



COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

*10 FLAGSHIP PROPOSALS
FOR CITIZEN-CENTRED INFORMATION ON EUROPE*



I) Introduction

On 1st December 2010 the IHECS and its partners, journalists and European civil society representatives, met in a Brussels workshop to elaborate together a « White Paper in support of civic and social European journalism ». Their goal? To present to the European institutions, especially the European Parliament, political measures that would allow a new generation of journalists to cover European matters in close connection with regional and local information.

This exercise didn't represent any political movement or union, and was basically a grassroots dialogue. Our reflection followed three main lines:

- The necessary political and economic conditions for producing pluralist information
- Journalism training and the place of Europe in school programmes
- The development of new links between journalists and civil society organisations

All in all 35 proposals were passed at the end of a series of rich exchanges: a concrete initial result. Nevertheless, participants decided to carry on and widen the debate.

Thanks to support from the *Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind* the website Socialeuropeanjournalism.com was born, providing a blog space to reflect on European journalism, and an online forum was opened for six months, until July 15th, 2011.

Each week a proposal/question from the White Paper was subjected to debate. Spontaneous discussions were complemented by more elaborated interviews with journalists and NGO representatives.

Analysing and bringing together those different points of view led us to select ten flagship proposals, to take to the Members of the European Parliament.

The latest European Parliament resolutions, on « *Community media in Europe* » (25 September 2008) and on « *Journalism and new media – creating a public sphere in Europe* » (7 September 2010), are of high quality and represent a good base from which to carry on the debate.

Some of the following ten proposals can be implemented soon, while others need some more time. We have chosen to present them here in accordance with the challenges that they address.

II) *What is at stake?*

While the powers of the European institutions continue to grow, influencing much of national legislation and thus the daily lives of some 500 million Europeans, during elections these Europeans express a growing sense of alienation from their Community representatives.

European institutions have repeatedly expressed their concern at the gap between themselves and citizens. But as long as they continue to analyse this separation as being down to a lack of *institutional* communication (which is essentially top down and overly centralised), Europe will stay in this deadlock. This process of communication, seen as a means of creating acceptance of European policies, is essential certainly, but not sufficient. It cannot replace the work of genuine, independent journalism, which analyses the institutional messages in a critical way, in connection with local social realities. Moreover, this institutional communication is often well out of date, usually emerging once a decision has already been taken.

Unless there is better information provided *in advance* of decisions, there is a great risk that the European Union will be hijacked forever by experts and technocrats... and that the gap between it and its citizens will keep on growing.

Journalists, particularly those who work at the local and regional levels and who are therefore closest to people, have a vital role to play in linking local affairs with European challenges, explaining in a simple but rigorous way the decision-making processes and their impact on our daily lives.

How to help them? Three facts...three requisites:

Fact #1: the unequal access to European information tallies with a generally unequal access to good political coverage in the media. The growing submission of media organisations to the ratings law; the normalisation of casual labour within the sector; the inadequate funding for public services and community media: all of this has seriously attacked political and cultural pluralism within the media. **Requisite #1:** we urgently need to create the legal and economic conditions capable of protecting content pluralism.

Fact #2: very few journalists have received training on how to cover information about Europe. And Europe as a subject is also hugely lacking in primary and secondary school programmes. **Requisite #2:** efforts have to be made in the field of education.

Fact #3: journalists who want to cover European questions at the local level have difficulty finding any concrete sources of information besides the institutional ones. The current aim of many citizen organisations throughout Europe is precisely to humanise and open the debate about European policies. **Requisite #3:** create better links between the media and the lives of citizens in order to stimulate public debate.

