



MEDIA LITERACY

COUNTRY REPORT: CYPRUS

Country Report submitted to the European Commission

For the purposes of Article 30C(4) of The Radio and Television Broadcasters Law of 1998 to
2016

Cyprus Radio Television Authority

June, 2017

List of Content

1. Introductory Remarks – Regulatory Provisions.....	3
2. Media Literacy in the context of the operation of the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA).....	5
3. Aims and Objectives.....	5
4. Target of the Project.....	6
5. Projects undertaken by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA).....	6
5.1. Media Literacy Experiential Workshops.....	6
5.2. Interpretation of regulatory provisions about Audiovisual Commercial Communication.....	10
6. Forthcoming Activities of the Cyprus Radio Television Authority.....	11

1. Introductory Remarks and Regulatory Provisions

According to the Audio-Visual Media Services Directives of 2007 and 2013, Member States and in particular the independent regulatory authorities in the audiovisual media services are required to ensure high levels of and to upgrade media literacy in the member states. The Directives safeguard certain public interests, including media literacy. This report presents the initiatives undertaken by the competent regulatory authority of the audiovisual media services in Cyprus, namely the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA) for the period of July 2014 to June 2017. The Cyprus Radio Television Authority has the mandate to design and coordinate the agenda for the enhancement of Media Literacy in the Republic of Cyprus.

• **Private Audio Visual Media Service Providers**

Article 30C of The Radio and Television Broadcasters Law of 1998 to 2016 pertains to Media Literacy. In particular, the article provides that:

“30C(1) The Authority shall undertake, in cooperation with other competent State, semi-governmental and private agencies, to promote the planning and coordination of the development and implementation of programmes (research, educational, informational and other) to upgrade the level of media literacy in the Republic.

30C(2) Media service providers shall participate in these efforts, on the basis of the Authority’s design planning, and particularly in the dissemination to citizens of clear and user-friendly information and the support awareness campaigns, inter alia, on the method of production, promotion and distribution of information and creative content in the digital environment, for the responsible use of the internet in general as well as on the method of operation of search engines and their optimum use. .

30C(3) For the purposes of this section, the term "media literacy" shall mean the ability to access, understand and critically assess the various aspects of media and its content as well as the ability to express oneself in different forms of communication, mainly through new technologies.

30C(4) The Authority shall send a report to the Commission relating to the application of subsection (1) which shall be communicated to the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Education and Culture, no later than 30 June 2011 and every three years thereafter.”

- Public Service Broadcaster

It is noteworthy that with regards to the media literacy the same provisions are included in the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation Law, section 300A (as subsequently amended), which regulates the public service broadcaster in Cyprus, namely the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC)¹. Article 18D of the aforementioned law provides as follows:

“18D. “The Foundation participates in the Media Literacy actions, coordinated by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority, particularly in the dissemination of clear, user-friendly information to citizens and in supporting, among others, the awareness campaigns on the production, promotion and distribution of information and creative content in digital environment towards the responsible use of the internet in general and the operation and optimum use of search engines.

For the purposes of this Article, the term "media literacy" means the ability to access, understand and critically evaluate the various aspects of mass media and mass media content, and the ability of expression in the different modes of communication, primarily through new technologies.”

¹ The Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) is country's public service broadcaster. Its operation is partially monitored by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA). In brief, CRTA is responsible for monitoring issues as regards the CyBC, concerning, among others, the following: advertising and teleshopping, political advertising during pre-election periods, sponsorship, right of reply, European works, product placement, prohibition of incitement to hatred, implementation of media literacy activities.

2. Media Literacy in the context of the operation of the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA)

The CRTA has statutory responsibility to promote the level of Media Literacy in the Republic of Cyprus. The activities and the initiatives undertaken by the CRTA with regards to media literacy seek to empower citizens with essential skills and competences in the new digital and converged media environment and to facilitate them to have critical thinking and knowledge about the operation of the media sector. Media Literacy is therefore regarded by the CRTA as the reply to the fastly changing and complex media landscape.

The implementation of media literacy policy reflects a change in the role of regulators of audiovisual media services: it exemplifies the evolvement of the relevant regulatory framework towards a widening role for the regulators in the sector. Regulators are no longer simply in charge of applying media legislations they are rather expected to have a pivotal role in providing citizens with the essential skills and competences to engage with media, to exercise effective choice and judgement and ultimately to protect and empower themselves.

