Liite 1.

Media Literacy in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)

Brussels, 7 September 2016

Preliminary remarks

The importance of media literacy has been highlighted for years in innumerable policy documents as a crucial issue when dealing, inter alia, with audiovisual policy. European-wide studies have been carried out (including by international organisations), highlighting the significance of a critical consumption of media content.

Additionally, the Council of the European Union conclusions "on developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training" were adopted in May 2016.[1] They recognize the role of MIL and of digital competence, "which encompasses the confident, creative and critical use of ICT", and is posited as " a crucial component of media literacy". This update and clarification of the position of MIL fits with the enlargement of the new Directive to Digital media and services

Media literacy competences influence audiovisual aspects such as content access, consumer protection, access and right to information**,** recognition of media pluralism and other issues the AVMSD deals with. This is why media literacy provisions are (were) currently included in the AVMSD. It explicitly required the development of media literacy in all sections of society. Media literacy provisions, in fact, are well present in the AVMSD, specifically in Whereas 12 and Whereas 47 and in Article 33.

[1] data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9641-2016-INIT/en/pdf.

The 25 May 2016 Proposal of the European Commission

Unfortunately, the recent proposal (http://bit.ly/29vSN9e) of the European Commission omits any reference to media literacy.

In our opinion to ignore the above mentioned references disregard research-based evidence and the spirit of the current Directive about the need to promote media literacy competences amongst EU citizens and on monitoring their progress on a regular basis.

Conclusions

With a widely shared understanding of the growing importance of media literacy principles in contemporary society, we invite to support the inclusion of media literacy references in the revision of the AVMSD.

Within the AVMSD, it does not seem appropriate to ignore media literacy skills and its underlying properties, especially in times of radicalization and propaganda, that has brought about the Paris Declaration "on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education" of 17 March 2015.

Neither the failure to address media literacy cannot be justified under the pretext that it is an educational matter only (and therefore mainly a responsibility of Member states to deal with). As it was mentioned already, the properties that flow from its definition in fact, clearly encompass media access and audiovisual content production and evaluation.

Furthermore, it does not seem correct to shift responsibility entirely to parents relegating media literacy competences to a self-regulatory tool within the section of protection of minors only.

Technical (digital) skills should neither be given exclusive emphasis and focus should not be solely on economic aspects (read consumers).

Our proposal

Therefore, we propose the inclusion of the following in a new Whereas and existing Article of the Directive.

New Whereas (8 bis) – *Contemporary societies require citizens to access information, evaluate media contexts, use, evaluate and create media content responsibly. Media literacy skills enable them to develop awareness, critical thinking and an open mindset as well as the ability to counter hate speech, extremist messages, propaganda and disinformation. 'Media literacy' refers to competences, knowledge and understanding that allow citizens to use and create media contents effectively and safely. Media-literate people are able to exercise more informed choices, understand the nature of content and services and take advantage of the full range of opportunities offered by communications technologies.*

They are better able to protect themselves and their families from harmful or offensive material. Therefore, the development of media literacy in all sections of society, for citizens of all ages, and for all media, should be promoted and its progress followed closely.

Article 33

"By (date – no later than three years after adopting) at the latest, and every three years thereafter, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic and Social Committee every three years, a report on the application of the Directive in all Member States, as well as a report on practices, policies and accompany measures supported by Member States in the field of media literacy".