THE EUROPEAN MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR:

Bridging Law, Economics and Media Studies as a First Step Towards Risk-Based Regulation in Media Markets

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PART 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

Media concentration advances, yet new technologies and media uses are changing the media landscape, and this requires not just increased vigilance but also a new understanding of media pluralism. In order to equip policy makers and regulatory authorities with the tools to detect and manage societal risks in this area and provide them a stronger evidentiary basis to define priorities and actions for improving media pluralism, there is a strong need for instruments to enhance the auditability of media pluralism – such as the “Media Pluralism Monitor”, which we will present in this paper.

The Media Pluralism Monitor is the result of a one-year study carried out between February 2008 and February 2009 by the authors on behalf of the European Commission. This study forms part of the three-step approach on media pluralism in the European Union (EU), announced by Commissioner Viviane Reding and Vice-President Margot Wallström in January 2007 in response to continuing concerns from the European Parliament and non-governmental organisations about media concentration, and its possible effects on pluralism and freedom of expression. The study follows step 1, which was the publication on 16 January 2007 of a Commission Staff Working Paper on Media Pluralism in the Member States of the

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2 Media pluralism: Commission stresses need for transparency, freedom and diversity in Europe’s media landscape, Press Release IP/07/52, Brussels, 16 January 2007; see also: Reding, V. (Member of the European Commission responsible for Information Society and Media), The future of content markets: Business cannibals or media partners, Speech delivered at the Global Digital Magazine Media 2.0 Conference (CeBIT), Hannover, 14 March 2007.
European Union. The Working Paper provides a concise discussion of the issues raised by media pluralism. The results of the study are intended to advance the debate on pluralism within the EU and will form a significant input to a subsequent Commission Communication on indicators for media pluralism in the EU Member States, on which a broad public consultation will then ensue (step 3). 

The protection of media pluralism has been a recurrent concern of the European Parliament, inviting the Commission on several occasions since the 1990s to propose concrete measures to safeguard media pluralism. However, the various consultations held by the Commission in the last fifteen years have led to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate to submit a Community initiative on pluralism. The failed attempt to launch a harmonisation directive on pluralism and media ownership in the mid 1990s demonstrated the political sensitivities surrounding the subject and the need for a balanced and realistic approach which would take into account the specificities of media markets in the various Member States. The successive enlargements of the European Union, in which Central and Eastern European countries, characterised by relatively young media markets and intense media reforms, have joined, has further diminished the feasibility and appropriateness of a uniform approach to media pluralism.

However, our study adopts the viewpoint that it is feasible to search for general and substantive criteria to measure risks for media pluralism (hence, not the actual level of media pluralism) and to develop tools for empirical assessments of diversity in the media sector, without jeopardizing the multi-faceted and normative character of media pluralism. 

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7 The study does not intend to offer a harmonised definition of media pluralism, nor does it impose a specific normative approach. As stressed by recent academic literature, the concept of media pluralism in itself is an object of political contestation, subject to continuous process of social negotiation, which makes that attempts to reach “pluralistic consensus” within the EU are often regarded as suspicious and undesirable; Karppinen, K. (2009). Making a difference to media pluralism: a critique of the pluralistic consensus in European media policy. In Cammaerts, B., & Carpentier, N. (Eds.), Reclaiming the Media – Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles (ECREA Series), Intellect.
MAIN FEATURES

The following paragraphs highlight the main characteristics of the MPM and how these affected its design.

NEUTRAL MONITORING TOOL

The Media Pluralism Monitor that has been developed throughout the study offers a diagnostic, not a prescriptive tool on the basis of established risk management strategies. Its purpose is to facilitate the collection of empirical data on various risks for media pluralism given the particular economic, socio-demographic and legal situation in each Member State. The Monitor does not prescribe specific remedies or actions for particular risk profiles. Thus, while it urges the application of the same analytical framework in all Member States to ensure comparability of the results obtained (infra), it is not a call for harmonisation of policies in this area. Given the far-reaching socio-cultural, economic and political importance of the media for the functioning of European democracies, the sensitive matter of how to protect media pluralism is ultimately left to the discretion of Member States and their authorities who, in defining their nation’s risk appetite,\(^8\) are free to consider market-based as well as regulatory approaches to diversity.

HOLISTIC, BUT PRACTICABLE MONITORING TOOL

In response to the criticism (especially voiced in the US, following the FCC’s proposal for a diversity index) that reducing pluralism to single quantitative measurements fails to account for the complexities of the media landscape and substitutes mechanical devices for serious analysis of media power,\(^9\) the Media Pluralism Monitor takes a holistic approach, not only measuring ownership and concentration, but also other restrictive forces, and not confined to external pluralism only, but also looking at aspects of internal pluralism. It thereby couples quantitative with qualitative indicators in order to grasp the full complexity of media pluralism\(^10\) and it investigates threats to pluralism with differentiated sets of indicators, both on the legislative and production and supply sides (combining “economic indicators”, “socio-demographic indicators” and “legal indicators”; infra).

At the same time, the mission was to construct a user-friendly and practicable tool. This implied that certain risks and indicators, although listed in the initial inventories of relevant risks and indicators in the first phase of the project, had to be discarded again in the final prototype of MPM, in order to avoid over-complexity. This decision was based either on the grounds of secondary relevance of the risk concerned

\(^8\) A nation’s ‘risk appetite’ or ‘risk tolerance’ refers to the amount of risk that one is willing to take on in pursuit of value.


\(^10\) Following the Council of Europe, the Monitor adopts a broad definition of media pluralism as the scope for a wide range of social, political and cultural values, opinions, information and interests to find expression through the media. More specifically, it understands by media pluralism the diversity of media supply, use and distribution in relation to 1) ownership and control, 2) media types and genres, 3) political viewpoints, 4) cultural expressions and 5) local and regional interests.
(for example, the risk of bias against female politicians in the political domain), or on the basis of not meeting the “SMART”-criteria. The SMART-test, which is commonly used in the design and evaluation of indicators, assesses whether indicators are specific (i.e. indicators have a sufficiently precise meaning and direct link with media pluralism), measurable (i.e. they can be expressed in a quantitative or qualitative score), achievable/attainable (i.e. data can be obtained at reasonable cost) and relevant/realistic (i.e. reliable border values can be defined on which there is broad consensus). Indicators that did not pass the SMART-test are called “second tier indicators” in the study and include, for instance, concentration in employment for a given sector (measuring the number of employees in Top4 — or alternatively Top8 — firms and calculating employment share per owner) and advertising and time use concentration by sector and all media (both of which were left out because the availability of data required to measure the indicator cannot always be granted in some countries).

Also for reasons of practicability, it has been decided to use quantitative measurements to the largest possible extent. Also where qualitative assessments (like content analysis) are required, scores are expressed in simple scenarios, guiding the user towards selecting one of the three options in the scoring sheets (high, medium, low risk). To avoid over-simplification, however, the Monitor leaves scope for qualitative analysis / interpretation of the results of the scoring, while excluding subjectivism to the largest possible degree by providing guidelines for interpretation in the User Guide.

**EU STANDARDISED, BUT EVOLVING MONITORING TOOL**

Another major dilemma faced when designing the Media Pluralism Monitor was the one between comparability of results throughout the EU (which can only be achieved by using an identical set of indicators and the same border values for all countries) and respect for national specificities in the Member States (by taking account of differences in market size, political and regulatory cultures, etc, in the scoring of indicators and interpretation of results).

The prototype of MPM offers a measurement tool that is applicable in an identical manner in all EU Member States, even though these countries may represent different profiles in terms of market size, technological development, presence of minorities, cultural and political traditions, etc. To allow for comparability between Member States, the MPM uses the same set of risks and indicators, and applies in principle the same border values (of high, medium, low risk) to all Member States.

