



## **23rd Plenary Assembly, 8 and 9 October 2024**

**Yerevan, Armenia**

### **Minutes and Action Points**

The 23rd MNRA Plenary Assembly was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on 8-9 October 2024, at the invitation of the Commission on Television and Radio (CTR) of Armenia, which holds the Presidency of the network.

Sixteen member authorities from fifteen countries and territories around the Mediterranean were present: AMA of Albania, CTR of Armenia, CRTA of Cyprus, Arcom of France, NCRTV of Greece, AGCOM of Italy, IMC of Kosovo, BA of Malta, HACA of Morocco, CA of Moldova, AEM of Montenegro, ERC of Portugal, AVMU of Macedonia, REM of Serbia, CAC of Catalonia, CNMC of Spain. Representatives from UNESCO, as well as artificial intelligence companies and an Armenian radio station also took part in the discussions.

The meeting was held in person.

### **Minutes (I)**

#### ***Tuesday 8 October 2024***

- **Speech by Armela Krasniqi, President of the AMA and outgoing Vice-President of the MNRA.**

The handover took place between the outgoing Albanese vice-presidency and the Albanian presidency. **Tigran Hakobyan** succeeds **Armela Krasniqi** as president of the network.

- **Opening speech by Tigran Hakobyan, CTR President and MNRA Chairman.**

Tigran Hakobyan welcomes the participants and opens the session.

- **UNESCO Guidelines for the governance of digital platforms and the Global Forum of Networks launched during the Dubrovnik conference**

**Gohar Mamikonyan, Member of the Commission**, moderated the panel.

**Mikel Aguirre Idiaquez, Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists Programme Specialist, UNESCO**, reviewed the background to the development of the Guidelines for the governance of digital platforms. He also spoke about the process of creating these Guidelines, their objectives and the launch of the Global Forum of Networks at the Dubrovnik conference in June.

**Frédéric Bokobza, Deputy Director-General, Arcom, France**, recalled that REFRAM, currently chaired by Arcom, had been involved in all stages of the Guidelines process: declaration by the networks of regulators in February 2023, contribution to consultations for the drafting of these Guidelines, launch of the Forum at the UNESCO conference in Dubrovnik. He also emphasized that REFRAM was continuing its work on platform regulation, in cooperation with the African Communication Regulation Authorities Network (ACRAN), following the Abidjan declaration on strengthening dialogue with online platforms on the African continent and in the French-speaking world, and its voluntary commitment protocol.

**Armela Krasniqi, President of AMA, Albania**, detailed the challenges presented by the regulation of digital platforms (dialogue between platforms and regulators, transparency on algorithms...), and the need for non-EU countries to develop and implement legislation to meet these challenges. The AMA president noted that work had begun to adapt Albanian legislation to these challenges, and that the regulator had succeeded in establishing cooperation with TikTok to combat illegal content more effectively.

**Monica Duran, International Relations, CAC, Catalonia, Spain**, presented the Ibero-American Platform of Audiovisual Regulators (PRAI), for which the CAC acts as executive secretariat, and reiterated her support for the UNESCO Guidelines and the Global Forum of Networks. She presented a document published in 2023, produced jointly with UNESCO, aimed at mapping media and information education initiatives in Ibero-America, to be updated every two years.

**Christophe Gautier, Senior Coordinator of the I4T Global Knowledge Network (video recording)**, gave an update on developments in the objectives and international texts of digital regulation. He stressed the importance of cooperation between the nine categories of players involved in the regulation of digital platforms mentioned in the Digital Services Act (European Commission, European Parliament, national governments, digital services coordinators, online platforms, trusted signalers, civil society organizations, researchers and industry groups), pointing out that other categories could be involved, such as non-regional organizations like the Global Forum of Networks.

**- An overview of the present and future of radio in the network's member states**

**Gohar Mamikonyan, member of the Commission**, moderated the panel.

**Joana Duarte, Director of the Supervision Department, ERC, Portugal**, presented the regulation and radio landscape in Portugal, which is largely made up of private local radio stations. She reviewed the history of radio in Portugal, and detailed Law 54/2010, which forms the basis of radio regulation in Portugal. She concluded her presentation by outlining the challenges facing radio today, particularly in terms of digitization, financing and the concentration of players.

**Frédéric Bokobza, Deputy Director-General, Arcom, France**, presented the White Paper on Radio published by Arcom in June 2024. He took stock of the current situation of the radio sector in France, in terms of economic, legal and technical aspects, as well as changes in usage. He detailed the challenge of FM band saturation and presented the prerequisites and conditions for a successful transition to DAB+.

**Mher Margaryan, Director of “Radio Yerevan”**, gave an overview of the radio sector in Armenia, focusing on the changes that took place in the 1990s, following the collapse of the USSR. Today, this medium faces a number of challenges, such as attracting new audiences, modernizing the necessary equipment, and competing with other sources of information and entertainment.

