



MEDIADEM

European Media Policies Revisited: Valuing & Reclaiming Free & Independent Media in Contemporary Democratic Systems



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Title	MEDIADEM - European Media Policies Revisited: Valuing & Reclaiming Free and Independent Media in Contemporary Democratic Systems
Project funding	European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013), grant agreement FP7-SSH-2009-A no. 244365 (approx. 2.65 million euro)
Research area	SSH-2009-5.1.1. Independent media and democracy in Europe
Duration	1 April 2010 - 31 March 2013 (36 months)
Project coordinator	Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)
Person responsible	Dr. Evangelia Psychogiopoulou
Short description	MEDIADEM is a European research project, which seeks to understand and explain the factors that promote, or conversely prevent, the development of policies supporting free and independent media. The project combines a country-based study in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the UK, with a comparative analysis across media sectors and various types of media services. It will investigate the configuration of media policies in the aforementioned countries and will examine the opportunities and challenges generated by new media services for media freedom and independence. Moreover, external pressures on the design and implementation of state media policies, stemming from the European Union and the Council of Europe, will be thoroughly discussed and analysed.
Website	www.mediadem.eliamep.gr
Consortium	14 partners

What is MEDIADEM about?

MEDIADEM is an interdisciplinary European research project, aimed at understanding and explaining the factors that promote or conversely, hinder policy development for media freedom and independence. The project will investigate the complex array of policy approaches and regulatory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory practices established to govern the media across 14 European countries and their effects for democratic politics. For that purpose, it will place state regulatory activity in its proper national context and will investigate the way in which regulatory instruments are put into practice. MEDIADEM hypothesises that legal culture, institutional traditions, as well as economic, socio-cultural and political domestic peculiarities exert a significant amount of influence on the way in which regulatory norms are formulated and implemented. The project further presumes that the action of regional organisations, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe, affects to a lesser or greater extent the configuration of state media policies.

In examining domestic media policy-making processes, the project will further investigate the opportunities created and challenges posed upon media freedom and independence as a result of new media services. MEDIADEM will explore the characteristics of these new forms of communication, their interaction with established media sectors, their democratic importance and their contribution to a free and independent media environment.

Comparative & interdisciplinary dimension of the research

To obtain meaningful research results regarding how media freedom and independence can be safeguarded in Europe, European-wide, cross-country analysis is essential. Without this comparative aspect that MEDIADEM adopts as its main strategy of analysis, research in the field of the media cannot fully grasp the diversity of European media policies and the multiplicity of regulatory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory approaches followed or in need to ensure and promote media freedom and independence. This can only be achieved through European-based collaboration.

MEDIADEM's country studies have been selected to reflect the diversity of European media regulatory practices and the wide range of factors that influence state media policies. The countries that the project will cover fall under the various models of media systems identified by Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini in *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*: the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist Model (Greece, Italy, Spain), the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany) and the North Atlantic or Liberal Model (the UK). Additionally, the project covers countries from Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Estonia, Romania, Slovakia), as well as EU candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey).

The research interests of MEDIADEM lie at the crossroads of legal research, media studies and political science. An interdisciplinary team has therefore been established, consisting of legal scholars, political scientists and experts in the field of media studies and journalism.

MEDIADEM & the EU policy context

MEDIADEM has high policy relevance for the EU. This is because the project ascertains that EU law and policies can create both pressures and opportunities for domestic media policies. By reviewing the influence exerted by EU law and action on state media policies, the project will examine whether, and to what extent, the media initiatives launched by the EU institutions are coherent, complementary and supportive of free and independent media.

MEDIADEM innovations

The research that MEDIADEM conducts is innovative, both in its thematic focus, as well as in the analytical and comparative framework that it employs. Although the project is founded on the premise that media regulation in its various forms (i.e. regulation, co-regulation, self-regulation) is a prerequisite for media freedom and independence, it hypothesises that the conduct of state media policies is conditioned by a multiplicity of factors. By placing regulatory activity in its proper national context, the project seeks to conceptualise and explain the dynamics of media policy-making and its repercussions on the ability of the media to feed the democratic process.

