

EBU/UER
European Broadcasting Union - Union Européenne de Radiodiffusion

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Broadcasters and the Internet - some policy issues

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Background

The role of the electronic media in the internet world is already very important, from many points of view:

- * some of the world's most visited websites are those of broadcasters,
- * in many countries, broadcasting bring internet into even very poor homes through digital terrestrial and satellite,
- * they fight the "digital divide" by teaching people about the digital world.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who took part in the World Electronic Media Forum co-organised by the EBU as an event of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis (November 2005), said the following:

"Electronic media are at the very centre of modern life. When crisis strikes, to whom do people turn first for information and insight? Electronic media. At election time, or when societies wrestle with pressing issues, who offers the most accessible public forum for dialogue and debate? Electronic media.

And day in, day out, where do we find timely alarms about injustice, opportunities to forge connections across great distances, or simple entertainment after a long day's work in factory, field or office tower? On television, on the radio and, increasingly, on the Internet.

Despite all the things you are criticized for -- sensationalism, frivolity, the use of electronic media to spread pornography and hatred -- you continue to hold a unique position of immense stature and influence.

Today, the world needs you to use that influence, even more than you do already, to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals."

This role will be even more important in the next generation of Internet, when the identity of the producers and packages of content will be of essential importance. Without deep involvement of broadcasters – particularly public service broadcasters – in the Internet, there will be little chance of the Internet serving as a global forum for well-informed discussion of issues crucial to the future of Planet Earth. And without their deep

involvement in the IGF, there is unlikely to be a complete discussion of such important topics as cultural diversity, freedom of expression, the right to information, or copyright. Finally, the internet serves to communicate content. And this is why it is vital that broadcasters – the major producers of content worldwide – must be full and active participants in the Internet Governance Forum from Athens on. Moreover, participation by the EBU, on behalf of all the world's broadcasting unions, will provide a conduit to the broadcasters which can publicise the Forum's work to viewers and listeners worldwide.

Programme Committee

In the view of the EBU, the programme committee should be a multi-stakeholder body with equal representation of governments, business, civil society, and electronic media. We believe that these representatives should be selected on the basis of their expertise by the United Nations Secretary General after consultation with all relevant parties.

Dates , Format and Themes

The proposed dates in October seem convenient, although it might be prudent to foresee four days rather than three to allow resolution of any sensitive issue that might arise.

The format should alternate plenary meetings with specialist workshops to maximise the opportunity to explore and harness the expertise of the different stakeholders.

We propose that the workshops should address, among other topics, the questions of multilingualism and cultural diversity, and how to conciliate the right of the public to access with the copyright issues.

International organizations already involved in regulation of the relationship between broadcasting, the Internet and modern society

Multilateral

United Nations System - UNSG

UN General Secretariat is aware of the key role of the media in various fields, first of all in the fight against the digital divide and secondly in the dissemination of "digital education" among the world population.

1. WEMF 2003 – Broadcasters' declaration

http://www.ebu.ch/departments/legal/pdf/leg_pp_wsis_declaration_broadcasters_091203.pdf

2. WEMF 2005 - Message to the Tunis World Summit of Information Society

http://www.wemfmedia.org/Message_to_the_WSIS.pdf

As Kofi Annan recognised in his speech delivered to the WEMF in Tunis:

"The Broadcasters' Declaration, issued by the first World Electronic Media Forum two years ago, signalled your commitment to help to build an information society that enriches and empowers all people."

United Nations System - UNESCO

EBU is involved in many projects with UNESCO, one of the most relevant being the assistance to the electronic media in the countries in transition toward democracy or in post-war reconstruction process.

United Nations System - ITU

EBU is one of the parties of ITU and is heavily involved in revising the 1961 Stockholm Agreement on spectrum allocation in order to manage the transition from analogue to digital transmission.

Regional

European Region:

European Union

- The EBU is involved in many cooperative projects with the EU, especially in creating EBU - [European Broadcasting Union](#)

finalize, with the contribution of EBU, its revised version of the TV Without Frontiers directive which aims to regulate the world of convergent media.

Council of Europe

The EBU is involved in many projects with this body, especially in assisting broadcasters in countries in transition toward democracy.