However, given the important impact of the size and wealth of a nation on its media market structures and regulatory possibilities to protect and promote media diversity, the MPM offers the possibility to account for the population size of the country concerned (large versus small) and its GDP/capita (high

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11 The “T” in SMART stands for “time-bound”, i.e. data can be collected frequently enough to inform the progress and influence the decisions. As the Monitor has been designed to provide a snapshot of situations at a given moment in time, a detailed assessment of the time-principle has not been conducted.

12 The number of major firms in a country and range of media types are directly related to market size, indicated by the size of population, as well as to the wealth of the market, indicated by GDP/capita. Nations with smaller population and/or a lower GDP/capita will normally have fewer media firms and a more limited range of media types.

13 Small nations are those with populations below 20 million or fewer. Large nations are those with population of more than 20 million.
versus low)\textsuperscript{14} before starting the actual scoring of indicators (called “ex ante-profiling” in the study). This will result in an automatic adjustment of border values for a number of (predominantly economic) indicators of risks of concentration and limitations to the range of media types for these nations. When a nation is, for instance, designated as small and low GDP/capita, the border values of the indicators of concentration and media range threats should be increased by one-third\textsuperscript{15} (thus accounting for the fact that their small size and low GDP/capita would be expected to produce a greater level of concentration and a lower range of media). Thus, the value should be multiplied by 1.33 (increasing the border values for green, yellow, red).

Other variables affecting the level of media pluralism and which differ from Member State to Member State, such as degrees of heterogeneity among the population in terms of ethnic and linguistic groups, the most popular means of TV reception, or dominant political viewpoints, are taken into account via the “ex post-interpretation” exercise (infra, Part 3).

Finally, it is important to stress that the Media Pluralism Monitor has been developed as an evolving and flexible tool that allows for regular updates and adjustments necessitated by, firstly, economic and technological evolutions, and secondly, new solutions to normative dilemmas. This implies that, in the future, new risks and indicators can be added to the Monitor (for example, in the area of new media, search engines, etc), or old risks and indicators removed from it.

**STRUCTURE OF THE MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR**

The Media Pluralism Monitor is structured in six risk domains, which each contain a varying number of risks, and three risk areas; it combines three types of indicators (166 in total) and measures them on the basis of three border values.

**Risk Domains** – The 166 indicators to assess risks for media pluralism in a Member State are grouped in six risk domains, five of which refer to those dimensions of media pluralism that are most commonly accepted, in policy documents (e.g. of the Council of Europe) and in the academic literature, as its constituting elements: pluralism of media ownership and/or control, pluralism of types and genres, cultural diversity in the media, political pluralism in the media and diversity of local and regional interests.\textsuperscript{16} One domain, called the ‘basic domain’, consists of indicators relating to essential legal and policy safeguards of a general nature, i.e. not confined to a single aspect of media pluralism: freedom of expression (and related rights), independent supervision and media literacy. They are further explained in Part 2.

\textsuperscript{14} The determination of high and low GDP/capita was made using Eurostat 2008 Yearbook data. Those nations above GDP/capita for the EU-27 (23,500 Euro) were considered in the high category and those below are considered in the low category. High GDP/capita nations are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, United Kingdom. Low GDP/capita nations are: Bulgaria, Cyprrus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.

\textsuperscript{15} This is a conservative adjustment. In some small nations concentration is 1.5 to 2 times higher than in large nations. The conservative measure is used because the monitor highlights RISKS of concentration and limited range of media and because the monitor uses on three broad ranges of risk indication (green, yellow, red).

\textsuperscript{16} Within each risk domain, there are indicators looking at external pluralism, and indicators assessing internal pluralism.
Within every risk domain relevant risks have been selected combining traditional methods for risk identification (objectives-based) and risk assessment (educated opinions and literature review) with sector-specific methods.

### INVENTORY OF RISKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Domain</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Freedom of speech and related rights and freedoms are not sufficiently protected</td>
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<td>B2</td>
<td>Insufficiently independent supervision in media sector</td>
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<td>B3</td>
<td>Insufficient media (including digital) literacy</td>
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<td>Pluralism of Media Ownership &amp; Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>O1</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in terrestrial television</td>
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<td>O2</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>O3</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in newspapers</td>
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<tr>
<td>O4</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in Cable/Sat/ADSL/TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>O5</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in magazines</td>
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<td>O6</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in internet content provision</td>
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<td>O7</td>
<td>High ownership concentration in book publishing</td>
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<td>O8</td>
<td>High concentration of cross-media ownership</td>
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<td>O9</td>
<td>High vertical concentration</td>
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<td>O10</td>
<td>Lack of transparency in ownership structures</td>
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<td>Pluralism of Media Types &amp; Genres</td>
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<td>T1</td>
<td>Lack of/under-representation of/dominance of media types</td>
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<td>T2</td>
<td>Lack of/under-representation of/dominance of media genres</td>
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<td>T3</td>
<td>Lack of sufficient market resources to support range of media</td>
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<td>T4</td>
<td>Lack of sufficient resources to support Public Service Media (PSM)</td>
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<td>T5</td>
<td>Insufficient engagement of PSM in new media</td>
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<td>T6</td>
<td>Insufficient attention paid to public participation</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Political Pluralism in the Media</strong></td>
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<td>P1</td>
<td>Political bias in the media</td>
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<td>P2</td>
<td>Political bias in the media during election periods campaigns</td>
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<td>P3</td>
<td>Excessive politicisation of media ownership/control</td>
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<td>P4</td>
<td>Insufficient editorial independence</td>
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<td>P5</td>
<td>Insufficient independence of PSM</td>
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<td>P6</td>
<td>Insufficient pluralism of news agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>P7</td>
<td>Insufficient pluralism of distribution systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>Insufficient citizen activity and political impact in online media</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cultural Pluralism in the Media</strong></td>
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<td>C1</td>
<td>Insufficient media representation of European cultures</td>
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<td>C2</td>
<td>Insufficient media representation of national culture</td>
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<td>C3</td>
<td>Insufficient proportion of independent production</td>
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<td>C4</td>
<td>Insufficient proportion of in-house production</td>
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<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of world cultures</td>
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<td>C6</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of the various cultural and social groups in mainstream media content and services</td>
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<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of the various cultural and social groups in PSM</td>
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<td>C8</td>
<td>Insufficient system of minority and community media</td>
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<td>C9</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of different cultural and social groups in HR in the media sector</td>
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<td>C10</td>
<td>Limited accessibility by disabled people</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Geographic Pluralism in the Media</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>G1</td>
<td>High centralisation of the national media system</td>
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<td>G2</td>
<td>Insufficient system of regional and local media</td>
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<tr>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of regional and local communities in media content and services</td>
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<tr>
<td>G4</td>
<td>Insufficient representation of regional and local communities in HR in the media sector</td>
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<td>G5</td>
<td>Dominance of a limited number of information sources for local issues</td>
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<td>G6</td>
<td>Insufficient access to media and distribution systems due to geographic factors</td>
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**Three Types of Indicators** – Each risk is analysed by measuring a set of indicators on socio-demographic factors, the economic situation and/or the regulatory context. Hence, the MPM contains three types of indicators:

- **Economic indicators (E):** indicators on the economics of the media, assessing the number of media companies in a particular Member State (or within a linguistic region within a Member State), the number of newspapers and magazines per head of population, comparable indicators in relation to electronic media, together with ratios or other relevant indicators that would convey an understanding of the health of the sector, including profitability.

- **Socio-demographic indicators (S):** indicators on the socio-demographic situation, assessing the range of media available to citizens in different Member States and the socio-demographic factors having an impact on that range (including, for instance, geographic factors or the existence of professional associations of media workers / journalists).
• **Legal indicators (L):** indicators on the legal and regulatory context, assessing the presence and effective implementation of policies and legal instruments that promote media pluralism; these include a wide range of measures, going beyond the scope of ownership restrictions and ranging from state regulations and state policy measures over co-regulation to self-regulatory instruments (both at sector and company level).

*Three Risk Areas* – The three types of indicators can be divided into three different areas, corresponding with the major levels in the media value chain:

• **Supply (S):** the structures, processes, and outcomes of the production and packaging of content for various media types.