III) Six challenges and ten flagship proposals to be included in the European agenda

These three requisites lead us to the following six challenges and ten proposals:

For a legal guarantee of information pluralism

WE NEED TO DEFINE THE NOTION OF PLURALISM AND INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON EUROPE IN THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

For the recognition of the essential role played by a broad range of media in spreading independent, pluralist and high quality information on Europe

WE NEED TO MAKE « INFORMATION FOR CITIZENS» A SERVICE OF GENERAL INTEREST (SGI)

WE NEED TO CREATE A BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA, COMMERCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA

WE NEED TO MAKE INFORMATION ABOUT EUROPE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF PUBLIC SERVICE INFORMATION

WE NEED TO ALLOCATE A NEW MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL OBSERVATORY TO RESEARCH CONTENT QUALITY IN EUROPEAN MEDIA

For information on Europe that is rooted in the regions, closer to people

WE NEED TO CREATE A NEW EMPLOYMENT STATUTE FOR EUROPE CORRESPONDENTS

WE NEED TO CREATE A NETWORK OF REGIONAL EUROPEAN NEWS AGENCIES

For better training of journalists in covering information on Europe

WE NEED TO CREATE A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR TRAINING IN EUROPEAN JOURNALISM

For a more prominent place for Europe in schools

WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE BOLOGNA REFORM AND CREATE A COORDINATION BODY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF EUROPEAN STUDIES INTO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

For the establishment of new links between media and civil society

WE NEED TO CREATE AN INDEPENDENT INTERNET PLATFORM FOR JOURNALISTS AND NGOs

IV) The ten proposals in detail

For a legal guarantee of information pluralism

1. DEFINE THE NOTION OF PLURALISM AND INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ON EUROPE IN THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1.1 Proposal

- Modify article 11, 2. of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union:

Replace: ‘2. The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.’

With: ‘2. The freedom and pluralism of the media are guaranteed. This pluralism is understood to be external, through a diversity of media ownership structures; and internal, reflecting the diversity of society’s political opinions and cultural expression.’

- Introduce the right for each citizen to benefit from access to information on Europe

1.2 Explanatory statement

We want to stress here the distinction between 'external pluralism' - meaning a plurality of media ownership structures - and 'internal pluralism', meaning a plurality of information provided by these media, thus offering space for the expression of different political viewpoints (political pluralism) and cultures (cultural pluralism) that make up society.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights clearly consecrates media pluralism in its article 11. But this pluralism is above all conceived as external pluralism.

Now, experience shows that external pluralism alone cannot guarantee internal pluralism. It is also worth noting that the anti-concentration rules, which vary greatly from Member State to Member State, are apparently incapable of effectively guaranteeing this plurality of media ownership structures.

An illusion of pluralism is created by the multiplicity of titles and information media. Yet the concentration of media ownership in a few hands, and the rationalisation of journalistic labour in line with purely economic objectives, is leading to homogenised editorial content and to the “googlisation” of information. Increasingly formatted and pre-packaged, this coverage prevents the representation of diverse political opinions and cultural expressions.

Action to address this is now urgent!

In 2007 Margot Wallström, European Commissioner for Communication at that time, along with Viviane Reding, launched a three-step approach aimed at evaluating, under European coordination, the different threats to information pluralism in the Member States. The study defining the relevant indicators, published in June 2009, was qualitative and covered all the

dimensions of pluralism. But it was never implemented and Commissioner Viviane Reding, responsible for Communication since 2009, has since left it on the shelf.

Today the European Initiative for Media Pluralism, led by European Alternatives and the International Alliance of Journalists, and supported by four European Parliamentary groups (ALDE, GUE/NGL, S&D, Greens/EFA), is trying to push the Commission to carry on this work.

At the same time, we seek to clarify the definition of pluralism in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights:

It is right and proper that the Charter's legal scope is limited to areas under community competence. But let's not minimise its political strength.

The Council of the European Union also approved, on behalf of the European Union, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). This states: "each Party may adopt measures aimed at protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory".

Regarding the right to information on Europe the European Commission, in its White Paper on a European Communication Policy (COM2006/35 final), stressed that people from all walks of life should have the right to fair and full information about the European Union. To that end it recommended the collective elaboration, with Member States and civil society organisations, of a framing document, something like a non-binding charter. Why don't we go further with this initiative and modify the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights itself?