Other regions of the world:

At the regional level in the rest of the world, EBU is active through the WBU - World Broadcasting Unions – which brings together the associations of national broadcasters around the world:

MEMBERS

- EBU - [European Broadcasting Union](#)
- ABU - [Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union](#)
- IAB - [International Association of Broadcasting](#)
- ASBU - [Arab States Broadcasting Union](#)
- CBU - [Caribbean Broadcasting Union](#)
- NABA - [North American Broadcasters Association](#)
- OTI - [Organizacion de Telecomunicaciones Iberoamericanas, OTI, A.C.](#)
- URTNA - [Union des radiodiffusions et télévisions nationales d'Afrique](#)

The commitment of broadcasters to combat the digital divide

In Tunis the World Broadcasting Unions confirmed their commitment to combat the digital divide.

[http://www.nabanet.com/wbuArea/docs/WBU%20WEMF%20II%20Press%20Release%20\(11-18-05\).pdf](http://www.nabanet.com/wbuArea/docs/WBU%20WEMF%20II%20Press%20Release%20(11-18-05).pdf)

As EBU Secretary General Jean Réveillon said in a speech delivered to the WSIS plenary:

"... radio and television are committed to playing a key role in building the Information Society by continuing to offer everyone free access to information and knowledge.

Broadcasters reaffirm their attachment to the values of the freedom of speech, pluralism, and, of course, cultural diversity, recognized by the Convention adopted by Unesco;

In particular, our World Electronic Media Forum:

- *urged all radio and television operators to continue their course of action – already embarked upon – of adapting their structures and staffing to the developments in communications technologies in which they are, and will be, key players.*
- *stressed the urgent need to make the requisite resources available to safeguard audiovisual media archives.*
- *recalled the complementary nature of the various media, according to their specificities, in communication between civilizations and cultures and supporting sustainable development and the great humanitarian causes.*
- *insisted on the role of regional and international cooperation in the transfer of skills and technologies and in raising the standard of human resources.*

- *supported, in particular, the initiative to be adopted in the United Nations Security Council to counter the growing danger faced by journalists and their co-workers in situations of armed conflict.*
- *in conclusion, and in return for our commitment, we radio and television broadcasters ask you world leaders, first, to grant the necessary resources to public service broadcasting for it to continue its remit of underpinning fundamental values through services provided free of charge to the entire population.*
- *and secondly, to involve us specifically as a partner in the follow-up to the conclusions and orientations of the WSIS and in particular in the Forum on the governance of the Internet.*

Given the interest shown here in our conclusions, we, the public service broadcasters, confirm our intention to contribute to the creation of a fair and open Information Society".

The role of electronic media within the WSIS Plan of Action and the Tunis Agenda and Commitment

The WSIS Plan of Action

The WSIS Action Plan sets forth a provision on the role of media in the future Information society through article 9) paragraph 1) that put among the WSIS priorities:

"Encourage and promote joint use of traditional media and new technologies.

More than that, in the following chapter 8 (C8. Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content) at art. 23. *Cultural and linguistic diversity, while stimulating respect for cultural identity, traditions and religions, is essential to the development of an Information Society based on the dialogue among cultures and regional and international cooperation. It is an important factor for sustainable development.*

(...)

paragraph c) Support efforts to develop and use ICTs for the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, keeping it accessible as a living part of today's culture. This includes developing systems for ensuring continued access to archived digital information and multimedia content in digital repositories, and support archives, cultural collections and libraries as the memory of humankind.

Two years later at WSIS 2005 this goal is strengthened in the final Agenda and in the Commitment.

The Tunis Agenda:

The Tunis agenda in two paragraphs already recognize the role of the media: **53** and **90**.

(paragraph **53**)

*"We commit to working earnestly towards multilingualization of the Internet, as part of a multilateral, transparent and democratic process, involving governments and all stakeholders, in their respective roles. In this context, we also support local content development, translation and adaptation, digital archives, **and diverse forms of digital and traditional media**, and recognise that these activities can also strengthen local and indigenous communities".*

(paragraph **90**)

*"n) **promoting the use of traditional and new media** in order to foster universal access to information, culture and knowledge for all people, especially vulnerable populations and populations in developing countries and using, inter alia, radio and television as educational and learning tools;*

*o) **Reaffirming the independence, pluralism and diversity of media, and freedom of information** including through, as appropriate, the development of domestic legislation. We reiterate our call for the responsible use and treatment of information by the media in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards. We*

reaffirm the necessity of reducing international imbalances affecting the media, particularly as regards infrastructure, technical resources and the development of human skills. These reaffirmations are made with reference to Geneva Declaration of Principles paragraphs 55 to 59 ".