• **Distribution (D):** any mechanism, means, network used for distributing media content to the public, such as – in the case of print media – individual distribution systems, retail points, postal services, or – in the case of electronic media – electronic communication networks, services and associated facilities.

• **Use (U):** citizens’ abilities and skills to access and actually consume or actively use media; hence, this area includes the notion of accessibility of the media by all segments of society and looks at issues such as media literacy and digital skills, availability of subtitling and audio-description services.

*Three Border Values* – For each individual indicator, border values have been defined. These border values are measurement units and are expressed quantitatively (numbers, percentages, fractions, etc) or qualitatively (assessments). Based on an analysis of national and European policy documents and academic literature, to determine what is commonly perceived as positive or negative situations for media pluralism, border values have been divided into three ranges or zones, reflecting high risk, moderate risk or low risk:

• **High risk (associated with the colour red in the Monitor):** Threats to media pluralism occur and immediate actions or measures are required at short time.

• **Moderate risk (associated with the colour orange in the Monitor):** Immediate follow-up is necessary, actions or measures are possibly required, depending on the range between the orange and the red zone.

• **Low risk (associated with the colour green in the Monitor):** Safe zone, no immediate follow-up is required, no immediate actions are required.
PART 2. THE MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR: RISKS AND INDICATORS

BASIC DOMAIN

The basic domain consists of legal indicators that assess, firstly, the existence and effectiveness of a regulatory framework that guarantees the freedom of expression; secondly, regulatory safeguards for independent supervision of media markets; and thirdly, policy measures in the area of media literacy.

*Freedom of expression and freedom of the press* are basic human rights, pursuant to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. An effective protection of free speech is a prerequisite for pluralism and diversity in the media, implying that the public has access to a free media system, which overall, provides balanced, full and varied information.

Closely linked to freedom of expression are the regulatory safeguards for journalistic practice, including criteria to become a journalist, editorial independence and social protection of journalists. Legal restrictions, such as burdensome accreditation, registration or licensing schemes should not have an influence on who can or cannot become a journalist and editorial decisions should be made by media organisations on the basis of professional criteria. Journalists are only able to play their vital role of public watchdog\(^{17}\) when they can exercise their job independently from external influences. This ensures the public has access to a wide range of opinions, especially on matters of public interest. With this in mind, editorial statutes designed to prevent interference in information content by the owner of the media company or commercial entities are important. Member States should, while respecting the principle of editorial independence, encourage the media to supply the public with a diversity of media content capable of promoting critical debate and an increasingly broad democratic participation of persons belonging to all communities and generations. Furthermore, for a genuine pluralistic media landscape to be realized, it is crucial that journalists work under good social conditions.\(^{18}\)

Moreover, lack of diversity at the level of news gathering and content production also represents a threat to pluralism. This study considers diversity of information sources to be important for guaranteeing pluralism, on the basis of the assumption that the larger the number of information sources the more pluralistic and diverse the media output will be. To promote the development of free, independent and pluralist media, it is necessary for journalists to have the right not to disclose their sources of information.

In addition, journalists should be granted access to events for news reporting. It is incumbent on the press to report on all matters of general interest irrespective whether the outcome of a report turns out to generate positive or negative publicity for the organisation involved.

Secondly, the need for independent regulatory and competition authorities overlooking media markets has been underlined in various policy documents. The Council of Europe Recommendation No. R (2000) 23, on the independence and functions of regulatory authorities for the broadcasting sector, underlines

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that, given the danger of pressure from various forces or interests on members of regulatory authorities, the rules governing regulatory authorities for the broadcasting sector should be defined so as to protect them against any interference and to guarantee their effective independence. Members of these bodies should be appointed in a democratic and transparent manner. National legislation should include provisions entrusting the regulatory authorities with powers which enable them to fulfil their missions, as prescribed by national law, in an effective, independent and transparent manner. Governments should also ensure effective respect of the regulatory authorities’ independence, so as to protect them against any interference by political forces or economic interests. As the print sector has traditionally been left to self-regulate, attention should be paid to the existence and independence of self-regulatory bodies, such as Press Councils or Ombudsmen, consisting of external experts and overseeing disputes relating to reporting by the media and journalists.

Thirdly, media literacy is an important element in promoting pluralism. In particular when communication means are changing, it is necessary to make citizens aware of the many forms of media messages encountered in their everyday lives. Furthermore, media literacy should help citizens to recognise how the media filter their perceptions and beliefs, shape popular culture and influence personal choices. It should empower them with the critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills to make them judicious consumers and producers of information.

The main threats that were identified in this domain and that relate to the three aforementioned topics are:

- insufficient legal safeguards to protect freedom of expression;
- the regulatory system contains rules restricting free speech to such an extent that media pluralism is threatened;
- insufficient legal safeguards to protect freedom of information;
- the regulatory system contains restrictions on access to official information;
- when access to the journalistic profession is not open, the regulatory system that prescribes who may practice journalism contains requirements that are not transparent, subjective, disproportionate and discriminatory;
- the regulatory system does not contain guarantees against compulsory disclosure of journalists’ sources;
- the regulatory system cannot guarantee the editorial independence of the media;
- in case of change of ownership, the regulatory system does not grant journalists social protection;
- the regulatory system cannot guarantee access to events for news reporting for journalists;
- the regulatory framework does not sufficiently guarantee the independence of the regulatory and/or competition authorities;
- the media regulator has no effective monitoring and sanctioning power;
- there is no (representative) press council or comparable body monitoring journalistic activities;
- the Member State does not take active measures to promote media literacy among different groups of population.

These threats have been translated into indicators that aim to measure whether regulatory safeguards in these areas exist and are effective, exist but are not effective, or are non-existent. In the case of the assessment of policies or support measures (subsidies, for instance), the question that needs to be
answered is whether such policies and/or support measures are well developed, underdeveloped, or non-existing. Depending on the result of the measurement, the score for the indicator will show a low, medium or high risk for this particular aspect.

It should be noted that, in order to assess these indicators, not only should constitutional and statutory measures be taken into account, but also case law, and co- and/or self-regulatory measures (like ethical codes, editorial statutes, internal charters, etc.).

**PLURALISM OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL**

Pluralism of media ownership and control has been identified as a dimension of pluralism. It refers to the existence of media outlets and platforms owned, or controlled, by a plurality of independent and autonomous actors. It encompasses a plurality of actors at the level of media production, media supply and media distribution. As a consequence media ownership and control represent an operational risk domain for pluralism. In order to assess the existence and effectiveness of a regulatory framework and/or of economic measures to prevent undue concentration of ownership and control in the media sector the development of legal and economic indicators seemed to be appropriate.

The majority of EU Member States have adopted regulations in the area of media ownership, since limitations on the influence which a single person, company or group may have in one or more media sectors, as well as rules ensuring a sufficient number of diverse media outlets, are generally considered to be important for assuring pluralistic and democratic representation in the media.

Analysis of academic literature, and of existing legislations in the various Member States, shows that the objective of preventing undue concentration can be achieved in various ways, for example through imposing media ownership limits in sector-specific frameworks (either by imposing fixed thresholds, or by measuring the degree of media concentration in a more flexible way looking at the person or company’s position on the market or its opinion-forming power), licensing rules, (specific provisions in) competition rules (such as lowered thresholds for media markets), and transparency requirements.

The aim of the **legal indicators** is to assess whether there are regulatory safeguards in place which can prevent the undue concentration of ownership of, or control over, the media, which is the primary risk in the area of pluralism of ownership and control. Such safeguards may be found both in media legislation and in competition law, and may rely on various criteria (like number of licences, capital share, audience share, or revenues). The indicators do not prescribe the use of a certain system nor do they reflect a preference for certain criteria over others. It is up to the Member States to decide on the appropriate system in the light of the size and specific characteristics of national, regional or local media markets. Hence, the various regulatory systems in place are considered to be ‘functional equivalents’ for the interpretation of the indicators.

