CHAPTER 13

The Challenge of Media and Information Literacy for Public Service Media

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Media literacy, or Media and Information Literacy (MIL) as referred to by UNESCO, is the term used to describe the skills and abilities needed for conscious and independent development in the communication environment—digital, global, and multimedia—of the information society.

From an educational point of view, media literacy is now considered: (a) a basic skill included in most educational curricula in the world; and (b) a part of the essential right to education. Also, from the point of view of democratic citizenship, media literacy is considered essential for the
exercise of (a) genuine active citizenship; and (b) an essential part of the various communication rights: freedom of expression, freedom of the press, right to information, copyright, and so on. In this context, several governments and international organizations have recently developed an intense legislative and political activity trying to consolidate the right to media literacy and trying to consolidate strategies and policies that try to promote it socially.

In this chapter we will briefly describe the long road that has led to this situation, and concentrate in particular on how the legal framework is pushing Public Service Media to integrate Media and Information Literacy policies in their strategic lines in the European context.

1 The Right of MIL Policies for Ensuring Democratic Societies

Nowadays, MIL policies are more necessary than ever due to the current challenges we are facing. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that Media and Information Literacy policies are necessary to confront fake news and misinformation that spread quickly through social networks and have negative effects on the individual and public health. Beyond the negative impact on health, fake news also impacts the quality of democratic societies that put trust in institutions at risk. Hence, supporting quality journalism able to maintain a relationship of trust with the citizens as a reliable information source is a must.

A recent Council of Europe study, ‘Supporting Quality Journalism through Media and Information Literacy’, was conducted with the purpose of “providing context and evidence (...) on media literacy activities in Europe supporting quality journalism” (Chapman and Oermann 2020). The study analyzed 68 MIL activities. One of the key findings is that:

“Some of the MIL knowledge and skills required for people to recognise and value quality journalism in the digital age relate to knowing how the media is regulated and how the media is funded, understanding rights and responsibilities in relation to data and privacy, and having knowledge of how social media and search platforms operate” (Chapman and Oermann 2020).

According to the study, such a set of knowledge and skills, in which the role of the media appears, was found to be among the least included by the analyzed MIL initiatives. Accordingly, the authors recommend that in
addition to reinforcing MIL’s role in “promoting and protecting quality journalism in the digital age,” it is essential to “create media literacy programmes that help citizens of all age groups to develop the MIL skills and knowledge that will support quality journalism” (Chapman and Oermann 2020).

Despite Media and Information Literacy being a relatively young field, there is a solid background on Media and Information Literacy policies (Carlsson and Culver 2013). Over the last decades, UNESCO and the European Commission have been the two main actors promoting and assessing MIL policies. A brief overview for the first 20 years is shown in Table 13.1 (Pérez Tornero et al. 2013) with other contributions added for this chapter:

Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2010) further contributed to defining media literacy under the humanism approach. One of their contributions is systematically organizing actors and spheres in relation to media literacy. Table 13.2 sums up this contribution as shown:

The advancement in the field of MIL in the first 20 years resulted in different recommendations that highlight Media and Information Literacy as the core of the competences required in the twenty-first century. Furthermore, Media and Information Literacy can help in advancing various sustainable development goals (SDGs), such as SDGs 11, 16, and 17 and Targets 4.7, 4.c, and 5.b, by raising citizens’ critical awareness of information shared and received, how they communicate, their fundamental freedoms, and critical thinking that makes societies democratic, peaceful, inclusive, safe, and resilient. Media and Information Literacy is an enabler of social cohesion and fair societies in individual and collective contexts. But the question is what is the current status of development of MIL policies? We will focus on the two relevant actors who play a crucial role in defining, promoting, and assessing MIL policies in Europe and around the world—the European Commission and UNESCO.