For the recognition of the essential role played by a broad range of media in spreading independent, pluralist and high quality information on Europe

2. MAKE 'INFORMATION FOR CITIZENS' A SERVICE OF GENERAL INTEREST (SGI)

2.1 Proposal

- Replace, in all new official communication and all new political decisions on SGIs, 'public service broadcasting' with 'information for citizens'
- In this way the legislation on the application of state aid rules can be redefined.

2.2 Explanatory statement

We do think that SGIs are a good way to more efficiently guarantee the rights of citizens in the European Union.

The common values of the European Union expressed in the Amsterdam Treaty then became consecrated rights in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; the SGIs became, through the Lisbon Treaty, an autonomous Community legal object.

In terms of media activity, currently only broadcasting is recognised by Member States as one of the public services. Smaller-scale support to press projects, from the community or

commercial sector, is considered as an unjustified State Aid liable to be condemned by the Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

A lot of community newspapers and magazines play a part in information pluralism. But they can hardly afford their running costs and have suffered from the skyrocketing charges for press distribution since the privatisation of the postal services, which has made some of them simply give up printing. They also have limited access to TV broadcasting frequencies and can only develop activities on the Web.

The commercial press can also sometimes offer interesting coverage in terms of integrating European with local information. But while these productions may be led by committed journalists, since they are often in confrontation with their editorial management these such projects are often the first to be shelved under the current conditions of financial unable to resist the crisis.

The European Commission has repeatedly recognised the importance of having a wide range of media in order to guarantee fair information, and to favour social inclusiveness and public debate. (In the White Paper on European Communication Policy and the Communication from the Commission on the Application of State Aid Rules to Public Service Broadcasting, among others).

Making not only broadcasting but all kinds of information for citizens into a SGI would allow Member States to support more efficiently the pluralisation of information.

The definition of a new Community framework for State Aid is currently on the agenda with the upcoming expiry of the “Monti-Altmark-Kroes” framework in November 2011. So now would be an appropriate time to address this issue.

3 CREATE A BALANCE BETWEEN PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA, COMMERCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIA

3.1 Proposal

- Pass a Community law aimed at creating a fair and balanced media structure incorporating public service media, purely commercial media, and non-profit, community-based media. Each of these would control one third of the media capacity on offer.

3.2 Explanatory statement

To emphasise: action for greater media pluralism in Europe is urgent. It can be partially (but not sufficiently) achieved through new anti-trust legislation. That is one of the goals of the European Initiative for Media Pluralism.

Faced with the crisis, the competition for ratings around entertainment, and the disappearance of political and cultural coverage in the media, we appeal for strong public service media and further development of community-based media. Due to a lack of financing, public service media are caught up in a dual struggle for their economic and institutional independence.

Community-based media have limited access to the airwaves and have difficulty breaking into digital TV or press, thus greatly limiting their audience.

On 10 October 2009 the President of Argentina, Cristina Kirchner, enacted a new anti-trust law on broadcast media. This law is really innovative because it adds a clear distinction between public media, community-based media and private media, and allocates to each one of them a third of Argentina's audiovisual capacity.

This provision is really relevant but could not be applied in the EU in its current state. Indeed, talking about 'public media' doesn't tally with the realities in the 27 Member States. Some of them have allocated the provision of public service media to public companies, others to private ones.

Member States should attribute one third of their audiovisual media capacity to public service information ('Information for Citizens' SGI), one third to purely commercial media and one third to community-based media.

4 MAKE INFORMATION ON EUROPE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF PUBLIC SERVICE INFORMATION

4.1 Proposal

By means of a new directive, make information on Europe an obligation of public service media. This could be done by committing an amount of airtime or percentage of editorial content to information on Europe, and by linking, as often as possible, local coverage with that on Europe.

Information on Europe, as we see it, is linked to two conditions: Firstly the political context, which refers to the EU's orientation, its decisions and programmes, and their impact on people's lives. Secondly, to trans-regional and transcultural realities.

