

A EUROPEAN MANIFESTO

to support and to underline the importance
of minority community media

In the member states of the European Union there are thousands of minority community media initiatives, involving tens of thousands of people. These media groups use mainly magazines, newspapers, Internet/web-based media, radio and television stations as well as programmes produced by, for and about immigrants and ethnic minorities. Minority community media are often local, sometimes regional or national initiatives, if appropriate using the language of their audiences and providing them with information about participation and education in their country of residence. They provide a platform for discussion and exchange within the immigrant and other ethnic minority communities as well as between the minority and the indigenous/majority communities.

The minority community media groups reach out potentially to an audience of millions of citizens in the Member States, as evidenced in France and the UK, with the aim to provide them with essential information to help them to participate as full citizens of their country of residence. Although working under different national, regional and local conditions, minority community media groups throughout Europe encounter similar obstacles on both national and local levels in executing their activities.

In order to improve their situation a range of minority community media groups decided to work together and to join their efforts on the European level in asking for attention and support to improve their situation. To do so a European Manifesto was drafted. The Draft has been discussed nationally, regionally and locally across Europe. Based on these discussions the Manifesto was amended and approved by all involved groups.

In the Manifesto minority community media call upon the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Governments of the member states

- to recognise the important role that minority community media play in Europe as actors to implement social inclusion policies.
- to see the minority media being recognised as a public community service and that, as such, they will be contained in all European and national media legislation and will obtain a “must carry” status on all relevant broadcast platforms.
- to ensure that freedom of speech, the right to receive information and to the right to communicate for all, including the right for minorities to receive media in their own language, are recognised as basic human rights for all citizens. These rights should be included as part of the concept of civic citizenship and they should be enshrined in all media policies, legislation and social inclusion policies of the European Union and national member states.

The Manifesto will be presented during the European elections in 2004 to the President of the European Parliament, after all minority community media and supporting organisations have signed the Manifesto. For more information on how to joint the initiative you can call or email:

United Kingdom:

Community Media Association (CMA)
The Workstation
15 Paternoster Row
Sheffield S1 2BX
Tel. 0114 279 5219
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Email: eumanifesto@commedia.org.uk
<http://www.commedia.org.uk>

Irleand:

The Media Co-op
Alan Braddish
Northside Civic Centre
Bunratty Road
Dublin 17
Fax: (+353) 01 848 5211
Phone: (+353) 01 867 101 6
Email: nearfm@iol.ie
<http://www.mediacoop.ie>

Secretariat: On Line/ More Colour in the Media (OLMCM)
Website: <http://www.multicultural.net/manifesto/index.htm>

The European Manifesto

xx minority community media initiatives and organisations from xx member states of the European Union, are committed to contribute to the full participation of immigrants and ethnic minority communities in their country of residence, aware of their potential to support their immigrant and ethnic minority audiences and determined to develop their own media as an effective means of communication within their communities and as platform to inform the mainstream society, discussed and approved the following text in their local, national and trans-national meetings:

Taking into account

- that the new European Union intends to constitute an area of freedom, security and justice, in which its shared values are developed and the richness of its cultural diversity is respected.
- that member states of the European Union include a great number of citizens belonging to immigrant and ethnic minorities of which a growing number originate from countries outside the European Union and who contribute in a large part to the richness of the cultural diversity and the economy of the new European Union.
- that the European Commission introduced a concept of civic citizenship, guaranteeing certain core rights and obligations to immigrants so that they are treated in the same way as nationals in their country of residence.
- that immigrant and other ethnic minority communities already make great efforts to engage themselves in community life and other social, cultural and political activities in order to contribute as equal citizens in their country of residence.

