

CMFE

COMMUNITY MEDIA FORUM EUROPE

Community Media: Future stakes
Pieter de Wit, Brussels, 2 July 2013.

Summary Presentation

Introduction

Around 17 thousand community radio stations in the world in more than 85 countries. Most stations are located in Latin America 6.600 (40 %). In Europe: almost 2.500 community radio stations in around 30 countries.

And more than 500 community TV stations, not counting the hundreds of community oriented local TV stations with a more or less public or commercial license, operating in countries with no legislative base for community TV. All around the world also community TV flourish: e.g. Australia, Nepal, USA, Brasilia, South Africa.

- 1) *Short introduction CMFE;*
- 2) *Policy work at European level;*
- 3) *CMFE and Council of Europe;*
- 4) *New media;*
- 5) *Audience;*
- 6) *Digital switchover;*
- 7) *Financing;*
- 8) *Conclusions.*

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1) Short introduction CMFE

What is the CMFE?

The CMFE is founded to strengthen the participation of the “Third Media Sector” in European discussion and decision-making processes. Back in 2005 freedom of expression and free access to information were increasingly endangered by the consequences of concentration and digitalization in the media field. CMFE is a network of policy experts, organizations and federations, which aim to support the role of Community Media on the European level. Already more than 25 European countries are participating in CMFE, from Norway to Spain and from Hungary to Ireland.

I served CMFE since it's founding in 2005. Since 2008 as president, recently this has passed over to Ciáran Murray, Ireland. Since then I'm member of the board as treasurer. Next to my work for CMFE I have more than 26 years of experience as former director of OLON, the Dutch federation of local radio and television stations.

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COMMUNITY MEDIA

Internationally 'Community Media' is often used instead of 'Third sector media'. In terms of the Council of Europe, in the Declaration on the role of Community Media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 February this year¹, community media: *"may share to a greater or lesser extent (and this 'may share' is very important, because it doesn't exclude but include different types of community media: Let a hundred flowers bloom, as Karol Jakubowicz stated it in Bucharest, 2008) some of the following characteristics:*

- *Independence from government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties;*
- *A not-for-profit nature;*
- *Voluntary participation of members of civil society in the devising and management of programmes;*
- *Activities aiming at social gain and community benefit;*

¹ **Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue** (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 February 2009 at the 1048e meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919>



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- *Ownership by and accountability to the communities of place and/or of interest which they serve;*
- *Commitment to inclusive and intercultural practices*

In short (the 'elevator pitch'): Community media are not-for-profit media, to service specific groups of citizens and operated and owned by these citizens.

The Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue (11 February 2009) also stresses that community media serve needs which are not met by public service and commercial Media.

2) Policy work at European level

Recent CMFE contributions on EU-consultations regarding independence media authorities and media plurality

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3) CMFE and Council of Europe

Observership since 2008, contributed to the ministerial declaration on community media, participated in Reykjavik, ministerial conference. Now contributing to next ministerial conference, in Belgrade: Council of Europe Ministerial Conference on Freedom of expression and democracy in the digital age that will take place in Belgrade on 7 and 8 November 2013.²

Projects: MARS and MEDIANE

CMFE was one of the partner organisations for Media Against Racism in Sport - MARS, a joint EU/CoE programme for a European media network for mutual understanding, fight against discrimination and intercultural dialogue. It brought representatives from community media, minority media and mainstream media together on a very practical level.

We organized several national and one European gathering, inviting editors and journalists to come together and produce media reports through cross-production with non-discrimination and diversity as an angle of media coverage

² http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/Belgrade2013/default_en.asp



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After our contribution 2011-2012 to the European [MARS programme](#) (Media Against Racism in Sport) CMFE will continue to be one of the main partner in the Council of Europe's subsequent programme: "[MEDIANE – Media in Europe for Diversity Inclusiveness](#)".

European & sub regional Encounter

The programme started with the 1st MEDIANE European Encounter in Nicosia (Cyprus) from 10. to 12. June 2013, co-organized by our member Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC). Around 80 participants contributed to the first European encounter and will jointly work on practical tools and practices for diversity inclusiveness in the areas of media production, journalism training and editorial management.

European Exchanges of Media Practices

Another or additional possibility are the MEDIANE "European Exchanges of Media Practices" (EEMP's). The MEDIANE programme invites media professionals/practitioners to commit to exchange with European colleagues on media practices to include diversity and non-discrimination in their daily media coverage and thus to enrich their professional practices.