4.2 Explanatory statement

Both the Amsterdam Treaty's *Protocol on the system of public broadcasting in the Member States* and the Lisbon Treaty's *Protocol on services of general interest* are very clear on the subsidiarity principle concerning the definition and the organisation of public service media.

The «*TV without frontiers*» Directive (89/552/CEE), amended in 2007 to become the «*Audiovisual media services*» Directive, promotes the free circulation of European media output. It especially requires broadcasters to reserve at least 10% of their transmission time, or at least 10% of their programme budget, for independent productions. But this Directive uses as a criterion the place of production of the broadcast. The aim is free circulation and competition in the single market, rather than to guarantee intercultural and European content.

Now, in the *White Paper on a European Communication Policy*, the European Commission spells out that "Europe also needs to find its place in the existing national, regional and local 'public spheres'".

The Commission suggests, among other things, setting up a financial partnership between the EU and Member States. We might think here about the framework-agreements that were signed, for example with Belgium, for the dissemination of information about Europe and the recognition of the Europe Direct network. This kind of management partnership could have

been a possible transitional solution to imposing the coverage of information about Europe on public service media.

But it's necessary to go further! Now that the SGIs are recognised as fundamental rights of the European Union, and that the Lisbon Treaty gives them Community legal existence, it is hard to imagine that the European Commission can continue to brandish much longer the principles of subsidiarity and cultural diversity, and yet refuse to act.

At a time of redefining the SGI framework, it is essential to integrate into this legislation a qualitative dimension that enables it to meet the main principles consecrated by the EU (of quality, universality, equal access to information...).

5. ALLOCATE A NEW MISSION TO THE EUROPEAN AUDIOVISUAL OBSERVATORY TO RESEARCH CONTENT QUALITY IN EUROPEAN MEDIA

5.1 Proposal

- Put the European Audiovisual Observatory in charge of a study mission on the placement and treatment of Europe coverage in the media of each Member State. This task could be led in partnership with national observatories and universities.
- More generally, put the European Audiovisual Observatory in charge of a qualitative study mission looking at coverage of political and social information in the media of each Member State.
- Include all media in these studies, not only audiovisual. Change the name of the observatory to the European Media Observatory.

5.2 Explanatory statement

Today the media have taken possession of sociological research tools and many external companies have made audience ratings, opinion polls and user surveys their core business. Increasingly technical, fast and precise, they have developed analysis on what they refer to as consumers' "needs". But in fact they are dealing with the "choices" of consumers from among similar, homogenised proposed programming that doesn't reflect the real needs of citizens.

Those surveys serve competition interests, in a context of deeply increased economic pressure. This reflects the huge upsurge of « editorial marketing » in newsrooms and its growing influence on editorial choices.

How can the media maintain a critical distance on their programming quality and their coverage of Europe in such a context?

Who can monitor this?

The European Audiovisual Observatory does great work but is still mainly dedicated to the media industry through the diffusion of essentially legal and financial information. Its website states that "the aim of the European Audiovisual Observatory shall be to improve the transfer

of information within the audiovisual industry, to promote a clearer view of the market and greater transparency”.

There is no legal obstacle to assigning it, alongside this, another more qualitative mission: to evaluate the coverage of information on Europe and, more widely, the evaluation of political and social coverage by European media.

Latin American media network observatories are really active in this field. The Bolivian media observatory ONADEM recently coordinated a three-year study, from 2005 to 2008, in partnership with 13 universities. During this time they led 25 qualitative studies encompassing all Bolivian media (radio/TV/daily press/magazines - among national and local media). The study’s methodology and results were made public.

If we give such a task to the European Audiovisual Observatory, the need to include all types of media will require a change of name, to become the ‘European Media Observatory’.

For information on Europe that is rooted in the regions, closer to people

6. CREATE A NEW EMPLOYMENT STATUTE FOR EUROPE CORRESPONDENTS

6.1 Proposal

Create a new statute for Europe correspondents according to which the correspondents’ social security schemes and payroll charges will now depend on the law in the country where their employers head office is based, and not anymore on the correspondent’s country of residence.