Another innovative aspect of MEDIADEM is that it seeks to combine an analysis of traditional, print and audiovisual media with the study of new media services. MEDIADEM will investigate whether new media services create alternative information channels, diversifying media outlets, sources and content. It will also inquire into the conditions under which new media services may enhance opportunities for realising media freedom and independence.

Research objectives

MEDIADEM seeks:

- To understand what constitutes 'the media' in today's complex media environment, as well as the nature of media freedom and independence and its importance for democracy;
- To conceptualise 'media policy' and identify the full array of the regulatory models which support media freedom and independence;
- To explore the design and implementation of media policies in 14 European states and identify the factors that exert an influence throughout the process;
- To evaluate and explain variable patterns of media policy-making from a cross-country and cross-media comparative perspective in order to identify best practices for the promotion of free and independent media;
- To engage directly with the policy community and civil society in order to reflect on appropriate policy responses to the challenge of realising media freedom and independence;
- To develop concrete policy recommendations for state and non state actors, the European Union and the Council of Europe, regarding the development of policies which foster media freedom and independence.

Work plan & methodology

MEDIADEM's work plan consists of four different phases.

Phase 1: State of the art

The first phase of the project will establish the theoretical foundations for the research and will provide background information on the 14 media landscapes and regulatory systems reviewed. The research for phase 1 shall consist of a compilation and analysis of academic literature in print or electronic format, legal documents, government reports and policy papers, and consultation of websites, databases and other relevant research projects.

Phase 2: Case-studies

In order to examine how state media policies are shaped, the second phase of the project will involve empirical research in the 14 countries selected. Project partners will examine media policy-making processes in the countries under study, placing them in their proper socio-political context, and will investigate whether domestic media policy strategies help realise media freedom and independence. Analysis will relate to both traditional and new media services and will examine how regulatory, co-regulatory and self-regulatory norms are formulated and put into practice. The methodology employed in this phase of the project will combine an examination of primary resources, secondary literature and interviews with various media actors.

Phase 3: Comparative analysis

Our empirical findings will feed into the third phase of the project, which will involve cross-state and cross-media comparative analysis. This phase of the project will allow for the evaluation and explanation of variable patterns of media policy-making targeting media freedom and independence. The methodology employed will combine an examination of the research results of the case-studies and broader academic literature regarding the issues dealt with.

Phase 4: Policy development

The final stage of the project will involve the formulation of concrete policy recommendations for both state and non state actors involved in media policy-making, the European Union and the Council of Europe, and the identification of best practices for the promotion of free and independent media.

► Throughout the project, the consortium will seek to establish regular channels for the exchange of views and opinions with the broader media community and key actors involved in the design and implementation of media policies. This will help stimulate wider debate on media freedom and independence and the ability of the media to perform their democratic functions.

Who MEDIADEM addresses

The project is designed in such a way, so as to allow the largest number of potential users to be approached. These include:

- European policy-makers (EU institutions and the Council of Europe);
- Decision-makers at national level
 - Ministries
 - Independent regulatory bodies and supervisory organs
 - Parliamentarians and parliamentary committees;
- Judicial authorities at national and European level;
- Non-state actors involved in media policy-making
 - Media companies, media professionals and their representative associations
 - Human rights organisations
 - Other civil society organisations (e.g. viewer and listener organisations, citizens' groups, etc);
- The academic community, graduate students and those carrying out research in the media field.

Communication & dissemination activities

Mediadem's dissemination strategy aims to make original research concerning the forces that shape specific media systems and policies widely available, thus stimulating debate and promoting dialogue amongst communities of interest and the wider public as a whole. Activities that will allow for the diffusion of project information to key target groups at the national and European levels include:

- An autonomous website (www.mediadem.eliamep.gr) offering the latest news from the research team and up-to-date information on the research findings;
- A promotional flyer with information about the project and its identity in 15 languages: Greek, English, Spanish, German, Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovakian, Estonian, Turkish, Finnish, Croatian, French, Dutch, Danish and Italian;
- The present identity brochure offering a detailed overview of the MEDIADEM project and the research consortium;
- Targeted publications for policy-makers active at the national and European levels;
- Events presenting MEDIADEM's work and promoting exchange of views with policy-makers, media operators, journalists, civil society organisations and academics. The following activities will be organised:
 - Three case-study workshops in Greece (June, 2011), the UK (January 2012) and Finland (July 2012);
 - Fourteen national discussion groups (December 2012);
 - A final conference in Brussels (February 2013).