Examples of legal indicators are the existence of regulatory safeguards against (1) high concentration of ownership and/or control in television, radio, newspapers, magazines, (2) a high degree of cross-ownership between radio and television, as well as between print and audiovisual media, (3) the bottlenecks in distribution networks resulting from vertical integration, (4) high degree of integration between advertising and media activities, (5) non-transparency of ownership and control towards the public and the relevant authorities. What is measured is if such safeguards are either existent, exist but
are not effective, or are non existent. Depending on the result of the measurement, the score for the indicator will show a low, medium or high risk for the particular aspect considered.

In order to develop economic indicators with regard to pluralism of media ownership and control the areas to be assessed are supply aspects as well as distribution mechanisms and potential access to media. Classic economic measures involve competition, as already identified by the development of the legal indicators, and market power wielded by individual firms. Significant debates over measurement of pluralism using market power indicators exist. Market power measures are used to indicate the degree to which a firm or leading firms will be able to control quantity or price in a market, but efforts have been made to use these as evidence of media concentration and thus diminished pluralism.

Top4/Top8 analyses are often used to provide quick measures of market control based on the market activity of the top-four firms and top-eight firms in comparison to all firms in the market. When the top-four firms control more than 50 percent of a market, or the top-eight enterprises account for more than 70 percent of a market, undesirable concentration or control is said to be evident. Because this method typically relies on national or state market data, it subsumes all national conditions and will usually understate concentration in local or regional markets where fewer competitors typically operate.

The Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index (HHI) is a more robust indicator of market power developed for competition law analysis and is used by some to measure concentration in media markets. Unfortunately it is not a very effective measure of issues of pluralism in national media markets because it is a measure of economic concentration whose statistical construction assumes a number of competitors serving a specific geographic market, conditions that are more likely in other industries than in media. The indicator is sometimes applied at the national level by those who want to measure concentration of media ownership, but this use ignores the central geographic market issue of HHI analysis and the fact that many media serve regional or local markets and do not compete on the national level. HHI works best in analysis of media when it is applied to proposed mergers, but it rarely elucidates general discussion of media plurality because television, radio, and newspaper markets tend toward monopolistic or oligopolistic competition and the index provides limited insight under those conditions.

The limitations of HHI have been recognised by some media policy makers. The Federal Communications Commission in the United States created an alternative measure — the Diversity Index (DI) — as an indicator of risks to pluralism in local markets when cross-media ownership was involved. The diversity index, however, was rejected by the courts and highly criticised in Congressional hearings in relation to its assumptions, weighting method, and application. Several alternative means of assessing pluralism using

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HII based measures have since been suggested, including the Noam Index, but these too have been disputed and none have been widely accepted.²³

Because they are still useful to this risk-based application, although they must be interpreted with care, this project incorporates the use of Top4/Top8 analysis and HII analysis among nearly 60 different economic indicators related to pluralism. In this paper the market power indicators are combined with other indicators to determine the risk level for specific pluralism dimensions and the effects of factors such as national size are taken into account.

Indicators were reviewed by correspondents in 19 countries to determine whether they were viable and whether data existed in their nations to make the measurements. This provided insights in relation to indicators which are most likely to be measurable, and those which are unlikely to be measurable. The first set of indicators was then chosen as key indicators. Examples of such indicators are (1) ownership concentration, (2) audience and readership concentration – both measured using the top4/top 8 analysis, as well as (3) the number of sectors in which the top 8 owners are active.

Concentration is considered high when the major 4 owners (top 4) have a market share of above 50%, medium when market share is between 25 and 50%, and low when it is under 25%.

**PLURALISM OF MEDIA TYPES AND GENRES**

Pluralism of media types and genres has been identified as a further dimension of pluralism. Pluralism of media types refers to the co-existence of media with different mandates and sources of financing, notably commercial, community, and public service media, within and across media sectors such as print, television, radio and internet. Pluralism of media genres refers to the diversity in media with regard to media functions, including providing information, education, and entertainment.

The legal indicators for the risk domain ‘pluralism of media types and genres’ provide an overview of the existence and the effectiveness of legal and policy measures that aim to foster this ‘operational’ dimension of media pluralism. The goal of these measures is to indirectly support pluralism by ensuring the co-existence of different media types and different media genres. The former refers to commercial, public, and community media at all levels: national, regional, and local. The latter term is used to describe a diversity of media in relation to media functions, such as information, education, entertainment, as well as audiences, including children, adults, and the elderly. Social cohesion and integration of all communities, social groups, categories, and generations should be actively promoted. In this context, special attention has to be paid to the public service media which, according to a definition recognised by numerous international policy documents,²⁴ serves as a cornerstone of democracy (on the

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role of PSB: see Harcourt 2008, p. 261). The fundamental elements of the public service media that have to be present to achieve the goal of diverse media are non-partisan and non-profit character, public-service remit, national coverage and national mandate. The mission of the public service media is to fulfil a nation’s broadcasting needs and serve all regions, cultures and linguistic groups. For this result to be achieved, the public service remit should be clearly defined in law. It usually includes presentation of politically balanced information, as well as provision of comprehensive news coverage, and a forum for public debate.

The absence of or insufficient protection of certain media types and genres, the disappearance of some media genres from the free-to-air TV, the absent or insufficient funding of PSM, the insufficient engagement of PSM in new media, as well as the lack of, or unclear, definition in law of the PSM’s remit have been recognized as threats to pluralism of media types and genres. Such threats have been translated into legal indicators that aim to measure whether regulatory safeguards in these areas exist and are effective, exist but are not effective, or are non-existent. Depending on the result of the measurement, the score for the indicator will show a low, medium or high risk for this particular aspect.

It should be noted that, in order to assess these indicators, usually not only should statutory measures, and case law, be taken into account, but also co- and/or self-regulatory measures (like editorial statutes, internal charters, self imposed quota, convention with governments etc.).

**Economic indicators** have been developed to control the lack of sufficient market resources to support the range of media, which in turn causes a lack of or underrepresentation of certain media types. Consumer and advertising spending on, as well as public financing of, different media determine the sustainability of the medium and therefore the range of media present in the market. This threatens the diversity of media types available to the audience. Key indicators to detect such risks are the measurement of (1) audience parity and (2) financial parity between commercial and public service media, (3) the percentage of GDP per capita required by an individual to obtain TV or radio reception, to subscribe to a newspaper, a magazine, or to an internet service, as well as (4) the ratio of consumers’ and advertisers’ spending on different media per capita compared to the GDP per capita.

If within one country the audience share or the financing of commercial broadcasters is below 20% of the total audience share or total financing, then the risk of having a lack of or underrepresentation of media types is considered as very high. If the audience share or financing is between the range of 20 and 35%, then the risk is considered medium, while if it is above 35% the risk is considered as low or non-existent. Further, if within one country the percentage of GDP per capita required in order to have access to media is above 10%, then the risk of a lack of or underrepresentation of media types is considered as very high. If this percentage lies between the range of 5 and 10%, the risk is considered medium, while if it is below 5% the risk is non-existent. A more appropriate variable to be assessed here could be the total consumer spending per capita, however data on this variable are less available compared to the GDP per capita.

With regard to the ratio of consumers’ and advertisers’ spending, if within one country the percentage of GDP per capita spent on one medium is below 1%, then the risk of insufficient market resources to support the range of media is very high. If the percentage of GDP lies between 1 and 2.99%, the risk is considered as medium, while if it is above 3% the risk is considered as non-existent.

Threats to media genres and functions include the lack of or underrepresentation or dominance of some functions, as well as the missing of certain functions. Main indicators to identify these risks are the ratio of news/public affairs, educational and entertainment programming on the different media. If within one
country the proportion of entertainment broadcasting programs or magazines is above 90% of the total programs or magazines, then the risk of having a lack of or underrepresentation of media genres is considered to be very high. If this proportion lies between 75 and 90%, the risk is considered medium, and if the proportion is below 75% the risk is considered low or non existent.