This statute would apply to all journalists covering the European Union, in Brussels and Strasbourg.

6.2 Explanatory statement

The number of Europe correspondents is in free-fall. Today one can count barely 1,000 accredited journalists, for 38,000 European civil servants and 15,000 lobbyists working in Brussels.

Several factors seem to explain, to varying degrees, this disappearance. The first would be the lack of ambition and initiative of the current European Commission presidency. The second, the availability on the Internet of all European Commission press conferences and European Parliament debates. As such people often say that sending a journalist to Brussels is pointless. But on the contrary, being in Brussels or Strasbourg is essential to exploring Europe’s political machinery, in which citizens have a part to play, in order to carry out real investigation and analysis. Information on Europe cannot be limited to the “copy paste” of official press releases found on the Internet.

The key factor in the lack of local and national Europe correspondents in newsrooms is the prohibitive cost of Belgian payroll charges (which are, for example, three times higher than in Germany). Media organisations that want to keep a Europe correspondent sometimes have no

other choice than an illegal one, which consists in declaring the correspondent's residence and workplace as being in his country of origin, rather than in Belgium.

The International Press Association has been asking for years for the creation of a specific employment statute for Europe correspondents; it has become urgent to set this up.

7. CREATE A NETWORK OF REGIONAL EUROPEAN NEWS AGENCIES

7.1 Proposal

Provide stable financial support for the creation and development of a network of regional European news agencies.

This network will be managed at the European level by an independent organisation. It will operate in a fair and pluralistic way.

The regional agency will be a relay not only for journalists, but also for each actor who participates in informing the citizenry (social workers, teachers, local NGOs, public institutions).

The agencies will be decentralised and rooted in local realities but they will work through a transregional networking approach. The goals are to benefit from mutual knowledge of the European Union's various regions, and to encourage collective work on European policies.

Behind "Brussels" and "European policies", the agencies will also come to clearly articulate the work and role of each institution. And, regarding the European Parliament, to inform on the work of its different Members, in order to bring people closer to their Community representatives.

7.2 Explanatory statement

There is a huge amount of information on Europe available, produced either by journalists or simply disseminated by the official institutions. But the problem is that this information is not equally accessible to everyone.

In its White Paper on European communication policy, the European Commission admits that in spite of the numerous efforts to supply EBS and Europa.eu, and in spite of the professional competence of the European correspondents, 'media coverage of European issues remains limited and fragmented'.

The European Commission does a lot of communication. But this communication is also increasingly formulaic and should not be confused with the work of providing journalistic information, which is adapted for the needs of citizens and is produced in an independent and critical way by journalists who add value.

How can we involve citizens in European matters?

For us the core of the problem lies in the lack of close links between correspondents and their editors. Too often information on Europe is compartmentalised, without allowing sufficient

space for the local dimension. Correspondents find themselves isolated from their national and regional staffs and seen as ‘foreign affairs specialists’ by colleagues.

Moreover, even with new Community legislation recognising the specific status of European correspondents, the lower-budget local media still wouldn’t be able to afford the cost of sending a journalist to Brussels.

There are various regional news agencies (public, private and community-based) specialised in different topics. Again, each one of them would face enormous costs to provide coverage of Europe.

Networking them would allow the sharing out, which is to say the reduction, of those costs. It would also bring real added value in the form of more horizontal intercultural information.

Local media would benefit from easy access to information on Europe, by receiving institutional news and hot European topics to cover (thus relaying information from the European to the local level), or by seeking specific information linked to the local event they will cover (relaying from the local level to the European).

For better training of journalists in covering information on Europe

8 CREATE A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR TRAINING IN EUROPEAN JOURNALISM

8.1 Proposal

Financially support the creation of a European network for training in European journalism. This network will host and sustain each school/university of journalism that wants to provide teaching of Europe as a journalism subject, in initial and/or further education.

8.2 Explanatory statement

The European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) brings together more than 50 schools from 23 different countries. But only a minority of them include European journalism in their course modules. The EJTA is also fairly inactive in the field of information on Europe. There does not exist today a ‘culture of European journalism’, but rather many journalistic cultures across Europe.