1.1 Media Literacy by the European Commission

One of the recent developments in the European Commission (EC) has been the review of Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) that strongly contributes to media literacy policies in Europe. Prior to the AVMSD, one of the crucial reports developed by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2016 presented an overview of media literacy practices and
Table 13.1  A brief overview of media literacy/media and information literacy development

| Year   | Date       | Author          | Title                                                                 |
|--------|------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1982   | Jan, 1982  | UNESCO          | Grünwald Declaration on Media Education                                |
| 1989   | Oct, 1989  | European Union  | Television Without Frontiers Directive (TVWF)                        |
|        | Oct, Nov   | UNESCO          | General Actes                                                         |
| 1990   | Jul, 1990  | UNESCO          | New Directions in Media Education, Toulouse Colloquy                  |
| 1991   | Jul, 1991  | European Commission | MEDIA Programme                                                       |
| 1999   | Jan, 1999  | European Commission | Safer Internet Programme                                              |
|        | April, 1999| UNESCO          | Congress in Vienna “Educating for the Media and the Digital Age”      |
| 2000   | March, 2000| European Commission | Lisbon European Council                                           |
|        | May, 2000  | European Commission | eLearning Programme. Designing tomorrow’s education                  |
|        | June, 2000 | European Council | Recommendation 1466 (2000) of Media Education from the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe |
| 2002   | Feb, 2002  | UNESCO          | “Youth Media Education Seminar in Seville”                            |
|        | Nov, 2002  | European Commission | Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme) |
|        | Dec, 2002  | European Parliament | Recommendation 1586 (2002) The digital divide and education           |
| 2003   | Sept, 2003 | UNESCO          | Prague Declaration “Towards an Information Literate Society”          |
| 2004   | N/M, 2004  | UK Film Council and BFI | Promoting Digital Literacy European Charter for Media Literacy |
| Year | Date       | Organization          | Event Description                                                                 |
|------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2005 | Oct, 2005  | UNESCO                | L’éducation aux médias enjeu des sociétés du savoir                                  |
|      | Nov, 2005  | UNESCO                | The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning—Beacons of the Information Society |
|      | Nov, 2005  | European Parliament and Council | Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities |
| 2006 | March, 2006| European Commission   | The Media Literacy Expert Group                                                    |
|      | Sep, 2006  | Council of Europe     | Recommendation Rec (2006)12of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment |
|      | Dec, 2006  | European Parliament and Council | Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning |
|      | Dec, 2006  | European Commission   | Public consultation on Media Literacy. Making sense of today’s media content         |
|      | Dec, 2006  | European Parliament and Council | Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audio-visual and on-line information services industry |
|      | Dec, 2006  | European Parliament and Council | Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning |
|      | Dec, 2007  | European Parliament   | European Parliament resolution of 16 December 2008 on media literacy in a digital world |
| 2007 | Jun, 2007  | UNESCO                | Paris Agenda or 12 recommendations for media education                               |
|      | Jun, 2007  | UNESCO                | L’éducation aux médias : avancées, obstacles, orientations, nouvelles depuis Grünwal: ver un changement d’échelle? |
|      | Nov, 2007  | European Commission   | European i2010 initiative on e-Inclusion to be a part of the information society    |
|      | Dec, 2007  | European Commission   | Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe (2007)                   |
|      |            |                       | European Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AMSD)                                  |

(continued)
Table 13.1 (continued)

| Year   | Month | Organization | Event Description |
|--------|-------|--------------|-------------------|
| 2008   | Feb   | European Parliament | Recommendation 1799 (2007) of Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe of the image of women in advertising |
|        | May   | European Council | Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on a European approach to media literacy in the digital environment |
|        | Oct   | European Union | Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on ‘Media literacy’ and ‘Creative content online’ |
| 2008   | Nov-Dec | European Commission | Working paper and recommendations from Digital Literacy High Level Expert Group e-Inclusion |
| 2009   | Jul   | Council of Europe | Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment |
|        | July-Aug | European Commission | Study on assessment criteria for media literacy levels (2009)—A comprehensive view of the concept of media literacy and an understanding of how media literacy levels in Europe should be assessed |
|        | Nov   | Council of Europe | Council conclusions on media literacy in the digital environment |
| 2010   | March | Council of Europe | Council Resolution on the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the internal market |
|        | May   | European Union | Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on regional perspectives in developing media literacy and media education in EU educational policy |
| 2011   | June  | UNESCO | Fez Declaration on Media and Information Literacy |
| 2012   | May   | European Commission | Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A Digital Agenda for Europe EMEDUS European Media Literacy Education Study. |
|        | June  | UNESCO | Moscow Declaration on Media and Information Literacy |

(continued)
actions in Europe under the report “Mapping of media literacy practices and actions in EU-28” (Nickoltchev et al. 2016).

This report was based on responses from the national experts of each country, collected between May and September 2016, and revised by the members of the EU Media Literacy Expert Group. The questionnaire was elaborated in close cooperation with the European Commission, and the national experts are mainly: universities active in media literacy research, regulatory bodies with responsibility in this area, specialists in media literacy centers, and independent experts. The key questions addressed were identifying important media literacy projects in each country and providing a deep analysis for the most significant five for a case study.