Research outcomes

Phase 1 of the research project will result in a theoretical and methodological report on democracy, media freedom and independence and media policy. It will also lead to the publication of a collective background information report, presenting the 14 media markets and regulatory systems under study, placing them in their proper socio-political context, as well as the media-related initiatives of the European Union and the Council of Europe which are relevant and important for the safeguarding of media freedom and independence.

Phase 2 of the research project will produce 14 case-study reports. The reports will investigate media policy-making processes in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the UK, inquiring into the factors that condition and shape activity in the field.

Phase 3 will deliver two comparative reports: a cross-country and cross-theme comparative report, as well as a report discussing the conditions under which different forms of media regulation achieve or fail to promote media freedom and independence.

Phase 4 will result in a collective policy paper addressing state and non state actors involved in the design and implementation of media policies, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Policy recommendations will also be drafted in the national language of all project partners.

The project will further produce:

- three policy briefs, issued on a yearly basis and pointing to decision-makers and the media community;
- two edited volumes and a special issue in a scientific journal targeting the academic community; and
- one final report addressing policy-makers, academics, media professionals and civil society.

Expected results

MEDIADEM is expected to:

- Reach a thorough understanding of the conditions under which the media can foster democratic discourse;
- Generate new knowledge on how media freedom and independence can be safeguarded and promoted;
- Provide new insights into the contribution of new media services to media freedom and independence;
- Foster dialogue between policy-makers, media professionals, the research community and civil society on the role of the media for democracy;
- Contribute to the further development of the European Research Area, integrating partners from 'old' and 'new' EU Member States with scholars from EU candidate countries.

Presentation of the members of the consortium

Belgium: Pierre-François Docquir, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB, www.ulbbruxelles.be)
Bulgaria: Daniel Smilov, Centre for Liberal Strategies (CLS, www.cls-sofia.org)
Croatia: Nada Švob-Đokić, Institute for International Relations (IMO, www.imo.hr)
Denmark: Henrik Søndergaard, University of Copenhagen (UCPH, www.ku.dk)
Estonia: Halliki Harro-Loit, University of Tartu (UT, www.ut.ee)
Finland: Heikki Kuutti, University of Jyväskylä (JYU, www.jyu.fi)
Germany: Christoph Gusy, University of Bielefeld (UNIBI, www.uni-bielefeld.de)
Greece: Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP, www.eliamep.gr)
Italy: Fabrizio Cafaggi, European University Institute (EUI, www.eui.eu)
Romania (Germany): Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Hertie School of Governance (HERTIE, www.hertie-school.org)
Slovakia: Andrej Skolkay, School of Communication and Media (SKAMBA, www.skamba.sk)
Spain: Juan Luis Manfredi Sánchez, University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM, www.uclm.es)
Turkey: Dilek Kurban, Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV, www.tesev.org.tr)
United Kingdom: Rachael Craufurd Smith, University of Edinburgh (UEDIN, www.ed.ac.uk)

MEDIADEM's advisory board

Susanne Fengler, Erich Brost Institute for Journalism (www.brost.org/), Germany
Paschos Mandravelis, Kathimerini (www.kathimerini.gr/), Greece
Philip Schlesinger, Centre for Cultural Policy Research, University of Glasgow (www.gla.ac.uk/ccpr/), United Kingdom
Wolfgang Schultz, Hans Bredow Institut (www.hans-bredow-institut.de/), Germany

Contact

Project coordinator:

Evangelia Psychogiopoulou | email: epsychogiopoulou@eliamep.gr
Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)
49 Vas. Sofias Avenue, 10676 Athens, Greece
Tel.: +30-210-7257111; Fax: +30-210-7257114, www.eliamep.gr

Project team

Senior research fellow
Dia Anagnostou
email:
danagnos@eliamep.gr

Research assistant
Anna Kandyla
email:
akandyla@eliamep.gr

Administrative officer
Alexandra Nikolakopoulou
email:
alexandra@eliamep.gr

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The information expressed in this document is the sole responsibility of the MEDIADEM consortium and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

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