We must go further. We must encourage, by the means of voluntary and ambitious initiatives supported by European Union, the creation of a network that aims at increasing the training of a new generation of journalists to enable them to cover Europe with a pedagogical and concrete approach.

Some schools are pioneers in the teaching of European journalism and try to spur the same movement among academic partners.

There are examples of networks operating among schools that do not offer certain courses, such as Micro-Europa, the recently established European association of web-based radio

produced by journalism students. Through this group, the work of students involves linking local coverage to related European issues. The students also share information about the situations they face on the ground in their countries, regions and local areas. The network offers concrete experience in the practice of local-level European journalism and the practice of European citizenship.

Those initiatives have the merit of opening up alternative ways of doing things. But it should be said that they largely depend on the budgetary priorities of school management and the dedication of a few teachers who invest time and effort in supporting them. This weakens them and puts their durability in doubt.

The creation of a European network would allow them to be supported more efficiently on a long-term basis, and to generate greater de-multiplying effects.

For a more prominent place for Europe in schools

9 STRENGTHEN THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE BOLOGNA REFORM AND CREATE A COORDINATION BODY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF EUROPEAN STUDIES IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

9.1 Proposal

- In primary and secondary education: create, in close partnership with the Council of Europe and relevant civil society organisations, a coordination body to evaluate the integration of the European dimension into education curricula.
- In higher education: assign to the ‘Bologna Follow-up Group’ responsibility for the integration of Europe and European citizenship into teaching methods. Make the European dimension a larger part of the qualitative evaluation of higher education institutions.

9.2 Explanatory statement

Schools face three interrelated challenges: offering lively and practical courses on institutional Europe, stimulating active citizenship, and encouraging intercultural meetings and horizontal European integration.

At present often limited to courses on history, geography or civics, the construction of the European Union is presented (when it is presented) as something static and inert, or as an accumulation of knowledge out of touch with real life. Most of the time teachers aren't trained in European issues.

Schools could move away from their comfort zone and this static teaching model by tackling Europe as a subject of debate and envisaging Europe as an evolving political community. If this were to happen, Europe could find a place among every classroom subject, thus mobilising spaces of intercultural exchange.

Various innovative projects, managed by secondary education institutions from different Member States, have demonstrated their abilities and received support from the European Commission, for example through the ‘Comenius’ programme framework. But those initiatives are still unknown to the majority of teachers and are relatively scattered. Moreover their duration is often limited because the competition for European funding applications is ever greater, and there are no guarantees of renewed financing.

Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union aims at « developing the European dimension in education ». But by virtue of subsidiarity and diversity principles, the EU has always refused to legislate on the harmonisation of teaching content among Member States.

It is also true that imposing on Members States themselves the elaboration of a European module in teachers’ training risks teaching on Europe remaining subject to this traditional, static approach.

So we propose to create a coordination body, at the European level, for a more live and dynamic teaching of Europe and European citizenship. The Council of Europe, really active in this field and a privileged partner of the European Union, should be associated. Civil society organisations should also be deeply involved to maintain a horizontal, transnational approach to this coordination.

The EU intervened more actively in higher education in the Bologna reform. One of the six actions from the 1999 Bologna Declaration concerns the ‘promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research’. In their 2001 Prague Press conference, Ministers were also encouraged to ‘increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with European content, orientation or organisation’. The reform follow-up group gathers together the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the Member States (Ministers). This collaborative body is really relevant because the intergovernmental approach allows for getting around the obstacle of the subsidiarity principle, which governs Community law.

For the establishment of new links between media and civil society

10 CREATE AN INDEPENDENT INTERNET PLATFORM FOR JOURNALISTS AND NGOs

10.1 Proposal

Assign to an independent organisation the creation and coordination, at the European level, of an Internet platform shared by NGOs and journalists.

Each NGO and each journalist will register, providing information about the topics they work on, following the law of supply and demand.

