily life and more vital to the ways in which citizens participate and engage with their societies, questions of media literacy become more critical. Livingstone asked, "What do citizens need to know in a mediated society? How is the knowledge they must have changing as the processes of mediation and the social practices around mediation continue to change? What is the cost or detriment if they don't know what they need to know?" Asking questions about the problem, about what society looks like without media literacy, and who bears the costs of not knowing, was viewed by Livingstone as a useful lever for development.

Livingstone continued by asking what would be lost if this particular group decided to abandon their efforts to research and advocate media literacy.. She recommended trying to identify more clearly what problems would emerge if media literacy was not advocated. She felt that once the problem was identified, questions could be asked, such as what 'good' looks like, and, working backwards, researchers could start to ask, specifically, what is it that people need to know. She encouraged a clear, tactical approach.

She observed that "everyone sees and has ways into different particular policy windows when they open." Once people felt empowered to go and push on doors and present a body of literature or research, they would go in many directions, which Livingstone believed was productive. Livingstone asserted that if the EC approach ended up moving away from e-learning and focused on Creative Europe, current actors would take up the opportunity to explore the many possible benefits in studying creativity and participation.

Picking up on earlier points about whether participants should be relatively conservative, Livingstone predicted that on the edges of the debate around media literacy, a more radical agenda was coming. She considered that when an agenda about 21st-century skills, modes of learning, new technologies and so on emerged, media literacy advocates would be well positioned.

While Livingstone understood Frau-Meigs' interest in bottom-up grassroots movement for media literacy, she also called for an infrastructure of support, preferably at European level, to ensure that efforts were coordinated and initiatives driven forward. While infrastructure in turn required resources, these need not be large, and the benefits could be a visible, sustainable and outward-facing action around which stakeholders and researchers could mobilise, and gain recognition and impact for their work. As she explained, "the infrastructure is vital if we're going to capitalise on what is a very evident amount of enthusiasm and energy and diversity of purposes." She ended by offering to use the production of a seminar report as a means of collecting ideas, sources and proposals that could inform a plan for future actions in relation to European media literacy.

## Towards an action plan for European media literacy

It emerged during the meeting that a number of events and reports are now upcoming in the field of media literacy. In the EC, media literacy as a policy domain is now part of the Creative Europe agenda.<sup>25</sup> The CoE is continuing its teacher training programme in media literacy.<sup>26</sup>

In member states, a range of activities is underway. For instance, in the UK, Ofcom plans to release its qualitative *Media Lives* report in January 2014 and its *Adult media use and attitudes* report in spring 2014.<sup>27</sup> In Croatia, a series of workshops and training sessions is planned.

Meetings planned include:

- 13–14 December 2013, Paris, ‘Public policies in media and information literacy in Europe’<sup>28</sup>
- 8–9 May 2014, Tampere, ‘Media education futures’<sup>29</sup>

Looking further ahead, during and after the meeting, participants suggested a range of priorities and desirable actions. These are noted below, without attribution or ranking, as a contribution to wider stakeholder discussions of the next steps for media literacy research, policy and initiatives in Europe.

In terms of vision and goals, these included:

- Prioritise a focus on empowerment, to embrace a positive view of media literacy than one centred on the risk and safety agenda, so as to motivate a wider array of experts and others to participate in promoting media literacy.
- Since the media environment fundamentally changes people’s lives, we should think bigger – seeing media literacy on the same level as reading and writing and calculating, and pursuing a broader education campaign rather than thinking of media literacy as a simple tool or optional add-on.
- Call for an evidence-based approach within the EC to conceive of media literacy as vital 21st-century skills that enable a strategic link to the overarching innovation discourse. This could even advocate a media literacy directive to ensure actions to advance media literacy in all member states.

While the long-term ambitions for media literacy are important, there is also a need for a shorter-term, pragmatic plan that works with current policies and funding opportunities. Thus participants also suggested a range of practical next steps:

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<sup>25</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/>

<sup>26</sup> [www.coe.int/pestalozzi](http://www.coe.int/pestalozzi)

<sup>27</sup> All at [www.ofcom.org.uk/medialiteracyresearch](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/medialiteracyresearch)

<sup>28</sup> [www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/system/files/Public%20policies%20in%20media%20and%20information%20literacy\\_0.pdf](http://www.cost-transforming-audiences.eu/system/files/Public%20policies%20in%20media%20and%20information%20literacy_0.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> [www.uta.fi/cmt/mediaeducationfutures/index.html](http://www.uta.fi/cmt/mediaeducationfutures/index.html)

