

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Culture and Education

2006/2080(INI)

13.7.2006

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Development

on the media and development
(2006/2080(INI))

Draftswoman: Karin Resetarits

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Affirms the importance of ensuring a more systematic integration of freedom of expression and communication within the strategies and funding policies of the development agenda;
2. Considers that funding programmes with a mandate on and for development should include a more systematic integration of State-independent media;
3. Underlines the importance of the media in fostering respect for cultural diversity and promoting national and international cultural development;
4. Considers the media as a key factor in rapidly spreading information concerning new scientific achievements and technologies, which promote and enhance development;
5. Insists that the role of the media is not restricted to mainstream models, but that alternative media and informal communication networks should be strengthened and included in any infrastructure development plan;
6. Stresses that development should mean social and sustainable development, where social and environmental values are also to be equally respected;
7. Supports NGOs and trusts which invest in the education of journalists in developing countries and which improve the working conditions of media professionals so that they have a real chance to do their work in a secure and independent way;
8. Underlines the importance of strengthening the social and educational infrastructure by investing in better schoolbooks and funding media programmes which also offer educational content;
9. Stresses that educational content should focus on raising public awareness of the importance and the powers of a free media in the process of building a democratic society;
10. Urges that elements such as freedom of expression, freedom of the press, participation in public decision-making, and the protection of vulnerable groups should be included in the global development agenda ;
11. Calls on governments and public authorities throughout the world to end in particular the culture of impunity regarding violence against journalists by investigating and punishing those responsible for attacks on media professionals, and by taking the necessary precautions that make it possible for journalists to continue to provide citizens with the essential knowledge and objective information that flow from a free and independent press;

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

Today more than 1 billion people worldwide live on less than 1 dollar per day, another 2,7 billion live on less than 2 dollar per day. The Commission declared in the EU Report on Millennium Development Goals 2000-2004 (as the EU contribution to the MDGs at the UN 2005 High Level Event) as the first goal to achieve that by 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger should be reduced by half. Up till now there are still 600 million people illiterate worldwide.

There is a strong positive correlation between freedom of expression and freedom of press and higher incomes, better health, lower infant mortality and increased adult literacy. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are necessary to build up democracy, constitutional and human rights, greater knowledge and enlightenment. Free and independent media support and control good governance if their aim is information and education. Various examples proof what media is able to do: building up democracy, improving the quality of governance, giving people trust and confidence to stand up against corruption and exploitation.

The lack of effective voice of the most disadvantaged groups perpetuates inefficient and sometimes corrupt forms of governance and service delivery that keep the poor in a subordinate position. People need the freedom to participate in public life, to put forward ideas and potentially have these realised and to demand without fear of recrimination or discrimination. Access to information strengthen mechanisms to hold governments accountable for their promises, obligations and actions, Unfortunately freedom of expression and freedom of the press are never or rarely mentioned in international development declarations, such as the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly 1986, the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights in 1993, or the Millennium Declaration in 2000.

In November 2005, 176 States participating at the World Summit on the Information Society launched by the UN in 2001 reaffirmed in Tunis that freedom of expression and the free flow of information, ideas and knowledge are essential for development, but there is a digital gap between poor and rich countries.

PROCEDURE

Title	The media and development
Procedure number	2006/2080(INI)
Committee responsible	DEVE
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	CULT 6.4.2006
Enhanced cooperation – date announced in plenary	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Karin Resetarits 20.3.2006
Previous drafts(wo)man	
Discussed in committee	20.6.2006
Date adopted	13.7.2006
Result of final vote	+: 26 -: 0 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia I Cutchet, Ivo Belet, Guy Bono, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Jolanta Dičkutė, Věra Flasarová, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Milan Gaľa, Claire Gibault, Vasco Graça Moura, Lissy Gröner, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Manolis Mavrommatis, Marianne Mikko, Ljudmila Novak, Doris Pack, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Christa Prets, Pál Schmitt, Nikolaos Sifunakis, Hannu Takkula, Helga Trüpel, Henri Weber, Thomas Wise, Tomáš Zatloukal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Nina Škottová
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Comments (available in one language only)	2 substitute members of EPP were present, but only one was allowed to vote in view of not exceeding the allowed contingent of voting members