3. Aims and Objectives

The principal objectives of the broader initiative to enhance media literacy levels in the Republic of Cyprus are focused on:

- Increase awareness of the various forms of media messages experienced in everyday life.
- Development of critical approach towards media content; citizens need to be empowered to choose among multiple sources of information, of images and of advertisements, to evaluate each source and to critically reconstruct the information.
- Empowerment citizens to access the media and to create communication in various contexts and for various purposes.
- Development of requirements for access to media analysis and evaluation of their products as well as creation and production.
- Encouragement of active participation of individuals in media culture.
- Acquisition of the necessary skills and competences so that individuals are conscious consumers and producers of media content and well-informed citizens.

4. Target of the Project:

Current project targets at educating the younger generation, placing particular emphasis upon the pupils at primary and secondary school establishments. The choice to focus on this particular social group was not a random one. This social group is one of the most sensitive due to the fact that pupils' personality is still malleable. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of media's pivotal role in the development of children and the significant influence of the media in the mental and psychological development of children underpinned that choice.

However, it is important to emphasize that this does not mean that adults are not among the target groups of media literacy projects to be developed and implemented by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority. Additional target groups are the various professional groups, such as journalists and the various social groups, such as the elders, the minorities or people living the rural areas.

5. Projects undertaken by the Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA)

5.1. Media Literacy Experiential Workshops

The most significant Media Literacy project implemented by the CRTA considers the provision of *Experiential Workshops on Media Literacy*. It is a national program that covers urban and rural areas. All school establishments of primary and secondary education operating in the Republic of Cyprus are eligible to apply to participate in the workshops. The significance of this project resides in the size of the target audience and the success of the project. The success of the project is also seen by the demand on behalf of educators so that their students attend the workshops.

The rationale behind this scheme is that Media literacy education contributes towards developing critical thinking and active participation in media culture. The intention is to give youth greater freedom by empowering them to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media content.

This project addresses several crucial media literacy skills and capacities. Precisely, it is expected to empower students:

- To understand how advertisements and media messages are constructed.
- To understand the advertising strategies and the fact that advertisements are not incidentally created; contrastingly the media content is purposefully produced and disseminated.
- To understand the assessment criteria for news and information.
- To realise the need to critically think towards advertisements and news information
- To recognise different types of media content and to evaluate the content and the messages for truthfulness, reliability, credibility.

The content of the workshops

The project considers the development of three different lesson plans/workshops, one for each of the above-mentioned categories. In general the workshops seek to develop the critical thinking of the students and to empower them with the essential knowledge and competence to critically evaluate the messages distributed by the media. These messages pertain to the visual images as well, while the media include also the internet and any form of message communicated in the digital environment.

For the purposes of this project, school life has been separated in three categories, as follows:

- Level 1 to Level 3 of Primary school
- Level 4 to Level 6 of Primary school
- Secondary School (Level 1 to Level 3)

The workshop for Level 1 to Level 3 of Primary school focuses on advertisement and particularly on food advertisement. According to the lesson plan, during the workshop subjects such as, the target audience of the advertisement and the marketing strategy adopted in the advertisements that are shown are discussed. There is also an evaluative-creative activity which asks students to create their own advertisement using the target groups and the advertisement

ideas that are given to them. For the purposes of this last activity students are provided with ideas about a product and are asked to create their own advertisement.

Precisely and in more details, at the beginning of the workshop five advertisements of cereals and cereal-bar chocolates are shown to the students and then there is discussion about each one of the advertisements separately. The questions consider the product of the advertisement, the images, the colours and the music of the advertisement and the main actor/actress. Then students are asked to think which part of the population is likely to be interested in each one of the advertisements that have been previously watched.

The objectives of this workshop focus on the critical approach of children towards advertisement; namely these objectives are the following:

- To identify the location of advertising in daily life
- To name the purpose of advertisements
- To identify the product that is advertised and the target market (consumers) of the particular product
- To use the appropriate vocabulary which is relevant to advertising

The workshop for the second group (Level 4 to Level 6 of Primary school) refers, again, to advertisement. Though for this workshop different subjects are discussed. There is particular emphasis on how the media content, the advertisements included, contributes to the construction of the public opinion and to the creation and perpetuation of certain stereotypes. Thus, in the context of the workshop it is attempted to deconstruct these stereotypes.

Two different advertisements of the same product (car) are shown and the discussion deals with the plot of the advertisement, the main characters, the music, the images and the colours that prevail in each of the two advertisements. Through an interactive discussion the students realize the strategies behind each advertisement and how these strategies are defined and influenced by the target groups of the advertisements.

