

# **Declaration of Linz**

## **Adjustments to Cultural and Media Policies**

**For the first time, Austria's media and politico-cultural initiatives Virtuelle Plattform Österreich, Verband Freier Radios Österreich, Vereinigung alternativer Zeitungen und Zeitschriften, Kulturplattform OÖ and IG Kultur Österreich agreed on their common duties during a conference.**

**It was the beginning of on-going cooperation and discussion.**

**This declaration has to be seen as action guidance directed towards politics.**

### **Media policy is democratic policy**

Cultural and media action groups in Austria provide public conditions within the freedom of speech and artificial creativity of citizens can be realised.

These action groups as a whole make up an additional independent third sector to market and state. Its characteristics are a charitable status, self-determination, self-organisation and the acquisition of extensive competences.

This third sector contributes to social integration and innovation by allowing criticism, information, and creativity away from the economic and governmental mainstream. The apparatus of public law and commerce does not perform its work anyway and even when it does, achievements turn out to be insufficient.

Therefore, the model of a "civil society" calls upon politics to act as regulatory organ. Especially in what concerns the structuring of cultural and media development, mere guidelines of profitable competition may not be taken into consideration and reorientation is necessary.

Media policy is cultural policy

Media are understood as cultural instruments, which fulfil a similarly supportive function as legislation and its executive and legislative bodies. Thus their status has to be laid down independently from economic utilization logic. The state has to assume responsibility for the creation of juridical and financial basic conditions. The goal is a pluralistic information society with local establishment of unlimited freedom of speech and artistic, and cultural issues in free and non-commercial media.

### **Media policy is structuring policy**

The creation of non-controversial models and guidelines is required. Time after time, these structures have to be re-monitored. Juridically speaking, the expression of opinion and formation of opinion is public task, which really facilitates a free democratic constitutional structure. As required by the constitution (Art. 13 STGG, Art 10 EMRK) it should not be left to market mechanisms to protect the freedom of information and speech.

Political structuring therefore means to take one of the following measures to support the non-commercial media.

## **Media policy enables the possibility of variety**

In the field of printed media a fundamental change of promotion policy is indispensable. It is not circulation but editorial design that has to be backed. From a purely factual point of view it is not justified to make a distinction between dailies and weeklies on the one hand and magazines on the other hand. It is especially the variety of magazines that brightens up the development of culture and media, which is not to be expected from dailies and weeklies.

Free broadcasting can do without advertising-fees in favour of open program structures and offers opportunities to articulate beyond the pressure of formatting and quota-hunting. Free radios in this sense have to be established by law. Simultaneously to the legal establishment of free radios "Public Access Funds" have to be started to ensure their permanent basic support of structure and operation

Developments in the field of media art and network culture have to be suitably taken into account by well-directed Content-Support as well as by taking infrastructural measures. Network communication, creative interaction, and lively exchange of cultural contents require sufficient width of common cultural backbone of unrestricted access to digital networks. Decentralised production platforms have to be erected.

## **Media policy is education policy**

To secure a civil-social public inside a pluralistic media landscape in the long term, it is necessary to impart knowledge and cultural competence. A wide and active participation in the information society requires unrestricted access to the part of media centres where teaching and production take place. Media and action fields have to be opened up by gradually linking art, culture, media, science, and research.

## **Media policy is location policy**

Cultural and media action groups help substantially to intensify the active and creative treatment of media.

As far as administration and policy are concerned, political resolution has to result in dividing up well defined areas of responsibility. These matters of concern have to be translated into action at both national and international level.