Media Index on Diversity Inclusiveness

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Finally based on the MEDIANE outputs and the participants' feedback the Media Index on Diversity Inclusiveness (MIDI), a self-monitoring and action-support tool for diversity inclusiveness, will be accessible for media outlets and professionals in order to increase their capacity of including diversity in their daily media work! If you want to contribute to the building of the Index, please take 10 min for answering this questionnaire.

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4) New media: are Social Media social

Definition: Social media is a type of online media that facilitates conversation as opposed to traditional media, which delivers content but doesn't allow readers/viewers/listeners to participate in the creation or development of the content. Social media essentially is a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing, networking, and bookmarking online.

Think of traditional media as a one-way street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a radio program, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter. Social media, on the other hand, is a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate too.

How are these new, so called 'social' media affecting 'consumption' of traditional radio and television? Figures suggests that new media as internet, videogames, does affect the more traditional media, but hardly traditional broadcasting media. In more and more countries this year time spent on internet will surpass time spent on television, but it will not cannibalize TV nor radio consumption. Not yet?

Traditional media should use social media, there is no way back.



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5) Audience

Community media should know their audiences, addressing specific groups should result in reaching these groups;

In Germany (Broadcast TV News May 2012):

46.9 million German internet users viewed a video online in March 2012, according to comScore. The number of people viewing videos online has grown by 2.3% over the past year and time spent per viewer has increased by 33.7%.

Google sites, including YouTube, continue to be the most watched online video sites with 99.7% of the 35.4 million Google sites visitors watching YouTube.

Audience research for community media needs specific research, traditional media research is more or less useless. These methods aren't fine tuned enough to measure community media audiences, to take into account their programs for specific target groups. Good example: 'Community media matters'³, an audience study of the Australian community broadcasting sector.

³ <http://www.cbonline.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Community-Media-Matters-May-2007.pdf>



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6) Digital switch over

The right to information in the European Convention on Human Rights is more than a 'passive' right: it states, in Article 10, clearly the right also "impart information and ideas" not only restrict it to "receive" these. New digital media distribution networks therefore should also be accessible by community media.

Digital local broadcasting: why?

A digital future for radio is inevitable:

- Community media services are and should continue to be part of the media landscape in many countries;
- Market research shows that community media services are valued highly by listeners;
- The right to communicate also applies to a digital future.
- Next to new radio services (e.g. web radio en radio on mobile phones) traditional 'free to air' radio will stay essential to reach audiences.
- Audiences expect availability of community media on all new digital platforms.



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If you examine the use of internet radio and internet television, you'll find that a lot of people listen/watch the same stations as before. These stations are the most successful, also on the internet. Even the websites of traditional media are amongst the most visited websites.

The European Parliament resolution on Community Media in Europe (25 September 2008) which

- Stresses that community media contribute to media pluralism and are an effective means of strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity.
- Calls on Member States to make television and radio frequency spectrum available, both analogue and digital, bearing in mind that the service provided by community media is not to be assessed in terms of opportunity cost or justification of the cost of spectrum allocation but rather in the social value it represents;

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General Comment No 34 of the United Nations Human Rights Committee on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (12 September 2011), which states

- That licensing regimes for broadcasting via media with limited capacity, such as audio-visual terrestrial and satellite services should provide for an equitable allocation of access and frequencies between public, commercial and community broadcasters.
- Recognising that community radio is now a major part of the broadcasting landscape that engages and reaches many millions of people across Europe and that these media are an essential contributor to freedom of expression and access to information.

7) Financing

A mixed source of income is the best guarantee for independence. Advertisement/sponsoring should not be excluded.

Most countries have a state funding for public broadcasting. This should expand to 'broadcasting serving the public', including community broadcasting.



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Conclusions

- Community media still needs more recognition;
- State aid funding should include community media as they, next to 'traditional' public broadcasting, also provide a specific media service to their audiences;
- Digital broadcasting is now happening;
- Community media needs to have a place in the digital future;
- Presence on all relevant platforms is essential to stay connected to local audiences and take full advantage of new communications services possibilities;
- Much work needs to be done to secure this place, especially by representatives of the sector in national and international levels;
- Active involvement from the sector in the technical development of DBVT is urgently needed.

And remember this:

New technology and also digitalization is meant to make more possible, not less!!!