The team responsible for the development of the report point out that there were methodological limitations which indicate the need to reinforce a common policy for implementing media literacy in Member States. These limitations were (Nickoltchev et al. 2016) (a) the absence of a common evaluation framework in order to make an effective comparison between a diverse range of media literacy projects, (b) the absence of a universally accepted definition of media literacy which influences the results, and (c) the absence of a common notion of what is “significant”; a multitude of cultural, social, and political factors are relevant in shaping how the level of significance is understood.

Table 13.1 (continued)

| Timeline of media literacy development in Europe |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| 2013 June 2013 UNESCO-GAPMIL Framework and Plan of Action for the Global Alliance for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy |
| 2014 May 2014 UNESCO Paris Declaration on Media and Information Literacy in the Digital Era |
| 2016 June, 2016 UNESCO Khanty-Mansiysk Declaration “Media and Information Literacy for Building a Culture of Open Government” |
| July, 2016 UNESCO Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape |
| Nov, 2016 UNESCO Youth Declaration on Media and Information Literacy |
| 2018 Oct, 2018 UNESCO Global Framework for MIL Cities |
| Contexts          | Actors                              | Competences                                                                 | Processes                                                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Personal         | Adults, children, and young people  | Individual and personal competences in the consumption and appropriation of the media and ICTs | Conditions of access and use                                             |
|                  |                                     |                                                                            | Individual development of skill acquisition                              |
| Family           | Parents and guardians               | Competences to authorize the use of the media and ICTs and for media education | Household conditions of access and use                                   |
|                  | Children and young people           | Competences for collective learning through the media and ICTs              | Family media education actions                                           |
|                  |                                     |                                                                            | Activity in family media education                                       |
| Formal           | Legislators and authorities         | Competences to regulate and impose sanctions in the realm of communication and media literacy | Conditions of access and use of ICTs                                     |
| education        | Teachers and educators              | Institutional and collective competences of teachers in the realm of guardianship and media education | Curricula and programs Media education activities                         |
|                  | Parents and guardians               | Personal competences of parents and professional competences of teachers and guardians | Media production activities                                              |
|                  | Students                            | Competences of collective learning and education                            |                                                                          |
| Media            | Legislators and authorities         | Competences in media education policy and in media policy                   | Conditions of media regulation and participation                         |
|                  | Companies                           | Competences in promoting media education                                   | Dissemination and promotion activities Public competences and participation |
|                  | Professionals                        | Competences in media education policies                                    |                                                                          |
|                  | Public (audience)                   | Collective competences in media literacy                                   |                                                                          |
|                  | Citizens                            | Competences in the development and evaluation of media education activities and capacity for synergy Civic competences | Conditions of citizens’ regulation and participation Design and promotion of media education activities Individual competences and participation |
|                  | Associations                        |                                                                            |                                                                          |
|                  | Individual citizens                 |                                                                            |                                                                          |

Source: Pérez-Tornero and Varis (2010, p. 47)
Once the responses were collected, 939 main media literacy stakeholders were identified. It is worth noting that over a third were categorized as “civil society” (305), followed by “public authorities” (175), and “academia” (161). A total of 189 networks were identified and the vast majority of them (135) are operating at a national level, while the others do not have a statutory responsibility in this area. This result shows that civil society has promoted more media literacy initiatives than other stakeholders that are responsible for that. This shows that more involvement by responsible institutions is required.

The report is extensive and full of details that serve for analyzing and identifying the difficulties and possibilities in current media literacy activities. The following is a selection of provided key findings that should be considered (Nickoltchev et al. 2016):

a) Civil society plays a very active role in media literacy projects, followed by public authorities and academia.

b) The majority of key media literacy stakeholders do not have a statutory responsibility around media literacy.

c) A total of 189 main media literacy networks were identified across the EU-28 countries, the vast majority of them (135) were categorized as operating at a national level.

d) The level of media literacy activity varies significantly across countries.

e) Providing front-line support to citizens is a priority for media literacy projects (outside the school system).

f) Skills linked to ‘critical thinking’ are the dominant skills across the projects in this study: ‘Critical Thinking’ was addressed by 403 out of 547 projects. The media literacy skill that is least addressed in the 145 ‘case-study’ projects is ‘intercultural dialogue’, which was featured in 46 out of the 145 ‘case-study’ projects.

g) Teens and older students are the most common audience group for the projects in the study.