Informal meetings and more formal thematic workshops will complete this Internet platform. MEPs and European Union civil servants could be invited to debate about specific issues jointly highlighted by the journalists/NGOs.

10.2 Explanatory statements

NGOs play an increasingly important role in society and in civil dialogue with the European institutions. Structuring themselves at the European level, they often do high quality work when analysing the impact of European policies and have grassroots contacts in different European regions.

Nevertheless, they run into difficulties finding a voice in the media. In the context of deep economic pressure, NGOs cannot match the firepower of the private sector. For example, at the upcoming international negotiations on climate change, Volkswagen's press conference on its latest car model will take priority over an NGO-organised meeting.

The reality is also that local journalists are unfamiliar with European NGOs. But they are a precious source of information in humanising and concretising information about Europe, and bring original views that differ from official positions. They can demonstrate and make understood innovative practices and policies from other European regions.

The Platform would allow NGOs to target more directly journalists who are specialised in their domain of activity, and to meet local journalists - something often forgotten in their communications plans.

Coordination of this Communication:



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The Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications Sociales (IHECS) organises university training (Bachelor and Master) in communication, journalism, social and cultural activities and permanent education. Its specificity is the alliance of both a sound theoretical teaching and a very practical apprenticeship in media and foreign languages.

Over the last few years, the institution has put **European issues at the heart of its educational curriculum**. It offers a **120-hour specialisation** in European Journalism in the second year of its Masters programme. It also launched **two Executive Masters** in ‘Communication and European Affairs’, and in ‘European Journalism’. In terms of **further education** it offers practical modules in ‘local level European journalism’, under the European label ‘Jean Monnet’.

The IHECS is also a founding member and coordinator of **Micro-Europa**, a network of twelve European campus radio stations, from nine Member states, that work together on the production of a monthly programme, on a common theme, by interweaving local perspectives through an intercultural approach.

In partnership with the University of Louvain-la-Neuve and the Institut des Arts de Diffusion (Belgium), on October 2011 the IHECS also launched an **associative European school radio project, LN fm**.

The IHECS is also involved in European matters as a **social and political player**.

It is one of the eight main organisations promoting the **European Initiative for Media Pluralism**, driven by the International Alliance of Journalists and European Alternatives.

It is an active member of several other international networks: the EJTA, Théophraste, the AUF, the Ana Lindt foundation...

In collaboration with the Charles Leopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH), the school explores new routes for European journalism, based on synergies between the media and civil society.

Thus the IHECS develops three main axes of intervention:

Axis 1: the pedagogy. How to insert Europe into curricula programmes? Using which tools? Which methodology? Which innovations?

Axis 2: the practice. Push students to practice and experiment with European journalism by using different media. Young people represent a formidable means of transmission to inform a wider public about Europe.

Axis 3: the debate and the elaboration of political proposals. The IHECS aims at sharing this experience and debating it with academic partners.

Partners in this Communication:



The **AEDE - France** is one of the national sections of the **European association of teachers (AEDE.eu)**, founded in Paris in 1956. The AEDE-France aims at promoting a better understanding of the EU issues and encouraging people's commitment to make the EU project advance.

Education to European citizenship, in all its dimensions, is at the heart of the AEDE - France's numerous projects: seminars and conferences, training, editing, networking between European educational institutions, participation in multilateral Comenius projects, and involvement in European events, in synergy with other civil society organisations.

<http://www.aede-france.org> contact@aede-france.org



The **International Alliance of Journalists** proposes to the professionals of the media a space and a dynamics allowing the journalists, all over the world, to gather their reflections, experiences. concrete proposals to help influence journalistic

practices. Its goal is to link up the media's different actors to create a base of collective knowledge and work concretely on the reappropriation of a responsibility both at personal and professional, individual and collective levels.

http://www.alliance-journalistes.net/alliance_en



The **International Alliance of Journalists** and European Alternatives are the initiators of the **European Initiative for Media Pluralism**, which aims at :

- establishing a pan-European coalition of civil society organisations with an interest in media pluralism going beyond exclusively professional or sectorial associations. to promote media freedom at a pan-European level
- bringing about a substantial improvement in European legislation regarding media pluralism, including the implementation of the European Commission's own Media Pluralism Monitor, and the definition of clearer and more effective antitrust legislation at EU level governing concentration in media and publicity.



