EKOME S.A.
National Centre of Audiovisual Media
and Communication

The White Paper of EKOME
on Media & Information Literacy

Summary

The White Paper on Media & Information Literacy is EKOME's first policy paper on its third pillar in the audiovisual sector, **Education** that presents its viewpoint and strategic plan on the field. By highlighting the main trends and priorities on Media and Information Literacy in Greece and abroad, the White Paper aims to set out a paradigm for a national infrastructure on media education policy. Through the White Paper, EKOME highlights the main schools of thought and problematics in the public discourse and sets its main intervention fields of action towards a constructive relationship with the Creative Industry and the Digital Single Market, for promoting a sustainable policy model on Media and Information Literacy.

Introduction

In the new digital environment of the 21st century, where media play a crucial and structural role in the intermediation, information exchange and interaction among users-viewers-consumers, it is imperative to reinforce their function as educational mechanisms, a prerequisite for a mature citizenship and democracy. Nowadays, after taking into account the European and global mobility on media and digital literacy, Greece is called upon, through EKOME SA, the National Centre of Audiovisual Media & Communication, to line up with the international developments and create an innovative Media Hub focusing on the digital citizen of the future.

EKOME SA is established by Law 4339/2015, as the national centre for media literacy, film and digital literacy in the lifelong learning field and the creative industry. In this context, EKOME acts as an intermediator for actions and initiatives that promote critical, social and communication skills of all citizens, in all media platforms and contexts. In accordance with the broad concept of media and information literacy, EKOME maintains that media and information literacy not only constitutes an ethical responsibility of the media stakeholders but also a social imperative for everyone, to take advantage of the benefits of the digital age. The new communication channels, the transition from massive to customized consumption-viewing models, media convergence that dissolves boundaries between global and local culture, and the consequent transformation of the media industry in a constantly changing digital environment, set the new trends in the public discourse on media and information literacy.

The new media world order calls for informed citizens who are aware of the communication procedures behind media platforms and hence can interact powerfully in the digital era.

Recognizing the need for media and digital education, EKOME aspires to become the new creative Media Hub generating a national action plan for agenda setting on a long-term audiovisual, media and digital policy.

1. Conceptual Approaches and Definitional Orientations

Media and Information Literacy (MIL) responds to all challenges embedded in the messages of the media and information content providers. It embraces a critical attitude towards media content and the functions and mechanisms of the visual culture at large. More specifically, the MIL ecosystem includes: Press & online journalism (news literacy), static, moving image and arts (visual literacy), television and radio (audiovisual literacy), film (film literacy), internet and new media (digital literacy), advertisement and commercial communication (commercial literacy), digital games (games literacy), animation (animation literacy), virtual reality contexts (VR, AR, MR), archives, libraries and content providers (information literacy) and in general, any form of expression and communication in the modern digital era.

EKOME approaches Media and Information Literacy as the context where a vigorous and strong audiovisual and digital market within the creative industries is developed towards a competitive knowledge society. In addition, we believe that Media and Information Literacy contribute to optimum exploitation of the audiovisual and film heritage through access, and creative and educational use of media archives.

Different definitions have been attributed to the field of media education, with the first signs to be found in the 30s', the period of Press peak, long before the emergence of the digital era.

- **European Commission**

According to the European Commission (COM 2007/833, REC 2009/625/EC, Council Conclusions 2016, MLEG), media literacy is a wide concept with a set of skills that involve:

-The ability to access traditional and new media environments (technical, digital competencies)

-The ability to think critically, understand and evaluate different aspects of the media messages and media contents (cognitive competencies). All media are by default complex transmedia texts (image, sound, language), hence they require an advanced conceptual approach

-The ability to express creatively and produce User Generated Content (UGC) in multiple media platforms and communication environments (social, communicative skills).

This set of skills promotes critical literacy so that everyone can actively participate in the social, financial and cultural developments, being thus an empowered citizen in democratic societies. Moreover, these strong social and communication skills are a prerequisite for an empowered attitude in the non-linear environment of the Digital Single Market. According to the recent EC Communication on the Digital Education Action Plan (COM/2018/22), the need for modern-day education calls for innovative teaching methods through cultivation of the digital critical competences and media literacy.

- **Council of Europe**

The Council of Europe suggests that it is crucial to educate all citizens in media education in typical and non-typical learning environment as well as professionals in the media industry (Rec 1466/2000). Moreover, according to the results of the European Audiovisual Observatory study «Mapping of Media Literacy Practices and Actions in EU-28» (2017) for the European Commission, media literacy has a broad field of action outside typical education (547 projects noted in 28 EU countries) with multiple players and stakeholders from the media market and civic society.

