

# Media and development

2006/2080(INI) - 28/08/2006

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Manolis MAVROMMATIS (EPP-ED, GR) on the media and development. The report called on the European Union, Member States, acceding countries and the ACP countries to involve civil society organisations, including private enterprises, and particularly the media, in attaining their objectives for development.

It drew attention to the important role the media could play with regard to government transparency, accountability and the public scrutiny of decision-makers in power, by highlighting policy failures, maladministration by public officials, corruption in the judiciary and scandals in the corporate sector. The committee also said that it was important to improve the dialogue and consultation between local non-State players and national authorities in developing countries in crucial areas, such as the media, in order to strengthen the abilities, accountability and transparency of public institutions and to increase public sector effectiveness in applying the principles of respect for human rights and good governance and in fighting corruption.

MEPs said that funding programmes with a mandate on and for development should include a more systematic integration of State-independent media. And they called for women to have effective access to the media so that they could play a greater part in production and contribute to economic development.

Among other points, the committee underlined the role of the media in the education of people in developing countries, especially in terms of health care (sexual and reproductive health, malaria, etc.), employment, agriculture, trade, and environmental sustainability, such as the BBC World Service Trust for the use of communications for development. It acknowledged the problem of the "personalisation" of news, "which can manipulate both the audience of developing countries and the western public", and encouraged the organisations that provide training to journalists to give particular importance to the achievement of a minimum salary for people working in the media, which would make them less vulnerable to corruption. MEPs also stressed the decisive role of the media in promoting the protection of human rights in developing countries and in raising public awareness in countries in the West and, by extension, increasing their contribution to humanitarian aid. Finally, the report called on governments and public authorities throughout the world "to end in particular the culture of impunity regarding violence against journalists" by investigating and punishing those responsible for attacks on media professionals, and by taking the necessary precautions that would enable journalists to continue to provide citizens with the essential knowledge and objective information that flow from a free and independent press.