

Committee of Ministers: Declaration on Community Media and the Promotion of Social Cohesion and Intercultural Dialogue

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The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' (CM) adopted a Declaration on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue on 11 February 2009.

The Preamble to the Declaration lists a number of international instruments that are thematically relevant to various aspects of the Declaration's main focus. They include standard-setting texts elaborated by the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the European Union and the IGO special mandates on freedom of expression. The Preamble also explains in detail the distinctive characteristics of community media and their functional importance to society.

It recognises "community media as a distinct media sector, alongside public service and private commercial media" and stresses the need to examine ways in which legal frameworks could be adapted in order to facilitate the development and optimal functioning of community media. It favours allocating a sufficient number of (analogue and digital) frequencies to community media and ensuring that community media are not disadvantaged by the digital switch-over. It advocates educational and vocational measures geared towards maximising all communities' use of available technological platforms.

The Declaration then "[S]tresses the desirability of":

- exploring various funding possibilities for the community media sector;
- promoting good practice in community media, *inter alia*, through conducting studies, exchanging information, developing exchange programmes and other collaborative projects;
- facilitating appropriate capacity-building and training of community media workers;
- "encouraging the media's contribution to intercultural dialogue", e.g. by establishing networks on which to exchange information.

Finally, it invites community media - in the context of their role in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue - to elaborate, adopt or review, and in

any case adhere to, codes of professional ethics and internal guidelines.

Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, 11 February 2009

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/News/CMDec_Community_media_110209_en.asp