In order to detect risks to pluralism of media types and genres the development of socio-demographic indicators has been considered important. The proportion of employees dedicated to new media complement the legal and economic perspective when measuring for instance the absence or underrepresentation of PSM in new media. A further threat to pluralism of media types and genres is represented by an insufficient attention paid by online media to public participation. It is important that online media provide platforms and services to allow and enable their audience to provide feedback and express recommendations or complaints in the online public sphere. Thus, an assessment of the availability of online media offering space for publicly available comments and complaints is incorporated in the area of socio-demographic indicators, on the external supply side of media types.

The indicators are measured as follows. When full time and part time employees within the new media division of public service broadcasters represent less than 3% of the total number of employees, the risk of absence of underrepresentation of PSM in new media is considered high. If the ratio lies between 3 and 5%, the risk is considered as medium, while if it is above 5% the risk is considered low. With regard to the proportion of online offering media space for publicly available comments and complaints, if it is below 50% the risk of insufficient attention to public participation and therefore the threat to pluralism of media genres is considered high. If the proportion is between 50 and 75%, then the risk is medium, while if it is above 75% the risk is very low or non existent.

### POLITICAL PLURALISM IN THE MEDIA

The way how political representation and political process is developed in democratic societies, and what role media and journalism play in shaping political communication, depends from different circumstances, including political traditions. Still, the role of the media in making politics (and society) visible, in providing information, analysis, forums for debate and shared democratic culture, is beyond dispute (Dahlgren, 2009).

Taking that into account our attempt to assess political domain of risk for media pluralism and identify potential threats in that domain examines complex set of structural circumstances regarding access and control, but also underline dynamic components embedded in media discourses, journalism practices and struggle for independence.

According to our working definition political pluralism in the media refers to fair and diverse representation of and expression by (i.e. passive and active access) various political and ideological groups, including minority viewpoints and interests, in the media. This definition is thus twofold: firstly it encompasses the capacity and possibility of all social segments, with their likely diverse political/ideological views and interests, to address/reach the public by means of media (whether

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26 Within the scope of this definition of political pluralism, ‘social segments’ is to be understood beyond what is included in the cultural pluralism aspects of social features. Thus, ‘social segments’ include social groups with shared
owned by, or affiliated to them, or owned by third parties), and secondly it designates the spectrum of political and ideological viewpoints, opinions and interests covered by and represented in the media.

By means of its potential to actively represent all these segments, political pluralism is an essential aspect of media pluralism and serves as a vital (pre)condition for the safeguarding and performance of any democratic society and for accomplishing informed citizenship.

Political pluralism may be viewed and assessed from various perspectives: internal pluralism (content, supply side), external pluralism (ownership, supply side) or audience pluralism (citizens, users’ side).

- **Internal political pluralism (at the level of media supply/content)** can be understood as referring to the diversity of political/ideological viewpoints covered by and expressed through various media programmes, as well as the extent to which media reflect views of entire political spectrum of a society.

- **External political pluralism** refers to political affiliation of media owners and it encompasses the degree of (in)dependence of owners from political affiliation, political action/inaction, governmental financial support and managerial control as well as the (pre)dominance of certain types of political ownership and/or pressure on specific media outlets, for example TV and newspapers rather than radio or internet.

- **Audience or users’ political pluralism** refers to citizens’ availability (in the sense of willingness or initiative) and ability (meaning skills) to access, critically asses, consume or actively make use of media by extracting, analysing and/or adhering to particular political beliefs and opinions being propagated through the media.

For an effective analysis of the political pluralism aspect of media pluralism, the three dimensions should be regarded as interconnected and must be taken into consideration and assessed at the level of their interactions and reciprocal influence rather than separately. Also, references to political actors should include traditional political actors, such as governments, political parties, politicians, political advisers and professionals, but also non-traditional actors, like non-governmental organisations, activists, interest groups and unions.

In our study the following risks were identified in the political domain of media pluralism:

- political bias in the media;
- political bias in the media during election campaigns;
- excessive politicisation of media ownership/control;
- insufficient editorial independence;
- insufficient independence of Public Service Media (PSM);
- insufficient pluralism of news agencies;
- insufficient pluralism of distribution systems, and

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social characteristics such as class, age or other which are not relevant for the cultural pluralism dimension but form the basis for the creation of specific political interests, engagement and organisation (for instance trade unions, youth organisations etc.).
- insufficient citizens activity and political impact in online media.

The 37 indicators for the risk domain ‘political pluralism’ assess the existence and effectiveness of regulatory safeguards on the one hand, and structures and practices on the other hand, which ensure access to the media by the various political actors and groups, and enable the public to become informed in a correct and complete way on the wide variety of political viewpoints within society.

The risk of political bias can be mitigated through both structural and behavioural safeguards. Examples of the former include rules ensuring the fair representation of the various political groups in management or board functions of media companies or media councils, where these include political representatives. Behavioural rules can prescribe, for instance, fair, balanced and impartial political reporting. Council of Europe Recommendation (2007)2, on media pluralism and diversity of media content, recommends that member states encourage the media to supply the public with a diversity of media content capable of promoting critical debate and an increasingly broad democratic participation of persons belonging to all communities and generations. However, the Recommendation, by way of a disclaimer, states that they should do so while respecting the principle of editorial independence. A careful balance should be struck between stimulating political pluralism and respecting the editorial independence of media outlets.

Concerns about political bias increase during periods of electoral campaigning. Misrepresentation in, or lack of access to, the media preceding the moment at which political power is redistributed is likely to make a more important impact. This explains the existence of specific regulatory safeguards in election campaigns, such as impartiality obligations for private broadcasters, rules on political advertising, and free airtime on PSM. The risk of excessive politicisation of media ownership/control is usually tackled through legislative measures ensuring the separation of political and media power (for instance, rules obliging broadcasters to be independent from political parties). Protection against undue interference by political forces is ensured through (sometimes self-) regulatory safeguards for editorial independence.

The main threats that were identified in the risk domain ‘political pluralism’ from a legal/regulatory perspective are:

- the regulatory framework cannot prevent excessive or exclusive representation or promotion of the political beliefs and ideology of the governing party (ies) in the media;
- the regulatory framework cannot prevent excessive journalist and editorial preference and positive/propagandistic coverage of selected political parties and ideological opinions;
- the regulatory framework system cannot prevent absent or insufficient media representation of particular political or ideological opinions and positions in society, including minority or legal but extremist ideas on the political spectrum;
- the regulatory framework does not guarantee fair allocation of media space to political opposition groupings,

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- the regulatory framework does not provide adequate remedies to react against misrepresentation in the media (such as a right of reply);
- the regulatory framework cannot prevent excessive presence of media financially dominated and managed by political figures, political parties;
- the regulatory framework cannot prevent excessive political pressure on programming due to political ownership and/or pressure on specific media outlets at national /local level;
- the regulatory and institutional system cannot prevent the absence of particular political groups and ideological communities from public debate and elections (voting) resulting from underserved and underrepresented minority points of view in the media.

These threats have been translated into indicators that aim to measure whether regulatory safeguards in these areas exist and are effective, exist but are not effective, or are non-existent. Depending on the result of the measurement, the score for the indicator will show a low, medium or high risk for this particular aspect.

It should be noted that, in order to assess these indicators, not only should constitutional and statutory measures be taken into account, but also case law, and co- and/or self-regulatory measures (like ethical codes, editorial statutes, internal charters, etc.).

Risks for political domain of media pluralism have been approached not only from a legal/regulatory perspective, but also by exploring structures, processes, and outcomes of the production and distribution of media content from economic and socio-demographic perspectives.

In that context a risk of political bias in the media is indicated by excessive or exclusive representation or promotion of the political ideas and interests of the governing party (parties) in the media, by excessive editorial preference and positive/negative propagandistic coverage of selected political parties and views, by absence or insufficient allocation of media space allocated to political opposition groupings and restrictions to right-of-reply and promotion of alternative political programmes. It is also indicated by lack of investigative reporting disclosing hidden actions of various political actors.

