



# **Media4Diversity**

## **Validation Seminar of the Study on Media and Diversity**

**Prague, Hotel Mercure Gallery**

## **CONCEPT PAPER**

All individuals are equal before the law and are protected from discrimination. But is that how media see it?

Although these fundamental rights are reflected in the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 13 of the European Treaty gives the Community power to act to combat discrimination whether based on gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, there is no clear picture of how media cover the diversity story.

According to a Eurobarometer poll in 2007, a third of Europeans believe media have an important role to play in combating discrimination. This seminar will consider the performance of media in the eyes of people behind selected initiatives aimed at improving reporting of diversity in European media with input as well from media professionals, experts, academics and policymakers.

It marks the end of a long process of research, survey and analysis of more than 150 initiatives (see [www.media4diversity.eu](http://www.media4diversity.eu)) examined since May 2008. A team of experts, working on behalf of the European Commission, has short-listed 30 "top initiatives", has to draft a publication on media best practice with recommendations to media, civil society organisations and policymakers for further action.

This seminar will gather together representatives of the 30 selected initiatives by media or civil society organisations aimed at better reporting diversity in European media, as well as leading media professionals, experts, academics, anti-discrimination NGOs, equality bodies and policy makers active in the field of diversity and media.

Altogether, up to 100 people from most of the EU Member States will brainstorm and debate the way forward and finalise recommendations, which will be included in the mentioned above publication.

In a world of uncertainty, where differences create difficult realities across Europe, media can exercise enormous influence in shaping opinion and accepting social diversity. Where questions are being raised about the value of diversity, this seminar and the recommendations to flow from it will be important in strengthening the diversity in media content across Europe.

This is a powerful challenge at a time when society needs to pay more attention to those who suffer discrimination. Diversity is not just about law and politics; it reflects the social reality of life in modern Europe.

Social inclusion in media and a revival of ethical values are key ingredients of a media strategy on diversity to realise the aspirations for change identified during both the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

## **THE SEMINAR AT WORK**

On Day I, after an opening by a representative of the Czech Government on behalf of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and a message from EU Commissioner for Media Viviane Reding, participants will have the opportunity to listen to a challenging keynote speech delivered by Ms. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, the first and still only Briton of colour to write columns in *The Independent* and the *London Evening Standard*.

The presentation of the study findings will be followed by a lively introduction to the Top 30 initiatives. On Day II, the meeting will exchange expertise, analysis and provocative thoughts from participants representing most of the EU countries. Their experience and ideas are expected to stimulate an active debate, in which all of them will be encouraged to present their activities, their innovative proposals and their own solutions to the challenges that accompany discussion about media and diversity.

On the morning of day II, there will be two successive sessions, each running three parallel workshops for more detailed discussions in small groups.



## **WORKSHOP SESSION I: REFLECTING DIVERSITY, THE COUNTRY BY COUNTRY CHALLENGES FOR DIVERSITY**

The media landscape varies from country to country: politics, history, culture and media governance are different and this is why the organisers are proposing to debate local or national specificities within three regional clusters that will cover North-West, South and Central-Eastern Europe. Session I is not simply made to exchange ideas; it is also necessary to discuss and inform the draft recommendations of the study, according to geographic or local realities. Discussions will deal with issues such as:

- ❖ *What are the main obstacles to or main gaps in reporting diversity?*
- ❖ *Is there a business case for media and diversity in each Member State?*
- ❖ *Is this a matter of corporate social responsibility of the media?*
- ❖ *What realistic objectives are possible in each region?*

## **WORKSHOP SESSION II: THE WAY FORWARD**

Discussion will focus on the current draft recommendations of the study that are put to the three following target groups identified by the study team, i.e. European and national policymakers, civil society groups and the media community.

Each of the three parallel workshops should contain the full range of stakeholders in order to develop as coherent and integrated strategies as possible. To achieve this, participants should not be restricted to attend the working group that necessarily matches their professional status but should instead be encouraged to attend other working groups. In each group, questions will be posed as follows:

- ❖ *What is the working experience (good and bad) with each target group (media, civil society and policymaking)?*
- ❖ *What recommendations will work best – both as a matter of urgency and in the longer term?*
- ❖ *Should the draft recommendations be nuanced according to regional realities as discussed in Session I?*

When the talking is done, the results of the study and the outcomes of the seminar will feed the final publication to be disseminated among the professional networks of all participants, in print and online, at the end of March 2009.