Considering these findings, there are significant Media and Information Literacy activities but they need to be reinforced through a stronger common policy involving the public audiovisual authorities. As shown, the civil society is playing the most active role in promoting media literacy activities; this should be accompanied by better support and promotion from public institutions. The need to reinforce intercultural dialogue is
another crucial point that should be highlighted especially now with the challenges of hate speech online. The revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) lightened with measures proposed to Member States in this direction.

1.1.1 The Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)

Media literacy (European Commission 2019) is one of the strategies promoted by the Digital Single Market led by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, responsible to develop a digital single market to generate smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in Europe. Before being included in this Directorate-General, the development of media literacy policies was linked to education. Media literacy is defined by the EC as follows:

Media literacy, our capacity to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with the media has never been as important as in today’s society. It enables citizens of all ages to navigate the modern news environment and take informed decisions.

Media literacy concerns different media (broadcasting, radio, press), different distribution channels (traditional, internet, social media) and addresses the needs of all ages. Media literacy is also a tool empowering citizen as well as raising their awareness and helping counter the effects of disinformation campaigns and fake news spreading through digital media (European Commission 2019).

In light of this definition, media literacy is understood as a tool that empowers citizens to take decisions in the current communication ecosystem. This definition incorporates the need to overcome the effects of disinformation campaigns and fake news. For this reason, media literacy now plays a central role in the current challenges that emerge in democratic societies. The European Commission’s Expert Group of Media Literacy meets annually to identify good practices in media literacy, facilitate networking, explore synergies between different EU policies, and support media literacy initiatives.

The recently revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (European Commission 2020) reinforces the role of media literacy. It requires Member States to promote and consider measures for the development of media literacy skills (Article 33a). Every three years thereafter,
Member States shall report to the Commission how the implementation of media literacy measures is developing in their countries, and the EC should provide guidelines regarding the scope of such reports.

It is worth highlighting one of the points in the initial statement of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. Point 59 states:

‘Media literacy’ refers to skills, knowledge and understanding that allow citizens to use media effectively and safely. In order to enable citizens to access information and to use, critically assess and create media content responsibly and safely, citizens need to possess advanced media literacy skills. Media literacy should not be limited to learning about tools and technologies, but should aim to equip citizens with the critical thinking skills required to exercise judgment, analyse complex realities and recognise the difference between opinion and facts. It is therefore necessary that both media service providers and video-sharing platforms providers, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, promote the development of media literacy in all sections of society, for citizens of all ages, and for all media and that progress in that regard is followed closely. (European Commission 2020b)

The approach to media literacy in the AVMSD goes beyond technological literacy. One of the crucial aspects emphasized is the promotion of critical thinking; the capacity to exercise judgment and analyze complex realities is needed now more than ever. The quality of democracies depends on whether or not institutions and citizens are implementing critical thinking linked to the values of humanism. This approach should be integrated in all policies developed and projects promoted.

Another key contribution of the AVMSD is Article 28b. One of the requirements stipulated in this article is that all Member States should ensure that video-sharing platforms provide effective media literacy measures and tools, in addition to raising users’ awareness about them.

Last but not least, Article 30b focuses on the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA). The European Commission (2018a) defines the composition of ERGA as “representatives of national regulatory authorities or bodies in the field of audiovisual media services with primary responsibility for overseeing audiovisual media services” and emphasizes that the EC participates in ERGA meetings. One of the tasks delegated to ERGA is “to exchange experience and best practices on the application of the regulatory framework for audiovisual media services, including on accessibility and media literacy”. Thus, ERGA plays a crucial role in the promotion of media literacy.
1.1.2  Media Literacy to Overcome Disinformation

Overcoming disinformation is a priority in current media literacy policies. The communication “Tackling online disinformation: a European approach” (European Commission 2018b), presented in April 2018, initiated the path to promote several tools to tackle the spread and impact of online disinformation in Europe. One of the concerns addressed is ensuring the protection of European values and democratic systems that could be affected by the spread of false news and disinformation. The four principles that inspire the referenced communication are: (1) Improved transparency regarding the way information is produced or sponsored, (2) Diversity of information, (3) Credibility of information, and (4) Inclusive solutions with broad stakeholder involvement.

