

## **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

### **Minorities, Media and Intercultural Dialogue Flensburg, 18-19 January 2013**

#### **European Centre for Minority Issues**

With the assistance of academics from different disciplines, the workshop will aim at developing a conceptual and practical framework for the analysis of how public media is (or may be) used as an instrument for intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, by promoting information on minorities as well as the majority.

#### Venue and dates

The event will be held in ECMI, Flensburg, Germany, on 18 and 19 January 2013, in the ECMI conference room located at Schiffbrücke 12. The workshop will last one day and a half – starting on Friday 18 January at 9.30, and ending on Saturday 19 January at approximately 13.00.

#### Objectives

The workshop will bring together scholars from various professional and disciplinary backgrounds that are active in the area of media and minorities. It will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and identify possible opportunities for cooperation. ECMI will seek to identify new areas for innovative research in the area of media and intercultural dialogue.

#### Background

Special arrangements for minorities, such as the establishment of media outlets operating in minority languages, can protect and promote cultural diversity. At the same time, separate minority institutions can also contribute to *ghettoization*. This risk needs to be offset through simultaneous efforts towards integration, through fora that promote intercultural dialogue, tolerance, plurilingualism and multiculturalism. Public media could then act as an inter-cultural tool, promoting the respect and appreciation of diversity.

The focus is on public media: the combination of traditional public service broadcaster (PSB) and its electronic form.

#### Themes for panels

Below is a list of suggested themes. The division is not strict, and some issues will re-emerge during the discussion. Each panel will last approximately 1.5 hours.

### *New media as public media*

In contemporary society any study on media that excludes the online environment is incomplete. PSB has also embraced the online media, by providing online versions of its programmes and services (such as [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)). What are the implications of the introduction of online versions of public media, particularly in relation to intercultural dialogue? An additional consideration is that, while in some European countries Internet use is widespread, in others it is still of limited reach.

### *Intercultural dialogue as integration of minorities in the wider society*

Dialogue between minority groups through the media can be instrumental in offsetting stereotyping and, generally, the ‘ethnicisation’ of social issues. The area of research to be discussed during this session goes beyond *diversity* and media pluralism per se, to focus on how, if at all, different groups may be *brought together* through the media, rather than simply being present in it – in separate programmes or media outlets. It will further focus on how access to the mainstream media (particularly public media) by minorities can enhance tolerance, understanding, and, ultimately, mutual respect.

### *State responsibility in an evolving media environment*

In some countries, PSB has become nearly obsolete. When it has limited funds at its disposal, its programmes can be of low quality. In these cases, the audience tends to turn to private media, which however has no public mandate or responsibility. When the role of main information provider shifts from the state media to the private media, an issue of governance arises. How does the state fulfil its responsibility to promote intercultural dialogue in this type of media environment?

At the same time, both PSB and new media continue to change. Some private media have taken up public functions and operate as quasi-PSB. How should the regulation of licence allocation take place so as to reflect diversity and promote intercultural dialogue? New media also continue to evolve along with technological advancements.

### *The participation of minorities in forging an intercultural dialogue*

Intercultural dialogue cannot be achieved without the participation of the minorities themselves. The direct involvement of minority groups is crucial in decision-making such as programming by the public broadcaster. What specific mechanisms exist for minority participation at the level of broadcasting regulatory bodies? How are representatives of minorities involved in the production of media outputs? What forms of consultation on programming take place? What are examples of good practice? How may the effectiveness of such measures be assessed?

### *Specific challenges of divided societies*

The media can be employed to foment inter-ethnic discord, and/or as a form of (majority) nation-building that marginalises and antagonises minorities. While these issues are highly problematic, the discussion will have different focus – that of cases in which the state struggles to foster intercultural dialogue, and in which the reality consists

in (private and sometimes public) media that reflect societal divisions. An example is Moldova, where Romanian/Moldovan- and Russian-speakers largely watch different (mostly private) channels and there are very opportunities for joint debate in a society deeply polarised along language lines. An even more extreme case is that of Kosovo. How can the government create cohesion in such a media environment? Related issues concern the possible role of the media in facilitating reconciliation, or alternatively delaying or impeding it.

*Concluding session: Research strategies*

This session will have a free-flowing discussion on existing and potential research initiatives, with a view to creating synergies among the institutions represented by the participants, and generating new ideas for research and cooperation.

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