- Find ways to facilitate networking and discussion among diverse experts working at national and international levels, so as to share insights and practice more effectively among researchers, industry, regulation and policy-making.
- Build support for media literacy in each member state, through awareness-raising processes (such as an annual 'media literacy day'), including broadcasters and others in the media industry, regulators and senior policy makers, educators, researchers and the public.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange at European level, with EU-financed seminars for senior policy officers (Ministries of Education), regulators, industry (including content providers of learning resources) and researchers.
- Support dialogue between the digital inclusion and the media literacy 'camps', since the debates are often similar but the solutions are often different and thus pulling in divergent directions. This could undermine the benefits of the overlap in interests and knowledge-gathering efforts.
- Develop indicators and ensure evaluation of educational and other initiatives so as to generate better policies on media literacies that aim to foster the wellbeing of citizens.
- Research to understand whether and how children and youth in Europe are participating in the digital media environment, particularly in relation to civic purposes, in view of the participation opportunities that new media offer in homes, schools, local communities and the EU.
- Also important is the identification of strategies to provide and increase institutional support for online (and offline) civic participation among youth, so as to improve the representation of young people in areas that affect their lives, and to ensure that their concerns and visions are integrated into decisions made at all relevant levels, thus shaping new forms of democracy in Europe.
- As countries produce their strategies for digital innovation and inclusion, on the one hand, and for education, on the other, it is important to embed media literacy considerations and support within both of these.
- It would be helpful to construct one general overview of all NGO institutions in EU that are providing media literacy programmes so as to facilitate cooperation and build bridges.
- To facilitate policy development, it would be helpful to develop a Media Literacy Legislative Resource Centre in order to help governments understand and implement media literacy programmes.

## Seminar participants

**Monica Bulger** is an educational researcher contributing policy research to multinational groups such as UNICEF and the European Commission (EC). Through her research, she quantifies concepts that are challenging to measure, such as digital literacy, engaged learning and online harms. She recently served as an expert to the EMEDUS project on educational evaluation, and in 2011 contributed to the development and testing of media literacy indicators for the EC. She is currently a Research Associate at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford.

**Ralph Catts** is a Visiting Research Fellow at the School of Education, University of Stirling. His research has embraced two areas. The first addresses access and equity in educational provision for disadvantaged people and deprived communities; and the other strand is concerned with the role of generic skills in adult and higher education with a special focus on the evaluation of media and information literacy programmes. In relation to media and information literacy, he has developed a valid and reliable indicator survey for use with university students, and worked with UNESCO to develop indicators further.

**Paolo Celot** is founding member and Secretary General of the European Association for Viewer Interests (EAVI), a not-for-profit international organisation based in Brussels. Paolo has worked internationally for both public and private media broadcasters, as well as for television advertising agencies and with public institutions. He is an expert on media literacy for the European Commission (EC), appointed to assist European Union (EU) member states in assessing media literacy in their own countries, a member of the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society at the Council of Europe (CoE), and a member of the Active Citizenship Group for the EC.

**Conceição Costa** has a PhD in Communication Sciences from FCSH – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, researching on children and consumption: media culture and the question of identities. She is a Certified Usability Analyst from Human Factors International (USA). She is currently an Assistant Professor and Researcher at the Department of Communication Studies, Arts and Information Technologies at Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias (UHLT) in Lisbon, Portugal. She is a member of the COST ACTION *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* and a researcher at CICANT (Centre of Research in Applied Communications).

**Thierry de Smedt** is a Professor at the School of Communication (COMU) and the Center for Communication Research (RECOM) of the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium). His research focuses on the social appropriation of information and communication technology. He has been active in the field of media education since its inception, with a particular focus on the evaluation of the educational effects of media education initiatives developed by educators. He is a member of the Technology and Society class of the Belgian Royal Academy, and of the Media Education High Council of the Belgian French-speaking Community (Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation aux médias).

**Veronica Donoso** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Media Studies of the KU Leuven, and since 2006 she has been part of the EU Kids Online network. In 2012 and 2013 Veronica was an independent reviewer of the EU Pledge monitoring reports. She also served as project manager of the Ch@dvice project, a European Commission (EC) funded project to support young victims of sexual abuse via chat, and has actively participated in multiplatform policy forums and debates such as the CEO and ICT coalitions.

**Kirsten Drotner** is Professor and Chair of Media Studies at the University of Southern Denmark and founding director of DREAM (Danish Research Centre on Advanced Media



Materials). She is a leading researcher on children and young people's interactions with media at present and in the past, on the formation of creative, digital media literacies, and on users' engagements with museums, libraries and similar cultural institutions. She is author, co-author or co-editor of six books in English, 27 books and reports in Nordic languages and more than 140 scientific articles and book chapters.