The communication referred to above assumes that the “open democratic societies depend on public debates that allow well-informed citizens to express their will through free and fair political processes” (European Commission 2018b). The role of the media is to guarantee quality journalism, providing information that enables citizens to form their own views on societal issues and participate in a democratic society, avoiding disinformation campaigns that erode trust in the institutions and in digital and traditional media, eventually harming our democracies. According to the communication (European Commission 2018b), today we are facing an unprecedented disinformation campaign addressed to personalized information spheres, which are becoming powerful echo chambers.

But how does the EC define disinformation? According to this 2018 communication, disinformation is described as:

verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm. Public harm comprises threats to democratic political and policy-making processes as well as public goods such as the protection of EU citizens’ health, the environment or security (European Commission 2018a, p. 4).

In this sense, the EC declares that there is not a single solution that could address all challenges related to disinformation. There are different principles and objectives recommended to be implemented in the different Member States, and one of them is Point 3.3: Fostering education and media literacy. The EC encourages Member States to mobilize resources and include in their educational policies digital citizenship, media literacy,
the development of critical-thinking skills for the online environment, and awareness-raising activities on disinformation, among others.

The Code of Practice on Disinformation (European Commission 2018c) is the other initiative promoted by the EC. This code is the first self-regulatory set of standards worldwide to fight disinformation voluntarily, signed by platforms, leading social networks, advertisers, and industry. The code includes five main areas: (1) disrupting advertising revenues of certain accounts and websites that spread disinformation; (2) making political advertising and issue-based advertising more transparent; (3) addressing the issue of fake accounts and online bots; (4) empowering consumers to report disinformation and access different news sources, while improving the visibility and findability of authoritative content; and (5) empowering the research community to monitor online disinformation through privacy-compliant access to the platforms’ data. Some of the platforms that have signed this code are Facebook, Google, Twitter, Mozilla, and Microsoft, among others. The last reports on the monitoring of the implementation of the Code of Practice are from Twitter (2019), Google (2019), and Facebook (2019).

The action plan against disinformation (High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2018), published on December 5, 2018 and developed by the European Commission, aims at reinforcing capabilities and strengthening cooperation between Member States and the EU in four areas: improving detection, coordinating responses, working with online platforms and industry, and empowering citizens to face online disinformation.

Finally, the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO) was launched in June 2020. As defined by themselves (European Commission 2020a), “EDMO aims at creating and supporting the work of an independent multidisciplinary community capable of contributing to a deeper understanding of the disinformation phenomenon and to increase societal resilience to it.” The five activities promoted by EDMO are: (a) mapping of the fact-checking organizations in Europe and training modules; (b) mapping and coordinating research activities on disinformation at the European level, including a global repository of peer-reviewed scientific articles on disinformation; (c) building a public portal providing media practitioners, teachers, and citizens with information and materials aimed to build resilience to online disinformation and supporting media literacy campaigns; (d) design of a framework to ensure secure and privacy-protected access to platforms data for academics researchers; and (e)
support to public authorities in the monitoring of the policies implemented by online platforms to limit the spread and the impact of disinformation.

### 1.2 Media and Information Literacy by UNESCO

UNESCO is a key international institution leading the policies on Media and Information Literacy across the world. The approach is similar but there are some differences, the first one being the inclusion of information literacy. This came as a result of debates that have shown that media and information literacy should be unified as one discipline due to the relevance of both literacies. UNESCO further decided to promote a composite concept of Media and Information Literacy, presenting an integrated set of information, media, and digital competences.

UNESCO has a specific unit for coordinating the Media and Information Literacy policies, activities, and initiatives (UNESCO 2020). UNESCO’s approach focuses on how our brains depend on information to work optimally, thus accessing quality information is a human need. The quality of the information that people access influences their perception, beliefs, and attitudes. In fact, MIL is linked with promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, peace, freedom of expression, and democratic societies.