The “**Permanent Forum of European Civil Society**” was born of an idea of federalist-minded associations, which, in 1995, were seeking allies in civil society to promote a genuine European democracy. The idea was taken up in a Call to a great number of networks of NGOs networks of NGOs and trade union organisations by the Conference of the presidents of the national councils of the International European Movement at its meeting in Bonn on September 21, 1995. On

November 26, 1996 the FORUM posted on the door of the Council (the Juste Lipse building in Brussels), symbol of immobility and European national bureaucracies, the CALL OF BRUSSELS “BUILDING EUROPE FOR ALL” inviting the Union “to regain its legitimacy”: “*WE, CITIZENS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, PROCLAIM THAT TIME HAS COME TO GIVE A NEW IMPETUS TO THE UNION OF OUR PEOPLES. THE UNION MUST BE FOUNDED ON THE HUMAN PERSON (...).*”

The FORUM aims to produce and communicate information, to be a place for dialogue and reflection and to promote actions of all kinds in order to achieve:

- An active European citizenship,
- A representative, participatory and equal European democracy,
- Governance that encourages better synergies between the European institutions and civil society while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The FORUM encourages the active participation, through their associations, of women and men in Europe in the construction of a European Union founded on shared constitutional values of peace, democracy, respect for human dignity and equality between women and men, solidarity and mutual recognition of cultural diversity, in short of a Union prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century.

<http://www.en.forum-civil-society.org/>

With the support of:



The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH, www.fph.ch) is an independent foundation under Swiss law with permanent teams in Paris and Lausanne. It was launched in 1982 to finance, through donations or loans, research and initiatives that contribute in a significant and innovative way to the progress of humankind through science and social development. Its current priorities, as defined in its guidelines, are:

- To support the emergence of a world community, as made indispensable by globalisation
- To contribute to three major changes that humankind must make in the course of the 21st century:
 - a revolution in governance in order to manage the new interdependence between human beings, between societies, and between humanity and the biosphere;
 - the search for a universal ethic of responsibility;
 - the creation of a sustainable society.

Together with a vast international network of local or distant, regular or occasional partners, the foundations' bodies act according to a coordinated strategy rather than funding a collection of single initiatives.

Since 2007 the FPH has sought to create a **programme on European regional integration from a civil society perspective**. The basis for this being that:

- Europe, the European Union, is still a basically intergovernmental affair
- One could speak of a lack of legitimacy due to:
 - an uncertainty regarding civic roles and participation within the community;
 - doubt regarding the financial and economic crisis, generating the questioning of solidarity among Member States, and of the political system towards its citizens;
 - an uncertainty about the role and capacity of the Union within itself, as regards the new budget period 2013-2020 or the Belgian governmental crisis, as well as within international processes such as the Rio +20 summit.
- A multitude of creative and diverse civil society organisations and initiatives are providing tools of dialogue, proposals and pleas across Europe that raise questions regarding:
 - their legitimacy and participation within the representative democracy;
 - the existing and missing links and synergies between them;
 - their visibility in the (European) political sphere.

Our approach implies three levels of actors influencing the democratic decision-making process: civil society (organisations), political institutions (especially the European Parliament), and the media.

Our strategy consists in the creation of tools and services answering to the needs of civil society actors. A website – **www.citizensforeurope.eu** – is intended to serve as a **hub for civil society stakeholders, their proposals and activities**. It operates in the spirit of highlighting and networking European civil society actors – with each retaining their own identity – to facilitate collective commitment, to link civic actors and their numerous and enriching policy proposals with the often distant European media and political worlds and, finally, to search for potential common ground regarding the European election agenda of 2014 and 2019.

www.fph.ch

www.citizensforeurope.eu