This workshop seeks to make students aware:

- To understand the various elements of an advertising (e.g. script, heroes, images, colours, music) and to state how these elements are relevant to the advertising products and the target market.
- To identify and evaluate gender stereotypes as these are emerged in the mass media.
- To write the script of an advertisement.

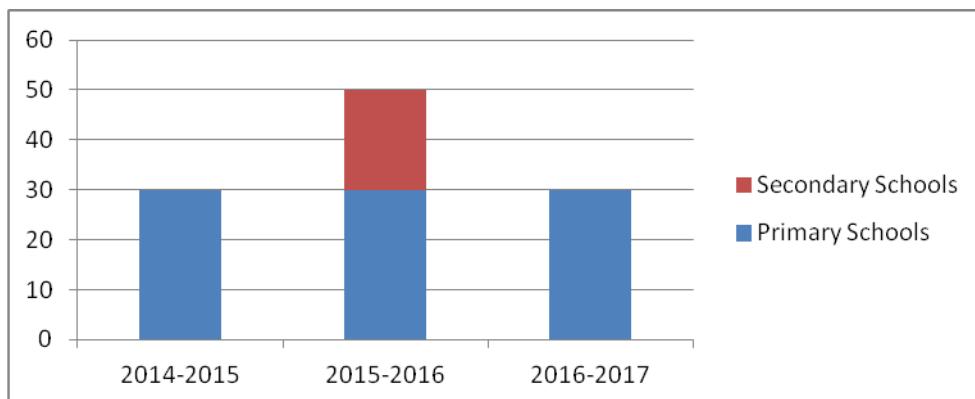
The main topic for the workshop delivered at the Secondary School (Level 1 to Level 3) is the critical evaluation of the content disseminated through the various forms of mass media. Students are expected to develop their critical thinking and to realise the significance of assessing the credibility and reliability of news and information that is distributed by traditional media and the internet. It is also anticipated that students understand the importance of distinguishing between news reporting and commenting and make a distinction between accurate and misleading information and news reporting. The importance of sources' and information's cross-verification also comes to the surface and is discussed. Moreover, the workshop introduces the concept of responsible use of the internet and the online search engines.

The objectives of this workshop focus on the critical understanding of news and are articulated as follows:

- To name the assessment criteria regarding the credibility of online news stories
- To detect the true from false in the information's jungle
- To evaluate the credibility and reliability of the news stories and of the various sources
- To understand the need to control and to cross-verify news stories, especially the online ones.

The workshops and the lessons plans were jointly designed by the CRTA and the Pedagogical Institute of Cyprus. The dissemination and delivery of the content of this project was face-to-face meeting. During 2014-2015 school year the workshops were delivered by CRTA officers and Pedagogical Institute staff, whilst since 2015-2016 they are delivered by CRTA officers.

Bar 1 below illustrates the number of school establishments in which the Media Literacy experiential workshops were provided.



Bar 1: Total number of schools in which the Media Literacy experiential workshops were provided

5.2. Interpretation of regulatory provisions about audiovisual commercial communication

Research

Realizing that media literacy is not only intended to topics and matters concerning the children and the youth but that it should also engage the whole population, the CRTA conducted a research with regards to the interpretation of the regulatory provisions about audiovisual commercial communications. This project targeted the professionals in the media sector and sought to clarify the regulation of audiovisual commercial communication in order to improve the implementation of the legislation governing media service providers and to facilitate the compliance of the providers with the relevant regulation.

The research conducted during Summer and Autumn in 2014. It considered the regulatory provisions about the audiovisual commercial communication and their interpretation as well as their implementation by the Cypriot audiovisual media providers. Precisely, the research discusses regulation of the product placement, of the sponsorship and of the surreptitious audiovisual commercial communication. Twenty five (25) programmes broadcast in May and June 2014 had been watched and a detailed report was prepared with regards to the acceptable and lawful practices in the product placement and the teleshopping. The report detailed the major violations of the regulation with regards to the above-mentioned types of audiovisual media communications

and elucidated the policy of the CRTA with regards to the issues under investigation. One of the most prominent conclusions was the incorrect implementation of the product placement.

The final report was communicated to the audiovisual media providers in Cyprus for their consideration and future reference.

6. Forthcoming Activities of the Cyprus Radio Television Authority

The Cyprus Radio Television Authority acknowledges that media literacy is a priority for every single individual and a competency essential for the whole population. Its forthcoming activities are related to the design and implementation of initiatives and activities focusing on adults, such as the provision of evidence on media use and attitudes and the facilitation of the engagement of adults with the on-line facilities, such as paying utility bills on-line, practicing e-commerce, having experience with e-governance.