The promotion of MIL depends on capacity-building resources according to its website through curricula development, policy guidelines and articulation, assessment framework, with a special focus on training. UNESCO promotes free and open online courses for MIL learning, besides promoting networking around the world. UNESCO facilitates networking and research through:

a) The Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL (GAPMIL) is an initiative that was launched during the Forum for Partnerships on Media and Information Literacy which took place in Abuja, Nigeria. UNESCO brings support to this network offering more than 40 years of experience in Media and Information Literacy and supporting the creation of a solid network involving over 500 organizations since its beginning, all of them aiming to reinforce the global impact of Media and Information Literacy initiatives. GAPMIL strengthened cooperation among other key MIL stakeholders such as the United Nation Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), UNICEF,
the Open Society Foundation, IREX, the European Commission, and other UN agencies and international development partners.

b) UNITWIN MILID (Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue) Network\(^2\) is the result of the collaboration between the UNESCO and UNAOC (United National Alliance of Civilizations) that together launched this network in 2011 in Fez (Morocco). This network is composed by universities of more than 20 countries around the world. They have engaged in research, publications, and guidelines for the promotion of Media and Information Literacy from an academic perspective and have obtained a solid theoretical framework that can be used in current and future research in order to advance this field of knowledge.

c) MIL CLICKS initiative (Media and Information Literacy: Critical-thinking, Creativity, Literacy, Intercultural, Citizenship, Knowledge and Sustainability)\(^3\) is led by UNESCO with the collaboration of GAPMIL and other actors in Media and Information Literacy. The idea behind this initiative is to facilitate the acquisition of Media and Information Literacy competencies to people in their online daily environment, mainly through their interactions on social media sharing tips, resources, and also training with open courses. Individuals and institutions can be part of this initiative by agreeing to the pact to become a MILClicker and sharing in their own social media channels the content distributed by this initiative. Under the slogan “Think critically and Click wisely”\(^4\) the individuals can commit to this initiative.

In order to understand how Media and Information Literacy is understood by UNESCO, Figure 13.1 explains this construct in detail.

UNESCO has a large trajectory in promoting assessment of MIL policies, training, and initiatives. Now that audiovisual platforms need to promote media literacy through their own media, it is time to join efforts. We selected some of them for consideration as part of the reflection in this chapter.

In that sense, UNESCO developed policy and strategies to promote MIL (Grizzle et al. 2013) and promoted a converging approach that interrelated different perspectives. UNESCO further identified the need for more collaboration and partnerships across government ministries to harmonize national and multilateral policies as one of the problems of policy strategy. For instance, MIL should be present beyond the education
policy, forming part of communication and technology strategy besides cultural and other areas of public administration. The approach that involves the policies and strategies to promote MIL includes a combination of human rights, empowerment, knowledge societies, cultural and linguistic diversity, gender, and development approaches. MIL cannot be limited to technological learning; all these approaches are needed to promote an MIL in line with an effective humanistic approach.
The Curriculum of Media and Information Literacy for Teachers (Wilson et al. 2011) is a good resource to consider when promoting media and information literacy activities by different stakeholders. This curriculum was built by international experts from different countries with the definition of the different modules well developed, considering all the crucial aspects to promote MIL learning.

Another key document elaborated by UNESCO (2013) is the Global MIL Assessment Framework, which aimed at collecting data on the enabled environment, monitoring the extent to which citizens have acquired MIL competencies, specifically teachers in UNESCO’s Member States. The idea behind this monitoring was to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of MIL policies and initiatives in the different UNESCO Member States. It would be useful to integrate data on the current website of UNESCO Data for the Sustainable Development Goals focusing on MIL competencies acquired by citizens as a core competence for overcoming disinformation.

Recently, two other key documents have been published and should be considered in this review. The first one is the Draft Global Standards on MIL Guidelines (UNESCO 2019a). This document contains the recommendations of Media and Information Literacy experts from 22 countries hosted by UNESCO in order to update UNESCO’s model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers and to make recommendations on Draft Global Standards for Media and Information Literacy Curricula Guidelines. And the second one is the proclaiming Global MIL Week signed by 193 countries that is a UNESCO resolution in November 2019 (UNESCO 2019b); now this is a global event that will be celebrated every year.

Due to challenges presented with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO has elaborated a common strategy called UNESCO COVID-19 response. The presentation of this strategy highlights that “more than ever the world needs professional journalism and reliable information to adapt its response to the spread of COVID-19, organize itself, learn from other countries’ experiences and counter the increase of rumors and disinformation.” They have included open education resources (OERs), networks of fact-checkers, Media and Information Literacy (MIL) resources to face the spread of disinformation, as well as the use of AI (artificial intelligence) and documentary heritage. Some of the initiatives shared in this common space are:
a) Actions to support media, enhance access to information, and leverage digital technologies in the fight against the pandemic;
b) UNESCO and radio stations mobilized to fight against COVID-19;
c) visuals, graphic, and social media messages to counter disinformation, fight discrimination, and promote best practices;
d) UNESCO and TV stations mobilized to fight against COVID-19. Short video messages in English, French, and Arabic for giving useful information and preventive measures for sharing in TV stations around the world;
e) code the Curve Hackathon;
f) mobilizing documentary heritage community amid the COVID-19 pandemic;
g) open solutions to facilitate research and information on COVID-19;
h) fighting COVID-19 through digital innovation and transformation;
i) the MIL Alliance response to COVID-19;
j) combating the disinfodemic: Working for truth in the time of COVID-19; and
k) communication and information webinars on COVID-19.