Source: https://youtu.be/9S1qfEzrV_Q

- **UNESCO**

With article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a starting point, reinforced by the Grünwald Declaration (1982), Alexandria Declaration (2005), Paris Agenda or 12 Recommendations for Media Education (2007) and the more recent ones, Paris (2014) and Riga Recommendations (2016), UNESCO approaches the term in a wider unifying notion, that of media and information literacy, encompassing the skills to access, critically evaluate and creatively express in the media and information providers field, as prerequisites for personal expression and social action. Through the acquisition of media and information literacy, all citizens are equipped with problem-solving and active citizenship skills in an open government. By and large, media and information literacy imparts crucial knowledge on the functions of media and information channels in the intercultural societies, hence it is imperative to become a paradigm for modern day education.

Below are the 5 Laws of UNESCO Media and Information Literacy:

FIVE LAWS OF MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY (MIL)

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

LAW 3
Information, knowledge, and messages are not always value neutral, or always independent of biases. Any conceptualization, use and application of MIL should make this truth transparent and understandable to all citizens.

LAW 2
Every citizen is a creator of information/knowledge and has a message. They must be empowered to access new information/knowledge and to express themselves. MIL is for all – women and men equally - and a nexus of human rights.

LAW 4
Every citizen wants to know and understand new information, knowledge and messages as well as to communicate, even if she/he is not aware, admits or expresses that he/she does. Her/his rights must however never be compromised.

LAW 1
Information, communication, libraries, media, technology, the Internet as well as other forms of information providers are for use in critical civic engagement and sustainable development. They are equal in stature and none is more relevant than the other or should be ever treated as such.

LAW 5
Media and information literacy is not acquired at once. It is a lived and dynamic experience and process. It is complete when it includes knowledge, skills and attitudes, when it covers access, evaluation/ assessment, use, production and communication of information, media and technology content.

Alton Grizzle and Jagtar Singh

Source: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/media-development/media-literacy/five-laws-of-mil/

EKOME embraces these main conceptual approaches as they are in agreement with the three areas of its strategic mission, and in particular within its third pillar, that of audiovisual and digital education. However, it supports the notion that "Media and Information Literacy (MIL)" encompasses the field in a more holistic approach. In either case, EKOME considers that the focus should be, not on the terminology, but on the essence and the depiction of all actions in a regulatory and practical aspect for maximum results for the digital citizen. Through media and information literacy skills, citizens are no longer passive recipients of media messages, but they adopt an active and critical attitude towards news agenda, making wiser choices and contributing to the quest for high quality media content, all characteristics of a strong and competitive media industry.

In an attempt to deconstruct the term Media and Information Literacy, EKOME perceives citizen's skills as:

a)   **Basic skills**: they refer to elementary digital access, safety access, search and research, content retrieval, storage and effective (re-)use in the digital environment

b)   **Advanced skills**: they engage the critical component in media messages and information (critical literacy) for comprehension, evaluation, analysis and interaction with the content of media and content providers. They also refer to content creation (UGC) and re-creation.

c)   **Vocational skills**: include education and lifelong learning procedures for media professionals on the new trends in the audiovisual and digital media in the creative industry.

More specifically, citizens who have acquired media and information literacy skills may:

- Enjoy safe access and browsing in the new media environment, recognizing the benefits of information and interaction and protecting, at the same time, their personal data.
- Foster a strong critical attitude and deep knowledge on how media and multimedia content platforms function, what are their rules and how they interact on a financial and cultural level within the Digital Single Market.
- Develop an ethical attitude on media and content providers messages, learn how to look for the truth behind the news and how to respect copyright.
- Realize the crucial role of audiovisual and digital archives in the preservation of cultural heritage. Through open access to archives, young people especially, learn about the past and how to (re)use the material for their own creative projects.
- Become themselves producers and consumers simultaneously, hence "prosumers", as an element for their own cultural self-expression as well as for enhancement of the public discourse.
- It is a fact that media and information literacy has a dynamic presence in the new, emerging trends and challenges (e.g. fake news, disinformation, hate speech, gender identity issues, copyright issues, transmedia storytelling), hence it constitutes a vital element for achieving media pluralism in the intermediated society.

On this framework, EKOME stands as the national focal point of reference for media educational, audiovisual and digital activities in Greece. To this end, it invites all interested parties from the creative industry to work together for an agenda setting on a sustainable media and information literacy policy.

2. EKOME & UNESCO GAPMIL European Sub-Chapter Mediterranean Group

GAPMIL - Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy of UNESCO is the international educational initiative that was launched by UNESCO in 2013. Presently, GAPMIL has over 600 members from 110 countries all over the world, aiming to advance all skills related to media and information literacy as a necessary competence for the 21st century, through joint actions, initiatives and policies. The upper goal is to promote freedom of expression, creation of critical and experienced users of media and digital platforms, and to put forward regulation for

quality and ethically-used digital content, elements that foster knowledge and democratic societies.

