

Media Literacy

Lesson #1

We need journalism.

More than 40 expert individuals and organizations quickly answered Global Youth & News Media's call in Spring 2024 to jointly suggest some language for new guidelines for media literacy in Europe that would encourage teaching about the necessary role of journalism in society as a basic, universal lesson.

*In October 2024, we have had some success with getting a mention of journalism into those [guideline recommendations](#) and also into practice at the Media Literacy Coalition of Bulgaria conference "Media Literacy: sustainability, expressiveness, solutions." There our director along with members of [Children's News Europe](#) (editors of *Vijte* of Bulgaria and *Časoris* of Slovenia) and the president of the International Media Education Association explored with more than 100 teachers how media literacy and journalism could help each other for the benefit of society.*

The need is global.

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Too many current media literacy standards lack a key element: They mention neither why democracies need journalism and journalists nor how that content differs from everything else.

This is as true in Europe as anywhere else.

Because of the increasing hostility toward journalism and those who do it, several experts strongly argue that such basic lessons need to be included in basic European media literacy curricula, where they are largely lacking.

Just as importantly, including that element would also put media literacy standards more firmly in line with core European values as evidenced most recently by the Council of Europe's [Journalists Matter](#) campaign and the European Parliament's [European Media Freedom Act](#). As Marie Frenay, media policy coordinator for EC vice president Věra Jerová, noted, "the Commission highly values the role of journalism – which can be seen via all the recent initiatives we have launched to protect media freedom and to put media freedom as a key pillar of the [European Democracy Action Plan](#)."

Finally, such inclusion in basic media literacy teaching would help the massive efforts in Europe and elsewhere to keep journalistic enterprises alive. Without a continuously renewed audience of people who recognize and appreciate real journalism, those efforts are largely useless.

With all this in mind, the more than 40 experts and organizations listed below have jointly suggest adding language to regional and national media literacy standards in both Europe and elsewhere that encourage teaching about the necessary role of journalism in a democracy as a basic, universal lesson.

Here's the proposed language for an additional section for any such guidelines:

A good media literacy initiative takes into account the necessary role of journalism in European democracy.

- Journalism differs from other content due to its codification as important for the success of a democratic form of government.
- This form of information puts an emphasis on ethical practice and verification to inform the public.
- Understanding the elements of the ethical journalism that produces quality content also contributes to the ability to decipher the nature of other content.
- It is important to explore the judicial, political and physical attacks some journalists face just to do their jobs.

PROGRESS

A first joint campaign bore fruit in Fall 2024 after The European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) [Working Group on Media Literacy Standards and Best Practices](#) called for input on its draft recommendations, which had included no mention of journalism or of its importance.

After consulting our joint proposal, and with similar input from others, EDMO altered the text to note the need to have a “focus on the value of independent journalism” with a “good media literacy initiative” including the skills needed “to value rigorous, independent journalism.”

That effort was coordinated by Aralynn McMane, Ph.D. and Josh LaPorte of Global Youth & News Media and its Children’s News Europe group.

Renate Schroeder, director of the European Federation of Journalists, commented on EDMO’s action: “Mentioning the importance of independent journalism is more

important than ever before, especially as journalists cannot be replaced by fact checkers.”

Aidan White, Ethical Journalism Network: “It's good to see that the penny has dropped to some degree regarding the importance of journalism in creating a reliable and trustworthy information environment for society.”

In an endorsement of EDMO’s recommendations, Global Youth & News Media commented: “Thank you for noting the importance of journalism, a critical early lesson. Journalism differs radically from other online content, serving as a weapon against the daily onslaught of the fake, the imaginary and the truly dangerous, and also as an approach by students and teachers to digital media literacy itself.”

A story in the global educational news service News Decoder about the effort : <https://news-decoder.com/for-media-literacy-teach-that-journalism-is-real-not-fake/>

Global Youth & News Media has curated collections of activities to help teach about the [dangers journalists face](#) and about the [worth of having journalism around](#) and, every two years, [honors educators and organizations](#), for excellence in such teaching.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS ([comments from several of them are here](#))

Mogens Schmidt, Denmark, UNESCO (former deputy assistant director general for communication and information), European Journalism Center (former director), WAN-IFRA (former assistant director general), all of which did extensive media literacy activity during his tenure.

Guy Berger, South Africa, UNESCO (former director for freedom of expression and access to information), lifelong supporter of media literacy and journalism.

Paul Mihailidis, Ph.D., faculty chair & director The Salzburg Academy on Media and Global Change (Austria).

Mariska Kleemans, Ph.D., professor (youth, news and education), Radboud University Behavioural Sciences Institute (The Netherlands). Also sent a separate support statement .

Sally Tayie, Ph.D., member of the Communication and Education Cabinet Research Group, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)

Nikos Panagiotou, Ph.D., associate professor of journalism and mass communications, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece).

Mark Deuze, Ph.D., Netherlands, professor of media studies, University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Faith Abiodun, executive director of United World Colleges International, a network of 18 secondary schools and educational programmes on four continents dedicated to making education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future (United Kingdom).

Madhav Chinnappa, ex-Google (former head of news ecosystem development), supporting both journalism and media literacy in Europe and the world during his tenure (United Kingdom)

Vasiky Gatov, Ph.D., USA/Russia, senior fellow, Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, University of Southern California (USA); former journalist, editor and publisher in Russia.

Raymonde Griswold, France, European Journalism Centre (former director), which was a global developer of nationwide media literacy programmes during her tenure (Moldova, Armenia, Bolivia, South Africa...)

Marianne Peters, The Netherlands, European Journalism Training Association (former director), unifying organization for journalism education entities across Europe.