2 The role of Public Service Media Promoting Media and Information Literacy

In its handbook *MIL in Journalism: A Handbook for Journalists and Journalism Educators*, UNESCO emphasizes on the key role of professional media as “champions” in the process of promoting Media and Information Literacy:

“There is an inclination to emphasise that MIL is a means of protection from the media. MIL is a process of transferring citizens/audiences to media partners and media to becoming champions of media and information literate societies.” (Muratova et al. 2019).

The AVMSD indicates the need for both media service providers and video-sharing platforms providers to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders to promote the development of media literacy in all sections of the society and for citizens of all ages. The regulatory bodies of audiovisual media services play a crucial role, too. In order to explore some examples of how audiovisual platforms are promoting media literacy considering the
principles of the AVMSD, we have selected two examples of audiovisual platforms (LUMNI and BBC-Bitesize) and one Observatory (O2 RTVE UAB).

### 2.1 LUMNI

[https://educateurs.lumni.fr/images-et-medias](https://educateurs.lumni.fr/images-et-medias)

This platform was promoted by the French public service broadcaster France-tv in its origins, but is now supported by the collaboration of more French media organizations (ARTE, France Télévision, INA, Radio France, Réseau Canopé, RFI, and TV5 Monde). LUMNI offers audiovisual content for primary, secondary, and high school students. It is a repository of 3000 videos and audios. Its educational games for learning are particularly noteworthy and can be found in its entertainment section. It also offers free, quality content for teachers with whom they seek to encourage academic debate.

The catalogue of the Lumni platform includes specific content addressing media literacy and face news. In fact, the platform has as a special section dedicated to work with students and teachers, as illustrated in Figs. 13.2 and 13.3.

### 2.2 BBC-Bitesize

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/)

Even though the UK is not a part of the European Union anymore, the BBC is still a good example to learn from. Bitesize is the BBC’s online platform that compiles educational resources. Through this website, the British PSM organization makes available to the general public an

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**Fig. 13.2** Fake news et complotisme, comment s’y retrouver? Source: Lumni
extensive catalog of resources supporting the education of students at primary, secondary, and post-16 levels. Facing the closure of schools throughout the UK due to the spread of Covid-19, Bitesize has daily updated its content in order to endure the lockdown and help families and students by guaranteeing more audiovisual content for learning purposes.

Regarding media literacy activities, Bitesize includes content on media studies for different ages, as well as a specific section called Fact or Fake aimed at acquiring competencies for the identification of fake news and disinformation.

One of the “star projects” of the BBC is the BBC Young Reporter (formerly BBC School Report), the BBC’s journalism and media project encouraging young people aged 11-18 to share their stories and get their voices heard. This project is open to schools, colleges, home schools, youth organizations, and community groups in the UK and promotes the acquisition of media literacy competences, including lesson plans on how to be a journalist. By adopting a methodology based on “learning by doing,” BBC Young Reporter (see Fig. 13.4) ensures the acquisition of media literacy competences. There are lessons planned step by step to get to know all the process of news production, including: (1) What is news?, (2) Finding news, (3) Gathering news, (4) Writing news, (5) Producing news for different platforms, and (6) Organizing and producing news for broadcast.
Oi2 RTVE-UAB Observatory

http://oi2media.es

Oi2, the Observatory for Information Innovation in the Digital Society, is promoted by the Spanish PSM organization RTVE and the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) as a partnership for monitoring the innovation in audiovisual information of Public Service Media, as well as the promotion of research. Oi2 has promoted the reflection on debates on innovation, also integrating the contribution to media and information literacy in the past five years (Fig. 13.5).
Oi2 is now researching the application of artificial intelligence to the news making process, two of the crucial points being the development of specific report on detection of fake news through artificial intelligence (AI) and how can AI be used to promote the engagement of end-users in the audiovisual content, as another strategic line highlighted on Media and Information Literacy.