Political affiliation of media owner matters. Not only domination of media owner(s) affiliated to one political group pose a risk for political domain of media pluralism, but also an excessive state ownership in the media and a non-transparency of data on political affiliation of media owners. Discrimination in distribution of state advertisements is also relevant for indicating risk in this domain.

Ability of media professionals to practice professional standards and values with regard to political reporting in the media is another important aspect of political domain of media pluralism. Are there representative professional associations to negotiate labour relations and mechanisms for exercise of editorial independence between media employers and media professionals? Are there excessive conflicts between editorial staff and media owners due to attempts of political instrumentalisation of the media?

Risk assessment for political domain of media pluralism in our study puts emphasize also on level of independence of PSM considering appointment procedure and composition of its governing bodies, mechanisms of its financing and mechanisms of appointments and dismissal of key editorial and management personnel.
Politically affiliated distribution networks for print, radio and television, if apply discriminatory measures, affect media pluralism, therefore examination of such indicators is part of risk domain ‘political pluralism’ in our monitoring tool.

Citizens, their opportunities and competences for informed political engagement and participation, have been in focus of recent debates about media pluralism, especially in those exploring importance of media literacy and the role of the Internet in politics and democracy.

The Media Pluralism Monitor in its risk domain “political pluralism” consider activity of citizens and citizens’ groups in using online media for posting their content relevant for political debate as an important indicator for media pluralism.

**CULTURAL PLURALISM**

Cultural media pluralism refers to fair and diverse representation of and expression by (active and passive access) the various cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic groups, disabled people and women in the media. It comprises plurality and variety of themes and voices brought to the media, socialisation through multiple forms of media access and participation and representation of diverse values, viewpoints and roles, in which media users belonging to various communities can recognize themselves.

Cultural pluralism in the media is a highly complex concept, therefore indication of threats and risk areas encompasses a number of dimensions. It can be conceived and interpreted in a socio-demographic sense to refer to proportional representation of different communities in the media (reflective dimension). A policy or normative dimension would indicate the level of public recognition and support for different cultural communities to maintain and express their identities through the media and communication services with an emphasis of diversity as integration (whereby the mutual interaction between the diverse cultures in media is promoted) or diversity as distinctiveness (whereby the preserving the distinctive character of particular cultures in the media is the main goal).

When applying the concept of cultural pluralism to the media, different levels of media environment (system as a whole, media organisation, contents and services, human resources and professional practices, patterns of use) bear significance. Media systems can be characterised by the primary dimensions of scale, centralisation, diversity, but also by certain organising principles manifested in the degree of public regulation and control (McQuail, 1992). At a macro level of the national media system as whole (and comparatively across EU), it is important to detect trends of the development of private, public as well as minority, community or autonomous media. Culturally diversified media services can be examined through the content analysis but also in the broader context, including the place of production, employment structures, outreach.

The notion of risk to cultural pluralism in the media seems to equally mirror the complexity: not reducible to the product of probability of occurrence, it can rather be viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon (Beck, 2006). Potential threats to cultural pluralism in the media include:

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• **content level**: absent, insufficient or stereotypical media representation of particular cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic groupings in society, including communities based on gender, age, disabilities; threat to national, European cultural identity and world cultural heritage perceived as absent, insufficient or highly disproportionate representation of national and European media production as well as insufficient coverage of world (non-European and non-US) cultures, regions, issues,

• **system level**: absence or insufficient system of minority and community media, including in particular: the lack of media outlets serving different cultural communities; the lack of investment in minority and community media; entry barriers for minority and community media by cable operators and other platform providers; marginal reach; lack of public support measures aiming at compensation of disadvantaged position of minorities as media users,

• **PSM provision level**: absence or insufficient representation of communities defined by language, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, disabilities in the public service media,

• **human resources level**: absent or insufficient representation of journalists and media executives from minority, ethnic, religious, linguistic groups, etc. in a society,

• **accessibility and use level**: low accessibility of contents and services by minority or underprivileged communities (e.g. disabled people).

## CONTENT LEVEL

Formulation of indicators in the area of cultural pluralism, especially as regards contents and services level, is guided by two conceptual differences. One approach emphasizes that cultural diversity is a key value shared by all Europeans, nurturing a European awareness and a feeling of collective belonging, intrinsically and conditionally linked to the progress of the Union (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2005).31 Herein, ‘cultural diversity’ is understood largely in terms of variety of national cultures (Levy, 2001: 42) and functions as a European cultural projection – as an effort to place recognizable images and representations of European culture (through the promotion of European works, co-productions, works made by independent producers and national production) in the global sphere. A set of relevant risk indicators following this understanding would aim to denote an absence or insufficient proportion of European or national production.

The second approach stresses the sense of a national, regional, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, while the main focus gravitates not only toward ‘cultural canons’, but also the lifestyles, values and languages of specific social groups and their socio-cultural heritage (Ader, 2006: 2),32 including minorities, women and disabled people. Analogically, a set of relevant risk indicators following this understanding would aim to denote absent or disproportionate media representation of religious, linguistic, ethnic groupings in society, including communities based on gender, age, disabilities.

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SYSTEM LEVEL

Accommodation of cultural pluralism in media services and practices depends on the shape and structure of a media environment in a given society, and in particular, on weights and relations between its key functional elements: private/public/community media; mainstream/minority media; generalist/culturally specific media. Minority and community media play an especially important role in this constellation, because they underpin cultural alternatives which media diversity is supposed to deliver. The use of minority and community media potential in this respect, however, depends heavily on government policies of regulation, support measures and control. Thus, a set of indicators in this area would aim to detect a probability of threat to external diversity of a media system perceived as an absence or insufficient system of minority and community media, including insufficient support measures, the lack of/or insufficient frequencies provided to minority and community media, and the entry barriers for minority and community media by cable operators and other platform providers.

PSM PROVISION LEVEL

Public service media are often singled out from other media outlets in its normative task to ensure impartial, comprehensive and quality information contributing to the formation of well informed citizenship (Rumphorst, 2006) embracing diverse cultural communities and ways of identification. This is well transposed to programming obligations of PSM in most European countries which frequently require a transmission of a specific proportion of culture-related programmes, promotion of local culture and works, and often broadcasting of programmes representing all the regions and minority cultures in a given country (Ader, 2006: 7). Moreover, internal pluralism is reflected the PSM’s normative attempt to meet audience’s needs as ‘complete human beings’ (Jakubowicz, 2006), offering a full range of services generating different collective identities (including membership in different social and cultural groups, and minorities). Hence, the relevant set of indicators might aim to detect an absence or insufficient representation of particular cultural groupings in a society by public service media contents and services, as well as an absence, decreasing or insufficient representation of PSM contents and services in minority languages.

HUMAN RESOURCES LEVEL

There is a general agreement that a workforce (which more accurately reflects the make-up of a society) inevitably produces richer and more relevant output. This in turn, makes media services more compelling and attracts a wider audience (BBC et al., 2002). A great variety of measures have been taken in numerous EU countries to promote cultural diversity in the workplace (including media organisations), yet the implementation of projects is still limited and their success is ambivalent or not easily accountable due to a lack of systematic evaluation schemes (Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung,

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34 Supra, n.32.
Most of diversity practices are based on diversity monitoring – a systematic collection of the data on ethnic, national, gender composition of the human resources in order to ensure fair representation in a workplace of persons from diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Relevant set of risk indicators in this area would not aim at imposing arithmetical proportion of different groups in media organizational structures. The main objective would rather seek to detect trends and tendencies in journalistic and media professional employment and to indicate serious discrepancies of representation, such as an absence or minimal representation of certain groups over a period of time.

ACCESSIBILITY AND USE LEVEL

The traditional concept of media pluralism has been recently challenged by the reconfiguration of media systems resulting from the impact of digital revolution, convergence and multiplicity of media platforms and services. In this new and very dynamic context, cultural media pluralism presents a potential full usage of which depends on individual users, their ability to access and interact with the media services according to their cultural interests and needs. A relevant set of indicators in this area might seek to denote insufficient accessibility of contents and services by underserved communities (e.g. disabled people, minorities).