Kristen Davis, France, CinqC consultancy (founder and CEO) Global Youth and News Media board member, former IT & Innovation director at New York Times International and longtime supporter of media literacy and journalism.

Grzegorz Piechota, Poland & United Kingdom, Gazeta Wyborcza Foundation and Bureau of Investigative Journalism (board member), International News Marketing Association (researcher) and longtime supporter of journalism and media literacy.

Analynn McMANE, Ph.D., France, Global Youth & News Media (founder and executive director) and longtime supporter of media literacy and journalism.

Josh LaPorte, Brussels, Global Youth & News Media (special adviser on media literacy and board member) and longtime supporter of media literacy and journalism.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS ([statements from several of them are here](#))

Albanian Media Institute (Instituti Shqiptar i Medias), supporter of journalism and provider of media literacy nationwide. Contact: Remzi Lani, Albania.

Alliance for Sustainable Regional Development, supporter of sustainable solutions to development problems, especially for youth, for Bulgaria, the European Union, and the world. Contact: Stefani Aleksandrova, Bulgaria.

Association pour l'Éducation aux Médias (APEM - Media Education Association), provider of media literacy nationwide. Contact: Etienne Millien, France.

Aftenposten Junior, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide. Contact: Mari Midtstigen, Norway.

Børneavisen, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide. Contact: Simon Thinggaard Hjortkjær, Denmark.

Časoris Institute, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide. Contact: Sonja Merljak Zdovc, Slovenia

Children's News Europe, consortium of European providers of journalism and media literacy for primary school children. Contact: Aralynn McMane, France

Deutsche Welle Akademie, supporters of journalism and media literacy worldwide. Contact: [Roslyn Kratochvil Moore](#), Germany

[Ethical Journalism Network](#), promoting ethics, good governance and self-regulation in media. Contact: [Wendy Collinson](#)

EuroAcademy Leadership Institute, working toward a better-led Scandinavia and world since 1985. Contact: Tomas Brunegård, Sweden.

European Broadcasting Union, unifying public broadcasters in Europe and beyond, a supporter of journalism and media literacy. Contact: Thomas Bergmann, Belgium. Also sent a separate support statement .

European Federation of Journalists, unites and leads supporters of journalism throughout Europe. Contact: Renate Schroeder, Belgium

European Journalism Centre, supporters of journalism throughout Europe. Contact: Lars Boering, The Netherlands.

European Journalism Training Association, unites 80+ journalism schools, universities and centres. Contact: Nadia Vissers, Belgium.

Fundación Diario de Navarra, supporters of journalism and providers of media literacy. Contact: Lourdes Paz Jiménez, Spain.

Global Forum for Media Development, supporters of journalism and media literacy worldwide, Belgium. Contact: Mira Milosevic.

Global Youth & News Media, supporters of journalism and media literacy worldwide, France. Contacts: Aralynn McMane and Josh LaPorte

Hiberus Media Labs, provider of digital services to journalism organizations in Spain and Italy and other parts of the world. Contact: David Jorge Torres Moreno, Spain.

International Center for Journalists, worldwide supporter of journalism and media literacy, notably in the new democracies of Europe. Contact: Vjollca Shtylla, USA.

KidsWeek, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide.
Contact: Henrike van Gelder, The Netherlands.

Lasten uutiset, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide),
Finland. Contact: Fanny Fröman, also a member of Children's News Europe, Finland.

Lie Detectors, provider of media literacy throughout Europe. Contact: Juliane von
Reppert-Bismarck, Belgium.

Macedonian Institute for Media, supporter of journalism and provider of media
literacy to children nationwide. Contact: Vesna Nikodinoska, North Macedonia.

Media Diversity Institute, promoter and supporter of diversity in journalism
worldwide. Contact: Milica Pecic.

Media Kasvatus (media literacy division of the News Media Finland and Finnish
Media Federation), supporter of journalism and provider of media literacy
nationwide. Contact: Susanna Ahonen, Finland.

News Decoder, provider of media literacy and journalism worldwide. Contact: Maria
Krasinski, France.

News Media Europe, unites 2400 journalism outlets throughout Europe, supporter
of journalism and media literacy. Contact: Wout van Wijk, Brussels.

Nieuws in de klas (media literacy division of NDP Nieuwsmedia), provider of media
literacy nationwide. Contacts: Nicolette van Dijkum, former director Chris Van Hall
(who was also an early advisor to Macedonia's media literacy initiative), and former
director Fifi Schwarz, co-author of *Jongeren, nieuwsmedia en betrokkenheid*, a
study of Dutch youth news media engagement and citizenship and is now an
adviser on education innovation (The Netherlands).

PressPass (media literacy division of Newsbrands Ireland), provider of a media
literacy program to the country's 16-year-olds and supporter of journalism
nationwide. Contact: Lisa Buckley, Ireland. Also teacher Anne Browne.

South East Europe Media Organisation, supporter of journalism in 33 countries.
Contact: Oliver Vujovic, Austria.

Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR), supporter of public service journalism
and media literacy. Contact: Henriette Engbersen, Switzerland.

Vijte, provider of media literacy and journalism for children nationwide. Contact:
Dessy Gavrilova, Bulgaria.

Youth for Positive Change, advocacy, youth expression and journalism nonprofit.
Contact: Rory Rusnak, Ireland.

[COMMENTS FROM SUPPORTERS AVAILABLE **HERE**](#)

Contacts for further information: Aralynn Abare McMane, Ph.D. (France) and Josh LaPorte (Belgium), Children's News Europe and Global Youth & News Media, France.

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