Riga Recommendations on Media and Information Literacy in a Shifting Media and Information Landscape

Preamble

Reaffirming the spirit and content of the progression and gradual repositioning of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in previous Declarations such as Grünwald Declaration (1982), Prague Declaration Towards Information Literate Societies (2003), Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning (2005), Paris Agenda-12 Recommendations on MIL (2007), Fez Declaration on MIL (2011), Moscow Declaration on MIL (2012), Framework and Action Plan of the Global Alliance for Partnerships on MIL (2013), and Paris Declaration on MIL in the Digital Age (2014);

Noting that the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 *Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions* - target 16.10, "ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements"*,* is central to achieving all SDGs and in particular SDG 5 on gender equality;

Emphasizing that media and information literacy is a life code that can underpin sustainable development;

Recognising that this potential requires a media and information landscape, wherein freedom of expression, press freedom, access to information and the right to information, and the right to privacy, flourish, as a necessary step to a critical, people-centred, sustainable development process;

Further recognising that media and information literate people are also needed for sustainable development;

Also noting that, in order to produce sustainable development processes, media and information literacy skills are increasingly essential in response to technological and informational advancements having overtaken the available skills required to efficiently and ethically use digital technology and media resources;

Noting that MIL is indispensable to a critical process that empowers and engages people as global citizens, and that it must be at the heart of strategies for the creation of a culture of communications that is open, inclusive, and based upon respect for human rights and democracy, and which contributes to human development at all levels.

Recognising in addition that media and information literacy supports the economic growth and competitiveness of societies and the well-being of individuals, in that such competencies are in increasing demand in job markets and are vital for many sectors.

Further noting the information, media and communications landscape is a very complex and rapidly changing, and where different stakeholders and creators are in a dynamic relationship with one another.

Noting security concerns about the increasing misuse of information and media resources for aims of disinformation, propaganda, hate speech and incitement of violence, and urging a concerted effort to empower societies with stronger media and information literacy competencies;

Underscoring the importance of MIL in building a new culture of communications and improving the quality of public discourse as being particularly relevant to promoting tolerance and engagement in public affairs, and that related efforts should include the political, social and cultural leadership in society;

Recognizing the contribution of MIL to a more peaceful society - through combatting hate speech, cyber-mobbing, and cyberbullying, and promoting digital privacy and digital security;

Supporting and endorsing the petition launched by GAPMIL to call for an internationally recognised and official Global MIL Week;

Welcoming initiatives such as the Council of the European Union (19 May 2016) adoption of *Conclusions on Developing Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Through Education and Training* - which invites its Member States and the European Commission to "continue to cooperate with, and take into account the work done by, other multilateral fora, such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the OECD, since the challenges cross borders and affect countries both inside and outside the European Union".

Call on each UNESCO Member State:

To ensure that MIL programmes and policy are developed as central to national and international policies designed to promote civic participation in democratic life by spreading information, knowledge, awareness and skills that will enable people to enjoy the benefits of the new communications environment;

To address knowledge gaps between MIL mediators such as library and information specialists, teachers, parents, journalists by providing relevant resources, funding and training as a part of professional development and lifelong learning;

To provide resources and support robust empirical research in the field of MIL, across global contexts for meaningful comparison, in order to address current issues such as communications around forced migration, violent radicalization, hate speech, global warming, new propaganda wars, gender-based cyber harassment, other forms of gender discrimination;

To ensure that national, regional and international debates on privacy and security include contributions from the MIL community;

To support and promote cooperation between stakeholders who are engaged in the provision of information based on international standards of free expression, including those concerned with: academic freedom; the freedom of artistic and cultural expression; and the freedom of the media and journalism;

To promote awareness and recognition of the relevance of MIL to youth and to ageing populations, and to intergenerational dialogue, by supporting the development and implementation of related initiatives;

To provide people with disabilities with MIL resources tailored to their special needs;

To encourage educators to use media and information resources more widely in education to enhance teaching.

Call on Internet and technological intermediaries

To increase engagement in policy making, training, capacity building, and evaluation, with all MIL stakeholders;

To explore common grounds for cooperation, among themselves and in dialogue with MIL practitioners, so as to ensure that citizens have open access to MIL-related resources;

To act in respect of human rights and to ensure that their activities on MIL fit into an information commons for public good and knowledge societies;

To promote pluralism of MIL-related content and increase access to this content and to training, by capitalizing on the technological boom in digital devices, especially mobile devices.

Call on media & information providers (including public and private broadcasters, over-the-top content providers, film rights holder and distributors, games distributors, news media, advertisers and advertising agencies)

To join in partnership with the education sectors and MIL communities to make media and information content available to children and young people to foster their media & information literacy

To operate licensing schemes where content is not freely available

To build on emerging good practice of unlocking archives for use in education and find equitable solutions to rights challenges of archive material, especially for orphan works

Call on civil society (including GAPMIL members, community activist groups, charities, foundations, trade unions, academia, and researchers)

To encourage participation in GAPMIL network and put in place strong mechanisms to ensure the strengthening and sustainability of GAPMIL - and all its Regional Chapters - as a wide coalition of organizations that can build bridges for MIL development;

To ensure that the awareness of privacy competencies and issues surrounding security are included in MIL resources, training, awareness raising, and in the MIL agenda in general;

To explore cooperation with relevant international MIL platforms and networks such as the Media Education Summit;

To increase the involvement of young people as co-producers/participants and stakeholders rather than as only recipients of MIL, and to avoid imposing or generalising conceptions of MIL that fall short of being human-rights centred;

To build alliances with media organizations and professional associations of journalists to promote media and information literacy;

To ensure that MIL issues are addressed through both formal and non-formal education, paying a special attention to disadvantaged groups, such as immigrants and unemployed, and involving such actors as libraries, other memory institutions, social partners and other civic organizations providing non-formal and life-long learning to society;

To champion learning through media and information resources as well as about them. When we learn through media and information resources we also learn more about them.

Call on educators, audiovisual regulators, libraries and information specialists, journalists and other media professionals, museums, archives and publishers

To ensure that all citizens have access to reliable and quality-assured information;

To encourage media and information literacy for a critical and reflective evaluation of information and to raise the awareness of manipulations and propaganda;

To promote media and information literacy enabling all citizens to take part in political and social life in a democratic society;

To establish standards for media and information literacy and to anchor media and information literacy and its links to other social literacies, in the curricula of all education levels - ensuring non-traditional evaluation which is sensitive to different MIL approaches.

Call on UNESCO:

To initiate consultation necessary for the tabling of a resolution for an internationally recognized and official Global Media and Information Literacy Week;

To bring these recommendations forward to the Global MIL Week 2016 feature event, the Sixth MIL and Intercultural Dialogue International Conference and First GAPMIL General Assembly which will be held from 2-5 November 2016 in Sao Paulo, Brazil;

To call for a multi-stakeholder meeting with the Internet and technological intermediaries and Member States together with GAPMIL to advance the MIL agenda, find mutual grounds to form an information commons and strengthen media and information literate societies.