**Pierre Fastrez** is a Research Associate of the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research at the Center for Research in Communication (RECOM) and a Lecturer at the School of Communication (COMU), both at the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium). His research focuses, on the one hand, on the cognitive consequences of the use of information and communication technology, and on the other hand, on the evaluation of media literacy as a set of interrelated competences.

**Divina Frau-Meigs** is Professor of American Studies and Media Sociology at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, France. With degrees from the Sorbonne University, Stanford University and the Annenberg School for Communications, she is a specialist of media and information technologies in English-speaking countries in a comparative perspective. She is also a research associate with CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research). She has published extensively in the areas of media content, information and journalism, the technologies and sub-cultures of the screen, and the relationship between media and technologies.

**Wouter Gekiere** works in the Brussels office of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) as a European Affairs Adviser. He's following up the latest European regulatory and policy trends in the audiovisual field including media literacy. He started his career working on research projects on various European policy issues, followed by a position as an adviser to an MEP in the European Parliament. He holds Master's degrees in Law (1998) and in International Relations (1999) from the University of Leuven and a Master's degree in Public and International Law from the University of Melbourne (2004).

**Uwe Hasebrink** is Director of the Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research and Professor for Empirical Communication Research at the University of Hamburg. His research interests are audience and reception research and European media and public spheres. Among other affiliations, he has been a member of the Executive Board of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), and a member of the board of directors of the Research Center for Media and Communication (RCMC), which brings together university and non-university media and communication research in Hamburg.

**François Heinderyckx** is Professor of Media Sociology and Political Communication and Director of the Department of Information and Communication Sciences at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). He is also President of the International Communication Association (ICA) and past President of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). His research interests include journalism, audience research, political communication and media literacy.

**Ellen Helsper** is a Lecturer in the Media and Communications Department of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) with a specialisation in quantitative media research. Her current research interests include the links between digital and social exclusion; mediated interpersonal communication; and quantitative and qualitative methodological developments in media research. She has been consulted widely by UK and EU government, the commercial and the charitable sector.

**Lee Hibbard** works in the Media and Information Society Division of the Council of Europe (CoE), based in Strasbourg. He has been coordinating CoE work in various international forums dealing with information society and internet governance-related issues. He has been

heavily involved in the conception and development of several pan-European policy documents concerning empowerment of children online, the public service value of the internet, protecting the dignity, security and privacy of children on the internet, freedom of expression and internet filters, and also human rights guidelines for internet service providers and online games providers.

**Josef Huber** works at the Council of Europe (CoE) as the Head of the training programme for education professionals (Pestalozzi programme). His involvement with media literacy goes back to 2007: organising think tanks and training activities on media literacy and human rights, Web 2.0 practices of young people, living in a connected world, the use of social media for democratic participation – and, starting soon, an 18-month training course on ‘Respect and responsible behaviour in the virtual space’. These activities aim to identify and devise training activities for the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge enabling learners to make best use of the media surrounding them in a constructive, beneficial and critical manner.

**Igor Kanizaj**, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Journalism Department at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, in Croatia. From 2010 he has been executive editor of *Media Studies*, and Vice President of the Association for Communication and Media Culture (DKMK). He has been a communication expert in several European Union (EU) funded IPA and CARDS projects, and is co-author of the first public opinion research on media literacy in Croatia. Together with his colleagues, he organised and participated in 153 lectures and workshops on media literacy and cyberbullying for more than 2,000 pupils throughout Croatia.

**Sirkku Kotilainen**, PhD, is a Professor of Media Literacy Education at the School of Communication, Media & Theatre, together with the School of Education at the University of Tampere, Finland, where she leads the Master’s Program in Media Literacy Education. She is an adjunct Professor on Media Literacies at the University of Jyväskylä and the University of Turku, Finland. She is currently working on several research projects on children, youth and media, and developing participatory research methods among youths. Her recent publications include *Pedagogies of media and information literacies* (UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, Moscow, 2012).

**Sonia Livingstone** is a Professor in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). She is author or editor of 17 books and many academic articles and chapters. Her empirical work examines the opportunities and risks afforded by digital and online technologies, including children and young people’s experience of digital media at home and school, developments in media and digital literacies, and the implications of the changing media environment for audiences, publics and the public sphere. She leads the EU Kids Online network, participates in the COST network, *Transforming Audiences*, *Transforming Societies*, and chairs the European Communication Research and Education Association’s (ECREA) Children, Youth and Media group.

**Andrea Millwood Hargrave** is an independent adviser on media regulatory policy and research, working across the communications field. An Associate of the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy, University of Oxford, and the Stanhope Centre for Communications Policy Research, Andrea is Director General of the Institute of International Communications (IIC), a not-for-profit, independent, global policy forum. She also directs the IIC’s International Regulators Forum. Andrea has published widely on international media policy and has a keen interest in communications literacy, having been an Expert for the European Union (EU) and Council of Europe (CoE).