GEOGRAPHICAL PLURALISM

Geographical media pluralism refers to fair and proportional representation of and expression by (active and passive access) local and regional communities in the media. It comprises geographical (local, regional) plurality and variety of themes and voices brought to the media, socialisation through multiple forms of interactions, and representation of local and regional values and viewpoints.

Such pluralism may be read through the spatial dimension (media contents are produced and distributed within a local and regional community) or the social dimension (media contents and services address unique needs and interests of local and regional communities) (Napoli, 2007).

Geographical pluralism in the media is a complex concept, therefore indication of threats and risk areas encompasses a number of dimensions. At a macro level of the national media system as whole (and comparatively across EU), it is important to detect trends of decentralization and relative strength of local and regional media in their operating environments, and across a longer period of time. Locally oriented media contents and services may be examined in the broader context, including the local production, employment, outreach.

Accordingly, a relevant set of risk indicators in the area of geographical media pluralism might aim to demonstrate elements of geographical pluralism at different levels. Interactions which develop between various criteria should be evaluated carefully in a geographical context of each country, including consideration of such factors as: population size, density of settlement, proportion of urban population, population size of a capital city, Gross National Product per inhabitant, administration arrangements. Growing or high centralization of a particular media system might result from significant concentration of

37 Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung (2005) Cultural diversity and Mainstreaming in Employment, Study commissioned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

the population in a capital agglomeration. On the other hand, relative strength of the regional and local media might be affected by decentralized administrative structure or subsidy system for regional and local media.

The measurement within a longer time frame allows to follow the dynamics of geographical diversity and extract a trend of its development. Variability across a longer period can be especially relevant for media system indicators.

Threats to geographical media pluralism include:

- **system level**: absence or insufficient system of local and regional media, including in particular: the of lack independent media outlets serving local and regional communities; the lack of investment in local and regional media; entry barriers for local and regional media by cable operators and other platform providers; marginal reach; lack of public support measures; high and growing centralization of a media system on a national scale; high and growing concentration of local and regional media ownership,

- **content level**: absent or insufficient media representation of local and regional communities, insufficient or decreasing local and regional production,

- **human resources level**: absent or insufficient representation of journalists and media executives from local and regional communities,

- **PSM provision level**: absence or insufficient representation of local and regional communities in the public media.

## SYSTEM LEVEL

A structure of a media system as a whole demonstrates a relative strength and importance of local and regional media for their users. A prominent role of regional media, and the press in particular, in preserving and fostering media pluralism has been recognised in numerous scholarly works (Drok 1998, Alger 1998, Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Rich and well-developed regional media may compensate a lack of external diversity on highly concentrated national markets. A relative strength of local and regional news media in a particular media system does not only indicate the level of its decentralisation, but also shows a potential to offer information from diverse sources for local and regional communities. A presence of competing media in local and regional markets serves as an important indicator of media diversity and pluralism, especially when referred to a regional press system. Rich local ownership patterns (private, state, local administration, media staff, NGO, church, etc.) demonstrate closer reflection of relevant society’s variations in terms of institutional composition. Varied types of media ownership often imply more diversified media functions, and consequently also more diverse contents and services for their users. Hence, a relevant set of risk indicators in this area might aim to denote a probability of threat to external diversity of a media system perceived as high and growing centralization of a media system on.

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a national scale; high and growing concentration of local and regional media ownership, an absence or insufficient system of local and regional media (in particular: the lack of independent media outlets serving local and regional communities; the lack of investment in local and regional media; entry barriers for local and regional media by cable operators and other platform providers; marginal reach; lack of support measures).

**CONTENT LEVEL**

Geographical pluralism does not only refer to availability of information on local issues from diverse sources, but also to proportional and fair media representation of local and regional communities, thereby bringing different perspectives and backgrounds into the public debate at the local and regional level. The risk of absent or insufficient media representation of local and regional communities in national media might either result from absence of **locally-oriented** or **locally-produced** contents and services. A relevant set of risk indicators in this area might aim to denote a probability of threat to media content diversity and fair representation of regional and local communities.

**PSM PROVISION**

Most European states place heavier obligations on public-service media than they do on commercial stations with regard to the promotion of localism and regionalism. Public-service media in most European countries are obliged to transmit a specific proportion of programmes related to promotion of local culture and works, or of relevance to all the regions in a given country (Ader, 2006). These provisions are openly applied on behalf of smaller – local communities, which are often unable, for economic reasons, to gain adequate access and representation in a media system. A relevant set of indicators in this area might aim to assess the effective implementation of regulatory safeguards guaranteeing local orientation and local production of content delivered by PSM channels and services.

**HUMAN RESOURCES LEVEL**

Finally, a workforce composition and especially, the balance of journalists and media executives based in local communities as well as the organizational structure of a particular media outlet indicates to what extent geographically varied experiences and interests are reflected in media performance and modes of production. Accordingly, a relevant set of risk indicators might aim at denoting a probability of threat to diversity of media internal practices and perspectives used for the production of media contents, perceived as absent or insufficient representation of journalists and media executives from local and regional communities.

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40 *Supra*, n.32.
PART 3. IMPLEMENTING THE MEDIA PLURALISM MONITOR

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As a standardised monitoring tool, the MPM should be applied in an identical manner in all EU Member States, even though these countries may differ significantly in several dimensions. However, to establish consistent assessment criteria and ensure comparability across Europe, the MPM utilises the same set of risks and indicators, and applies the same border values (for high, medium, low risk) to all Member States. Only one exception has been made to account for the size and wealth of the market: on the basis of the population number in combination with GDP/capita, a country will be classified as either ‘large’ or ‘small’ with ‘high’ or ‘low’ GDP/capita, and the border values for a number of indicators will be automatically adjusted according to this classification. Country profiles—national characteristics regarding socio-demographic, economic contexts and types of media markets—must be taken into account through the *ex post* interpretation of results in which there is scope to clarify differences in relevance of certain risks and indicators.

Interpretation of the results is therefore not simply a matter of mechanistically listing the red (and orange) zones and concluding that all measures should be taken at any cost to remedy the ‘blinking spot on the radar’. It is important to interpret the results in the light of:

- Interaction between indicators and between risks;
- Interaction between indicator types;
- Country profiles.

INTERACTION BETWEEN INDICATORS AND BETWEEN RISKS

When interpreting MPM results, the following interactions should be taken into account:

- the particular indicator and its interaction with other indicators for the same risk,
- the particular risk and its relation to other risks within the same risk domain and other risk domains as appropriate.

EXAMPLE 1: CULTURAL PLURALISM

Cultural pluralism is a complex media policy concept, and therefore the indication of threats and risk areas encompasses a number of dimensions. Substitutability and complementarity of indicators must be carefully considered. At the level of the national media system as a whole (and comparatively across the EU), it is important to detect trends of the development of both public service media as well as minority, community or autonomous media. Culturally diversified media contents and services should be examined in a broader context including the place of production, employment structures, and outreach. An examination of some indicators, for example, media system and workforce indicators, at different points of time can capture how these measures vary across time.

EXAMPLE 2: GEOGRAPHICAL PLURALISM
In the domain of geographical pluralism (again a complex media policy concept encompassing a number of dimensions), it is important to detect trends of decentralisation at the level of the national media system as well as the relative strength of local and regional media during a longer period of time. Locally oriented media content and services should be examined in the broader context of local production, employment, and outreach.

**INTERACTION BETWEEN INDICATOR TYPES**

It is important to note that the indicator type should be considered carefully before drawing conclusions from negative (red) scores for individual indicators. This is especially relevant for the legal indicators: a critical score on a legal indicator assumes particular relevance in those situations where the corresponding economic and/or socio-demographic indicators for the same risk have also received a negative score (as a rule of thumb we suggest at least 50% red or 75% orange).