**Jelena Kolo Jovanovic, Coordinator for International Affairs, EMR, Serbia**, gave a portrait of the users and uses of radio in Serbia. She explained to participants the advantages of the transition to DAB+, presented as a more economical and efficient way of broadcasting radio, which will enable the population to access more programs and innovative content with better coverage and sound quality. She recalled the crucial role of broadcast regulators, in cooperation with broadcasters and the media, in ensuring a successful transition.

#### **- Workshop on UNESCO Guidelines**

**Mikel Aguirre Idiaquez, Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists Programme Specialist, UNESCO**, moderated the workshop. Participants were first invited to work in groups on a case study, a fictitious country in which an election runs into difficulties and falls prey to intense misinformation, leading to the destabilization of the country. Each group of participants represented a key player in this situation (regulator, platform, civil society) and was invited to reflect on actions that could be taken before, during and after the crisis to limit its effects. Following this case study, the moderator gave a detailed presentation of UNESCO's Guidelines, highlighting their relevance in this type of electoral period.

#### **- Life of the network**

- **Incoming Vice-Presidency:** the IMC of Kosovo was unanimously elected Vice-President of the network.

*Wednesday 9 October 2024*

- **Artificial intelligence, focusing on projects and initiatives focusing on AI solutions to advance the UN's sustainable development goals**

**Gohar Mamikonyan, member of the Commission**, moderated the panel.

**Carles Gomara, Innovation and Digital Transformation Unit of the of the Government of Catalonia's Agency for Business Competitiveness (video recording)**, emphasized the recent multiplication of information sources, accelerated by the development of artificial intelligence,

a source of challenges. He emphasized the ecological impact of the digital sector, as well as the lack of public confidence in the media that artificial intelligence could engender. Finally, he underlined the growing need for international cooperation to ensure the rational use of new technologies.

**Arevik Anapiosyan, Development Coordination Adviser Partnerships and Development Finance Office of the UN Resident Coordinator**, reported that on September 22, 2024, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Pact for the Future, along with two annexes, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. The Global Digital Compact is the first international agreement on the regulation of artificial intelligence. Based on the idea that technology should benefit everyone, it sets out commitments to ensure that digital technologies contribute to sustainable development and respect for human rights, while tackling risks such as the digital divide, cybersecurity and the misuse of technology. The Compact aims to ensure that artificial intelligence technologies are used responsibly, by encouraging global cooperation on the subject. Finally, it calls on governments to form an impartial global scientific panel on artificial intelligence, and to initiate a dialogue on the governance of artificial intelligence within the United Nations.

**Gor Arakelyan, CEO of Openhearted, Armenia**, presented a solution being developed by the company to use 3D drawing and artificial intelligence to rapidly produce a sign language transcription of websites, videos or sounds.

**Mariam Dilbandyan, AI prompt engineer, Armenia**, explained what the term “artificial intelligence” could cover, and all the fields that could be affected by this technological revolution. She emphasized the importance of knowing how to handle the tools available (e.g. ChatGPT) correctly, in order to derive maximum benefit from them.

- **Working groups “gender and media” and “media literacy”**

**Monica Duran, International Relations, CAC, Catalonia, Spain**, presented the study carried out in 2023-2024 by the Gender and Media working group on the presence and representation of women in daily news programmes. Network members are invited to propose a theme for the coming year's work, and to participate in this study.

**Sasho Bogdanovski, International Relations, AVMU, North Macedonia**, presented his regulator's research on gender-based violence in news programs in 2023.

**Monica Duran** proposed that, for the coming year, the Media Literacy working group should focus on actions aimed at the elderly and people with disabilities. A study or a document centralizing regulators' initiatives on the subject could be carried out.

Several regulators then presented an initiative linked to media literacy:

- **Sasho Bogdanovski, International Relations, AVMU, North Macedonia**, presented a study conducted by AVMU on media literacy among teenagers aged 14 to 17. The study shows that, while students know how to use digital devices, their understanding of data privacy and security is limited. It notes that media literacy is partially integrated into the school curriculum, but calls for more comprehensive and practical approaches.

- **Ledjona Dalipaj, Dorector of the International Law and EU integration, AMA, Albania,** detailed the risks posed by new technologies for children and teenagers, as well as the benefits of media and information literacy. She presented a number of media education campaigns set up by AMA, as well as cooperation with other national players to make such training more widespread.
- **Maddalena Zambuco, Official at the International Institutional Department, AGCOM, Italy,** reported on ERGA's media and information literacy campaign during the European elections in June 2024.

## **Record of decisions (II)**

- **Incoming Vice-Presidency:** the IMC of Kosovo, led by Jeton Mehmeti, President of the IMC, was elected Vice-President of the network. The next MNRA Plenary Assembly will be held in Kosovo in autumn 2025.