**Brian O'Neill** is Head of the School of Media at Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland. He has written widely on media technologies and media literacy for academic journals as well as for organisations such as UNICEF and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland. Brian is a member of the Management Committee of COST Action ISO906 – *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies*. He leads the policy work package for EU Kids Online (EC Safer Internet Programme) and is also a member of Ireland's Internet Safety Advisory Council.

**Geoffroy Patriarche** completed a PhD in Communication at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), and is now a full-time Professor at the Université Saint-Louis, Brussels. He served as chair of the Audience and Reception Studies section of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). He serves as chair of the COST Action ISO906 *Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies* (2010–14). He co-edited *The social use of media* (Intellect, 2012) and *Audience research methodologies* (Routledge, 2013). His research interests include audience theory, (mobile) media uses in everyday life and mediated citizen participation.

**Alison Preston** is Head of Media Literacy Research at Ofcom, the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries. She leads Ofcom's media literacy surveys, which provide a wealth of data on the media habits and opinions of children aged 5–15 and their parents, and adults aged 16+, interviewing over 6,000 people annually. The surveys also focus on parental mediation strategies and children's online safety. She joined Ofcom in 2003, and previously worked as a research consultant in digital media policy and independent TV production business models. She has a doctorate from the University of Stirling.

**Aviva Silver** is Head of the MEDIA Unit in the Directorate General (DG) Culture and Education of the European Commission (EC). She is responsible for the MEDIA programme and media literacy. Aviva has worked on elaboration, implementation and coordination of legal and policy developments for support to the European audiovisual sector in DG Information Society and Media. She is a graduate of London University, and a member of the UK Bar.

**Christine W. Trültzsch-Wijnen** is a Senior Research Assistant at the Department of Education at the University of Vienna. She holds a PhD in communication from the University of Salzburg. Her work focusses on audience research, young people and the internet, media socialisation and media literacy. She is member of the advisory board of Saferinternet.at, chair of the media education section of the Austrian Association of Research and Development in Education (OEFEB), and vice chair of the media education section of the German Association of Journalism and Communication Research (DGPuK).

**Matteo Zacchetti** is Deputy Head of the Directorate General (DG) Education and Culture's 'MEDIA Programme and Media Literacy' of the European Commission (EC). He has spent almost all his professional life in the media or dealing with media-related issues, both in the private sector (NBC Super Channel Ltd) and at the EC where he has been working for more than 15 years on different policy aspects of audiovisual media. In 2012, he was Visiting Professor in the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California. He holds a degree in Economics from the University of Genoa.

## Seminar programme

### **Media literacy research and policy in Europe: A review of recent, current and planned activities**

12 September 2013, Université Saint-Louis, Brussels

- 09:30–10:00 **Arrival, registration and coffee**
- 10:00–10:30 **Welcome and introduction**  
Geoffroy Patriarche, Université Saint-Louis  
Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics and Political Science
- 10:30–11:30 **Panel 1: Reviewing the state of play in the European Union**  
Aviva Silver, MEDIA Unit, DG Culture and Education, European Commission  
Matteo Zacchetti, Media literacy, MEDIA Unit, European Commission  
Paolo Celot, European Association for Viewer Interests  
Chair: Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics and Political Science
- 11:30–12:30 **Panel 2: Positioning European Community actions in a wider policy context**  
Lee Hibbard, Council of Europe  
Wouter Gekiere, European Broadcasting Union  
Divina Frau-Meigs, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle  
Andrea Millwood Hargrave, Institute of International Communications  
Chair: Kirsten Drotner, University of Southern Denmark
- 12:30–13:30 **Lunch**
- 13:30–14:30 **Panel 3: Measuring media literacy: concepts, metrics, implementation**  
Monica Bulger, Oxford Internet Institute and EMEDUS  
Alison Preston, Head of Media Literacy Research, Ofcom  
Ralph Catts, School of Education, University of Stirling  
Chair: François Heinderyckx, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- 14:30–15.30 **Panel 4: Future challenges and next steps**  
Sirku Kotilainen, University of Tampere  
Brian O'Neill, Dublin Institute of Technology  
Paolo Celot, European Association for Viewer Interests  
Matteo Zacchetti, Media literacy, MEDIA Unit, European Commission  
Chair: Uwe Hasebrink, Hans Bredow Institute and University of Hamburg
- 15.30-16.00 **Conclusion**  
Sonia Livingstone, London School of Economics and Political Science  
Divina Frau-Meigs, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle