



CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE 'WHAT ROLE FOR THE MEDIA IN PREVENTING INCITEMENT TO TERRORISM AND VIOLENT RADICALISATION?'

(Dublin, May 21st 2007)

Difficulties in definition

- Can media representatives from across the whole region reach a common definition?
- Is this likely to be a definition that governments from across the region will find acceptable?
- Is it likely that the failure to agree a definition will prevent sensible discussion of other aspects of this matter?
- Is it possible to set this question aside and still have sensible discussion of other aspects?
- Should this major difficulty form part of any communication or should it be left to a stage where a plan for such cooperation is being set out.

Reflection on media positions

- Journalists should resist efforts to assign them a role on any issue.
- Journalists must have a clear idea of what they perceive their role to be and not readily take on the positions of government.
- Media should not label causes but provide contexts for current affairs, promoting understanding.
- Journalists must oppose censorship in all its forms, even in the guise of 'anti-terror' legislation.
- Journalists are divided on the need for specific codes of conduct but agree that adherence to any codes should be completely self-regulatory and not enforced through legislation.
- Journalists are divided on whether they should engage with militant groups and whether this constitutes providing them with 'publicity'.
- Journalists should be aware of the dangers of stereotyping, understand and respect other cultural/political orientations, and apply norms of common humanity to reporting.

- Need for greater ethical awareness among photographers and editors about the use of images of victims and the damage inflicted by terrorist attacks. To photograph, design and illustrate is to select, just as in direct reportage.

Reflection on government positions

- Greater transparency is needed within the media as well as within government.
- Terrorist groups are very good at propaganda and journalists need to be aware that they can be used for such purposes.
- Journalists should strive to ensure they are telling all sides of the story or, at least, be honest about which side of the story they are examining.
- Despite filters used by some states, it is difficult to effect internet regulation – even if this were desirable.

Reflection on possible actions

- The creation of forums for peer review, so journalists representing northern and southern media can examine each other's work.
- Forums through which journalists can exchange information about different political, religious and governmental issues.
- Development of handbooks, guidelines or information packs on specific issues to act as reporting tools within the news room.
- More information through various EU programmes, to explore the diversity of the Euromediterranean region.
- Foster a sense of inclusion among minorities by recruiting from minorities and by exchange arrangements between the North and South.
- More systematic contact between the media North and South, academics and think tanks; pooled syndication arrangements between North and South.
- Curricula for journalism schools on reporting diversity.
- Curricula for journalism training schools to include an awareness of peace journalism, offering a stronger voice to the moderate majority.