The Tunis Commitment:

The Tunis Commitment (*paragraph 9*) sets forth and reiterate the involvement of the media to the development of the Internet.

*"9. We reaffirm our resolution in the quest to ensure that everyone can benefit from the opportunities that ICTs can offer, by recalling that governments, as well as private sector, civil society and the United Nations and other international organisations, should work together to: improve access to information and communication infrastructure and technologies as well as to information and knowledge; build capacity; increase confidence and security in the use of ICTs; create an enabling environment at all levels; develop and widen ICT applications; **foster and respect cultural diversity; recognise the role of the media**; address the ethical dimensions of the Information Society; and encourage international and regional cooperation. **We confirm** that these are the key principles for building an inclusive Information Society, the elaboration of which is found in the Geneva Declaration of Principles".*

Issues for consideration

We call upon the IGF to recognize issues relating to the electronic media as a top agenda priority for the duration of its mandate, and to consider forming a working group on content policies.

The EBU, on behalf of the World Broadcasting Unions, reaffirms the Broadcasters' Message to the WSIS which was handed to the UN Secretary General in in Tunis:

They commit themselves to an open and participative information society, and call on heads of state and government to:

1. Develop the information society in the spirit of freedom of expression, pluralism, cultural diversity and public service as set out in the Broadcasters' Declaration of 2003.
2. Guarantee free and open access to editorially independent radio, television and new non-linear services in all countries through appropriate legislation and funding arrangements.
3. Support the development of technologies, software and open standards for the production of quality low-cost media content oriented to the needs of local populations.
4. Enable broadcasters to restructure, and to re-train their staff, in ways adapted to respective social, technical and economic conditions, in order to optimise the "digital dividend" offered by the new technologies for production and transmission.
5. Provide support for urgent action to preserve the world's audiovisual heritage, enabling future generations to access archives on their own social and cultural history, and for establishment of an international ad hoc group on audiovisual archives comprising the world's broadcasting unions, UNESCO, specialist organizations and financing agencies.
6. Affirm the vital role of the media as communicators of information, exchange and dialogue between cultures, and of public service broadcasters in particular as having a particular duty of technical and programme innovation.
7. Foster different forms of media for local communities, including associative radio, to improve dialogue and democratic participation, particularly in rural areas with poor infrastructure.
8. Encourage the transfer of competence and technology in digital production, transmission and asset management through regional and international cooperation and solidarity – including that of the world's broadcasting unions.
9. Collaborate with broadcasters in addressing global development and humanitarian issues, for example within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.
10. Promote before the UN Security Council an initiative to improve the security and physical integrity of journalists, media collaborators and associates in situations of

armed conflict, and support practical efforts, such as safety training, for all situations where journalists are at risk because of their work.

They also request recognition as full partners in establishing a truly global information society – not least as participants in the Internet Governance Forum.

WHAT IS THE EBU ?

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) is the largest professional association of national broadcasters in the world.

The Union has 74 active Members in 54 countries of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and 44 associate Members in 25 countries further afield.

The EBU was founded in February 1950 by western European radio and television broadcasters. It merged with the OIRT - its counterpart in Eastern Europe - in 1993.

Working on behalf of its Members in the European area, the EBU negotiates broadcasting rights for major sports events, operates the Eurovision and Euroradio networks, organizes programme exchanges, stimulates and coordinates co-productions, and provides a full range of other operational, commercial, technical, legal and strategic services.

At its office in Brussels, the EBU represents the interests of public service broadcasters vis-à-vis the European institutions.

The EBU also works in close collaboration with sister unions on other continents.

WHAT IS THE WBU ?

In recent years, regional broadcasting issues and problems have become increasingly global in nature. Realizing this, NABA proposed the establishment of the World Broadcasting Unions (WBU) in 1992 to act as a coordinating body at the international broadcasting level. Since then, the WBU has provided global solutions on key issues for its member unions.

MEMBERS

- ABU - [Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union](#)
- ASBU - [Arab States Broadcasting Union](#)
- CBU - [Caribbean Broadcasting Union](#)
- EBU - [European Broadcasting Union](#)
- IAB - [International Association of Broadcasting](#)
- NABA - [North American Broadcasters Association](#)
- OTI - [Organizacion de Telecomunicaciones Iberoamericanas, OTI, A.C.](#)
- URTNA - [Union des radiodiffusions et télévisions nationales d'Afrique](#)

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