

The EU Media Literacy Expert Group 2006-2010*

In 2005, the Commission was requested to launch an initiative on media literacy by the European Parliament. This happened during the hearings of Commissioner Reding before taking up her new mandate, as well as in the Weber Report on the transition to digital TV. This request had also been echoed by the industry and a number of Member States.

The Commission's work on this issue started then in **2006** with the creation of a "**Media Literacy Expert Group**" with an advisory role for the European Commission

The group was composed of a number of European media literacy experts with a mix of different competences and backgrounds including academia, media industry, international organisations (UNESCO, Council of Europe, Alliance of Civilizations), associations, regulators and other media institutions (Film Institutes, Media Councils, etc.). Ten meetings have been organised between March 2006 and December 2010.

This group was set-up with the aim to analyse and define media literacy objectives and trends, to highlight and promote good practices at European level and propose actions in the field. In particular, issues such as the importance of promoting the protection of children, young people and human dignity in the media and support the creation of a media environment appropriate for citizens' social, educational and cultural needs were tackled and debated. The group worked also on the development of European definition of media literacy and on reliable means of evaluation.

The group played a very important role in developing a European definition of media literacy (*Media literacy is generally defined as the **ability to access the media, to understand and to critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media contents and to create communications in a variety of contexts***) which has been used in Commission's official documents like the 2007 Communication and the 2009 Recommendation. This definition is the result of the work of many different people, institutions, media professionals, teachers, educators. It is built on **three main elements**: 1) access to media and media content; 2) understanding and critical approach, ability to decipher media messages, awareness of how the media works; 3) creativity, communication and production skills.

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The group was also a forum for the discussion, promotion and exchange of good practices on different aspects of media literacy. Finally, it proved to be a great opportunity for networking and intellectual enrichment.

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