Being aware:

- that sensitising the majority populations to the benefits and challenges of immigration are core elements in a pro-active social inclusion policy and that the mass media have a major responsibility in their role as educators of public opinion.
- that for the successful implementation of civic citizenship, the dialogue between key actors and visible, recognisable and the equal involvement and participation of immigrant and ethnic minority groups in the public debate are of prime importance.
- that mainstream media have great difficulties in attracting ethnic minority audiences and to make their mainstream products a real reflection of the multicultural society.
- that, unlike the mainstream media, minority community media are able to link into networks of spokespeople and community leaders and thus can act as a mediator.
- that minority community media, as part of the public service, and as evidenced in France and the UK, can play a major role in encouraging equal and full participation of immigrants and ethnic minority groups, by addressing issues of importance to immigrant and ethnic minority audiences and by offering them a platform for discussion within their own communities on important national and local issues, as well as providing them with a platform to share these views with the rest of the national population.
- that in most member states minority community media, despite their present efforts, cannot produce or further develop their own media, as they often do not have independent access to frequencies and other broadcast facilities, like regular training and media funds, due to the fact that minority community media are not part of the public service structure and because the national media environment on all levels is highly competitive and very difficult to penetrate for

new groups such as immigrant and ethnic minorities because of the existence of well established indigenous media networks.

Convinced:

- that freedom of speech, the right to receive information and the right to communicate for all, are basic human rights for all citizens as part of the concept of the civic citizenship in the enlarged European Union, to ensure equal participation of all citizens in the member states, which have to be enshrined in all legislation and social inclusion policies of the European Union and national member states.
- that minority community media can contribute enormously to the participation and emancipation process of immigrants and ethnic minority groups within the concept of civic citizenship, by the improvement of intercultural communication, common understanding and dialogue.
- that by using the language of their audience, minority community media are able to effectively reach out to immigrant and ethnic minority audiences, which cannot normally be reached by other national and local media.
- that minority community media can have an important supporting role to mainstream media, as mediator between the minority communities and the mainstream society, in providing access to minority networks and to alternative sources of information.
- that minority community media is a basic public service and that, as such, they should be a structural part of the national and European media environment.
- that minority community media need meaningful and relevant support in order to fulfil their important role.

Referring:

- to the European Convention on Human Rights, 1953, Article 10, which reads that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- to the Final Act on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Helsinki in 1975, which included the right for minorities to receive media/information in their own language.
- to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 11, Freedom of Expression and Information: Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers
- to The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by General Assembly of the United Nations resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992
- to the Treaty of Amsterdam, 1999, which enhances in Article 13 the right to equal treatment and freedom from discrimination on the basis of nationality as well as to that based on sex, race or ethnic origin, core principles underlying all policies of the European Union.
- to the Communication from the European Commission on immigration, integration and employment (COM 2003, 336 final) to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
- to numerous European and national conferences, like the Conference of the Council of Europe "Migrants, Media and Cultural Diversity" in Noordwijkerhout 1988, which called upon the governments of European countries to acknowledge the right of migrants and other ethnic groups to receive through the media adequate information appropriate to their needs and to express themselves in the

media and to ensure that these rights are enshrined in legislation on the media and in texts laying down the duties of the public sector media.

**We ask the European Parliament, European Commission
and Governments of the Member States to ensure:**

- that freedom of speech, the right to receive information and the right to communicate for all, including the right for minorities to receive media in their own language, are recognised as basic human rights for all citizens as part of the concept of the civic citizenship and that they will be enshrined in all media policies, legislation and social inclusion policies of the European Union and national member states
- that minority community media are being recognised as a basic public community service and that, as such, they will be contained in all European and national media legislation and will obtain a 'must carry' status on all relevant broadcast platforms.
- that minority community media will be recognised as important participants to implement the social inclusion policies.
- that the European Commission will make earmarked funds available within the Media Programme in order to encourage training programmes for immigrant and ethnic minority media professionals, trans-national co-operation of minority media and exchange of programmes and productions.
- that special attention will be given to media education for immigrants and ethnic minorities in the national and European educational and vocational programmes.
- that national governments create a Media Fund, to provide start-up and continuing funding on structural basis.

The Manifesto is supported by:

Minority Community Media initiatives
Ethnic minority organisations
NGO's
Others