



## **A New Notion of Media**

*A Youth Perspective*

# Conclusions

Youth Event prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and New Communication Services

Reykjavik, Iceland  
26-27 May 2009

with the financial support of the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, the European Youth Foundation and several Council of Europe Member States

## **The Youth Event in Reykjavik**

Following an invitation from the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs with their financial support, together with the financial support of the European Youth Foundation and several Council of Europe Member States, the European Youth Forum organised a youth event prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and New Communication Services, which took place in Reykjavik, Iceland on 26-27 May 2009.

The possibility given to young people to present to European decision makers what they perceive as opportunities and difficulties regarding the new media and communication services, shows a concrete sign of willingness from the Council of Europe to listen to what young generations have to say and allows young Europeans to put forward their main concerns and what possible solutions they see to it on matters that affect them directly.

During this two-day event, representatives of youth organisations from all over Europe got together to tackle "A New Notion of Media".

## **A New Notion of Media?**

The constant developments in the information society bring new challenges for media and communication policy, especially in relation to young people. The role of media has become crucial for the work of youth organisations as a tool to enhance access of young people to information and for the development of an active youth participation in democratic processes.

Moreover, it is essential to provide young people with the possibility to exercise their fundamental rights and especially freedom of speech and expression, while at the same time ensuring that they are aware of the responsibilities that come with these rights. Therefore, it is indispensable to take into account the voice of young people, as advanced media users and important stakeholders in society, when discussing media and communication policy.

Young people are increasingly engaged with new communications technologies and services. These provide possibilities for the promotion and strengthening of democracy and human rights. Particularly, they can be a means of encouraging young people to actively participate in democratic processes. In order for this potential to be realised, certain conditions need to be fulfilled.

## **Recommendations from the Youth Event**

The participants of the Youth Event call upon the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers to take into careful consideration the concerns of young people when developing policies regarding Media and New Communication Services. They therefore present the following recommendations to the decision makers on national and European level, civil society organisations as well as young Europeans.

- In times of diversified information sources trust in the media is neither a matter of format nor of technology. It is a matter of the quality of content that must be based on accurate and verifiable facts clearly differentiated from personal opinion. In this sense, respect and responsibility based on the fundamental individual and human rights are required both from the content creators and the users.
- Equal possibilities to access communications technologies and services both as users and as creators must be guaranteed as a fundamental right, regardless of origin, geographical location, gender, religious, social and cultural background, abilities, economic possibilities, political views or any other criteria. It is the responsibility of the Member States that these conditions are fulfilled.
- Media literacy should be mainstreamed at all levels of formal education to raise awareness and knowledge about the rights, responsibilities, opportunities and risks related to the use of new communications technologies and services. Thus we urge the Council of Europe Member States to introduce theoretical knowledge and active media skills in their educational curricula. Moreover, the role of youth organisations as the main providers of non-formal education in this area should be recognised and promoted. These measures will help individuals to develop a critical awareness of the media.
- Copyright policy is one of the challenging policies coming along with new media: sharing all intellectual and creative goods is one of huge advantages of the Internet. But as well as it is almost impossible to adapt offline copyrights to the online content, there is the need to remunerate intellectual and creative work. New, suitable ways such as Creative Commons or a cultural flat rate that combine both have to be developed with both users and producers.
- User security needs to be guaranteed by securing that personal information and user history online are not the property of anyone else but the user him/herself. Common standards should therefore be developed regarding privacy settings and personal data protection.