In short, users should not infer an inevitable need for regulatory intervention on the basis of the red score of a single legal indicator alone. Drawing such a conclusion prematurely in a situation where the economic and/or socio-demographic context is not problematic from the perspective of media pluralism, indicated by a majority of positive (green) scores obtained for the corresponding indicators, may lead to overregulation.

**COUNTRY ‘PROFILES’**

To interpret MPM results, users may also rely on country profiles which describe common characteristics of certain countries on the basis of a specific variable such as the size of media markets, the life cycle of media markets, the size of population belonging to minorities, the separation between political and media power, the concentration of population in urban areas, and the purchasing power of a country’s population.

Profiles allow the putting of results into social, economic, and political contexts, and comparisons of countries sharing the same profile. The profiles call attention to important, in some cases problematic areas, and measures that can increase or decrease the relevance of those areas. Profiles may also offer analytical tools to differentiate between critical and non-critical needs in order to counterbalance high risks for pluralism.

**PROFILE 1: SMALL VERSUS LARGE MEDIA MARKETS**

Within this profile countries are grouped according to the size of their media market measured in terms of total audience, or alternatively total revenues. A media market is defined as small when the population is under 20 million people, or alternatively the total revenues are up to $150 billion. Media markets exceeding 20 million people, or alternatively $150 billion in revenues are considered medium or large.

**PROFILE 2: DEVELOPING VERSUS MATURE MEDIA MARKETS AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS**

Within this profile countries are grouped according to the life cycle of their media economies and related regulatory frameworks.
PROFILE 3: COUNTRIES WITH SMALL VERSUS LARGE SIZE OF POPULATION BELONGING TO AN ETHNIC OR NATIONAL MINORITY

Within this profile countries are grouped according to the size of the ethnic minority present in the country. The MPM considers a minority representing less than 2% of the entire population small, while a minority exceeding 5% of the entire population is considered large.

PROFILE 4: COUNTRIES WITH/WITHOUT CONSTITUTIONAL SEPARATION BETWEEN POLITICAL AND MEDIA POWER, OR WITH/WITHOUT TRADITION OF POLITICAL PARALLELISM AND MEDIA WITH DISTINCT POLITICAL ORIENTATION

This profile groups countries according to the degree of separation between political and media power, and the tradition of partisan media.41

PROFILE 5: COUNTRIES WITH HIGH VERSUS LOW POPULATION DENSITY IN URBAN AREAS

Within this profile countries are grouped according to the density of their population around urban areas, or around the capital compared to other cities or other parts of the country. Population density is considered high when there are more than 200 inhabitants/km²; it is considered low for values of less than 100 inhabitants/km².42

PROFILE 6: LOW VERSUS HIGH PURCHASING POWER

Within this profile countries are grouped according to the purchasing power of the residents. According to the World Bank’s purchasing power parity list, the average purchasing power in the EU is around $11,000, therefore below that level the purchasing power of a country can be considered as low.

PROFILE 7: TERRESTRIAL TV RECEPTION VERSUS CABLE OR MULTI-PLATFORM COUNTRIES

The predominant means of television reception is likely to affect the level of pluralism one can expect on a particular platform. Some countries are typical ‘cable countries’, while in other countries terrestrial networks are still the most important means of television distribution and reception. This factor is important to interpret correctly the results for indicators which look at means of distribution. A negative score for an indicator focusing on one platform only (usually terrestrial reception), should be interpreted in the light of the availability of alternative platforms, like satellite or ADSL.


42 Cf. UN World Prospects Report.
ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MPM

EXPERT PANELS

The MPM is a public domain tool that should be utilised in the public interest. As it is open for use by a wide number of stakeholders, it is recommended that several stakeholders participate in the implementation process. Media regulators, NGOs, and academic experts should ideally collaborate in a fruitful division of labour. In the process of implementation, major tasks include ensuring access to databases that have been built by national regulatory agencies, international organisations and academic research centres; systematic data collection; the accumulation of new data in original research; processing data into the MPM; and the interpretation of results in national case studies as well as European, regional, and profile-based comparative perspectives. From the second cycle of implementation (see below) longitudinal perspectives are added.

In organisational terms, the need for different types of expertise may be met by expert panels. Such panels should include experts who are familiar with specific aspects of media pluralism across Europe (in the legal, socio-demographic and economic areas) as well as national experts who can access national data sources and conduct research in the respective national languages.

SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION AND UPDATE

Our research team suggests regular, biennial implementation (for the first time, in 2010 and followed up in 2012). In the period of two years, data could be systematically collected, the trends in media pluralism and related risks could be identified, and a proper time period could be secured for substantial discussion of results. In terms of the time required for data collection, a realistic estimate is that for a first implementation round, data could be collected and national reports produced in a period ranging between six and ten months. For subsequent rounds of implementation, the period of data collection and producing of national reports will be significantly less (our estimate is four to six months). Where new data have to be produced, the timeframe may have to be adjusted in line with the special requirements that this imposes.

The research team also suggests regular review and update of the MPM itself. On the basis of the experiences of the biennial implementation process and its results, as well as regular surveys of the impact of new technological, market, social or policy trends that are relevant for media pluralism regular reviews of the MPM should be conducted. This may entail review of all or some indicators, as well as research methodologies and related data sources. In the process of review the relevance of each indicator and its corresponding methodology should be assessed in order to allow for necessary changes in the research methodology.

In a similar vein, trends in technological, market, social or policy development may make it necessary to include new indicators in the MPM. This may be especially important in the area of new media, where technological breakthroughs in hardware and software, new media genres, markets and business models as well as novel modes of social communications lead to massive changes in media use and restructuring of audiences. Such changes may require the introduction of new indicators in the MPM to the extent that
appropriate and reliable methods are available. The development of new indicators and methods of measurement should be collaborative in nature and not be forced onto the MPM update cycle, considering that premature adoption of new indicators may have negative implications for the integrity of the MPM. In terms of organisation, the revision and update of the MPM should be conducted in a transparent way, by a panel of independent experts representing various types of expertise, disciplines, and regions in the EU, in cooperation with national experts, and representatives of media regulators.

In conclusion, a biennial implementation cycle could include measurement rounds in 2010 and 2012 to provide for a regular update of the indicators and to gather sufficient experience with practical assessment and possible data generation problems. In the run-up to a third implementation cycle, the methods could then be reviewed and the discussions necessary to ensure comparability of the measurement tools to be used across jurisdictions conducted. These discussions should be timed to occur in parallel to or shortly after the data collection process for the second implementation period to ensure that possible revisions to indicators would be measurable at the onset of the third implementation period in 2014.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We consider the Media Pluralism Monitor as a first step in developing an EU-wide standardised monitoring tool for detecting and dealing with societal risks in the area of media pluralism. Although the prototype will need further fine-tuning in the light of comments from a wide range of stakeholders, including regulators, NGOs, market actors and academics, we believe it has the potential to offer a substantial contribution to advancing the debate on media pluralism by increasing transparency about the state of media pluralism in Member States.

It offers a realistic solution to the problem of reconciling the demands of comparability between Member States and taking account of national specificities: while applying an identical set of indicators to all countries, it is at the same time designed to accommodate the diverging profiles of media landscapes throughout the EU by considering differences in market size, media development, cultural and regulatory traditions. Through the “ex ante-profiling” exercise, it can take into account the impact that underlying realities such as population size and average income levels have on the level of media pluralism sustainable by commercial means.

Undoubtedly, its added value lies equally in its novel, multi-disciplinary and holistic approach combining indicators drawn from law, economics and social science, matched to different risks identified during the course of the work. This approach – much wider than merely examining the ownership of the media – is especially adapted to the structural transformations that the media are currently undergoing as a result of new technologies and convergence. By bringing together a host of previously disparate concerns to offer a multi-faceted approach to media pluralism, the Media Pluralism Monitor provides decision-makers with the means to develop a wider and stronger evidentiary basis for defining priorities and actions in this important area.
REFERENCES (not yet mentioned in text/footnotes):


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