GAPMIL network is a joint synergy of UNESCO and other media stakeholders globally, such as the United Nation Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), UNICEF, Open Society Foundation, International Research and Exchanges Board – IREX and the European Commission. Through this network, all stakeholders agree to work together towards initiatives and actions that cultivate and promote media and information literacy skills within the family, the school, the community and society at large.

For the most effective geographical reach, GAPMIL consists of four Sub-Chapters: Asia-Pacific Regional, European, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional and North-American. EKOME is taking up the new European Sub-Chapter Mediterranean Group, catering for the needs of MIL in the greater Mediterranean region in Southern Europe.

Drawing upon over 40 years of UNESCO's experience in MIL, GAPMIL is an absolute "essential" to establish more enduring partnerships that are necessary to amplify the impact of MIL. According to GAPMIL Framework and Action Plan, some of GAPMIL's focal points of interest include:

• Governance, citizenship and freedom of expression;

• Access to information and knowledge for all citizens;

• Development of media, libraries, internet and other information providers;

• Education, teaching, and learning – including professional development;

• Linguistic and cultural diversity as well as intercultural and interfaith dialogue;

• Gender equality issues;

• Children and youth, persons with disabilities and marginalized social groups;

• Business, industry, employment and sustainable economic development;

UNESCO GAPMIL European Sub-Chapter Mediterranean Group is a new synergy in Southern Europe aspiring into making the Mediterranean region a strong player on the global MIL map.

3. Intervention Fields

EKOME as a model for a creative Media Hub in the field of media and information literacy, supports national and international activities through projects, knowledge-sharing research and policies that advance media and information literacy and pave the way for a modern media educational policy. To this end, it implements actions that monitor the latest developments in the audiovisual, film, and digital sector in a regulatory, social, political and technical level. More specifically, EKOME's intervention on media and information literacy includes:

- ➢ awareness raising on the need to adopt an ethical and conscious attitude on media use, especially in the new digital platforms, through targeted promotional and communication actions (campaigns, online material, digital resources)

- ➢ design, development and implementation of research educational projects and resources for exploring the field in order to integrate media and information literacy in schools

- ➢ training and lifelong learning of the educators (in-training, in – service), the students and their parents through targeted actions (open source material, workshops, seminars, master classes etc.)

- ➢ training and lifelong learning of media professionals, journalists, technicians and all relevant specialties in the creative industry through targeted educational actions (resources such as codes of ethics, new media workshops, open source material etc.)

- ➢ supporting the State and especially the competent Ministries (Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, Ministry of Education) towards agenda setting of a long-term media and digital policy

- ➢ reinforcing international public discourse through networking and partnerships, such as the new UNESCO GAPMIL European Sub-Chapter Mediterranean Group

- ➢ promoting scientific and evidence-based research for mapping the Greek and global field of media and information literacy (media monitoring, indicators, media intelligence tools)

- ➢ supporting media educational bodies, organizations and festivals on youth, children, film, animation, gaming, digital media and cultural products that contribute to media and information literacy skills and empower the creative industry

- ➢ spreading expertise and establishing a strong identity as a MIL stakeholder through presence in conferences, workshops, round tables, working groups and publications on media, information and the digital age

4. Joint Actions on Media and Information Literacy

The White Paper of EKOME on Media and Information Literacy is our vision and starting point for developing our strategic plan and build a constructive relationship with the creative industry. It sets out the main principles that the third pillar of EKOME – Education- will build upon, according to its scopes (art. 45, Law 4339/2015) with concrete actions on media and information literacy.

To this end, EKOME calls all interested parties, media stakeholders and media professionals from the broad cultural and creative sector to explore the latest trends, build on joint actions and synergies and advance public discourse on media and information literacy.

References

- UNESCO Grunwald Declaration on Media Education, UNESCO's 1982 International Symposium, 22 January 1982
- Council of Europe, 1466/2000 Recommendation on Media Education
- Paris Agenda or 12 Recommendations for Media Education, 21-22 June 2007
- UNESCO, Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, 9 November 2005
- European Commission 2006 / 1466 Recommendation 1466 (2000)1 Media education
- European Commission 2007 Communication "A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment"
- European Commission 2009 Recommendation on "Media literacy in the digital environment for a more competitive audio-visual and content industry and an inclusive knowledge society"
- UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers, Paris 2011
- UNESCO Framework and Plan of Action for the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL), 23 July 2013
- UNESCO, Paris Declaration on MIL in the Digital Era, European Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Forum, 27-28 May 2014
- UNESCO Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape, 27 to 29 June 2016, in Riga, Latvia
- European Commission 2016 Council Conclusions on "Developing media literacy and critical thinking through education and training"
- European Audiovisual Observatory, 2017 «Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28», Council of Europe
- European Commission 2018 Communication "Digital Education Action Plan"