The above-mentioned initiatives demonstrate the essential role Public Service Media can play in disseminating MIL. As mentioned in UNESCO’s MIL in Journalism handbook: “By promoting MIL, media are to simultaneously build a relationship with their audience while improving their quality and thus building and fostering the trust in media in general.” (Muratova et al. 2019)

3 The Role of the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities

The European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) is another key stakeholder in the promotion of Media and Information Literacy guidelines. EPRA was set up in 1995 due the need for increasing cooperation between European regulatory authorities. It is now the oldest and largest network of broadcasting regulators in Europe, the European reference for interchanging information, cases, and best practices between different regulatory authorities. This network is composed by 53 regulatory authorities from 47 countries, while the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the European Audiovisual Observatory, and the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media are standing observers of the platform.

EPRA includes in its own portal a repository of laws, policies, and recommendations, developed by different countries. One of the most widely covered topics is Media and Information Literacy: there are now 58 last news, 6 events, and 67 documents from different countries. Thus, this repository contains the last developments in media literacy in relation to regulatory authorities and broadcasting agents (Fig. 13.6).

One of the relevant documents elaborated by EPRA was the Media Literacy Networks Guidelines (Chapman 2018). This document was elaborated with the objective to harmonize the way that the National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) could support MIL networks, to know what was been made in each country. The document summarizes some of the key points
to learn from the experience of NRA supporting MIL networks. This document was prepared for the 46th EPRA meeting in Vienna in October 2017, where an agreement was reached on the promotion of MIL, complemented by a statutory regime that included the following points:

a) Raising awareness of existing rights and regulations,
b) addressing new regulatory challenges,
c) protecting constitutional values,
d) empowering citizens to manage their media use as a parallel to the regulatory mechanisms in place to help manage media use.

According to EPRA’s guidelines, stakeholders who can be integrated as an MIL network include entities from the following fields: (a) Media (broadcasting, digital, print, games, community media); (b) Education (formal and informal, primary, secondary, third-level); (c) Commercial (e.g., companies and organizations who depend on digital transactions); (d) Digital intermediaries (social networks, search engines); (e) Civic society (foundations, community groups and networks, special interest groups, unions); (e) Government / Public sector (ministries, libraries, local authorities).

EPRA guidelines provide useful tips for creating MIL networks and ensuring the effectiveness of the activities promoted. The guidelines highlight the need to establish an evaluation framework that enables reviewing
the results and the impact of the network. The need for continuous evaluation is equally crucial for all policies and MIL activities promoted.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a review of the latest developments in media literacy policies in Europe. One of the contributions worth highlighting is that audiovisual platforms have a crucial role to promote media literacy activities based on the AVMSD. The legal framework and policies reviewed encourage public service audiovisual media to become more active in the promotion of Media and Information Literacy policies.

Despite having a solid legal framework, public service audiovisual media need to reinforce their role becoming more engaged in MIL policies; the context is favorable, but more efforts are required from the side of public service audiovisual media.

The European Commission and UNESCO are currently focusing on MIL for overcoming disinformation. This comes as a result of a common concern regarding the negative effects of the infodemic caused by COVID-19 disinformation on democratic societies and public health.

Media literacy is a solid field, however monitoring systems are required to consistently and continuously evaluate the results of the policies implemented and promoted by audiovisual platforms and other media services. Coordination among different public audiovisual platforms and other agents is vital; this allows for sharing experiences of promoting media and information literacy. EPRA could contribute to reinforcing this goal.

There is a need to join efforts between traditional agents that have provided media literacy activities over the last 25 years, and the new agents that are currently developing media literacy activities, in order to guarantee the quality of training offered.

More success stories of people who have acquired MIL competencies should be shared through audiovisual platforms to demonstrate how MIL empowers to overcome disinformation. Public service audiovisual media could play an active role to serve this aim.

NOTES

1. GAPMIL: https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/gapmil/about
2. Unitwin MILID University Network: https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/milidnetwork/Members
3. MIL CLICKS: https://en.unesco.org/milclicks
4. MILCLICK’s PACT: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/mil_clicks_pact_english.pdf
5. UNESCO Data for the Sustainable Development Goals http://uis.unesco.org
6. UNESCO COVID-19 Response: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/communicationinformationresponse
7. EPRA: https://www.epra.org/articles/general-information-on-epra

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