

Media and Society



SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF COMMUNICATION

SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF INFORMATION

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The Secretariat General of Communication - Secretariat General of Information has initiated a number of actions aiming to raise awareness within society and the media on some key areas of social significance.

In this context, we have formed a framework of coordinated, well-regulated actions, with a view to appeal not only to specific target groups but to the broader public and the media as well.

Applying theory into practice, we have identified three pivotal areas of interest around which our actions revolve:

- Disabled people and Mass Media
- Children and Mass Media and
- Greek Regional Press

All three areas take as a point of reference the common concept of **Media and Society** and are intended to provide assistance to social groups who need it, either because of their age (minors), their geographical distance from the so-called urban center (Greek periphery) or because of their negative representation in society (disabled people).

In addition, we have undertaken initiatives and surveys dealing with several aspects of the media today (cultural, historical, technical, economical and educational), bearing always in mind the complex relationship between Media and Society.

Theodoros Roussopoulos
Minister of State and Government Spokesman

MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Secretariat General of Communication - Secretariat General of Information-recent initiatives (Athens, Greece)

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND MEDIA

- “People with disabilities and Mass Media”, annual International Conference, “Emotion Pictures - Documentary on Disability”, annual International Festival
- www.ameamedia.gr; a special website for people with disabilities and the Media
- “Issues of disability and Media”, a media guide on how to report on disabilities, “Guide on rules of behavior towards disabled people”, “Mental health and Media”, a media guide, selective publications in Braille form
- Conferences throughout Greece, in order to inform and educate local communities on issues relating to Disabled People and the Media

CHILDREN AND MEDIA

- “Children and Mass Media: protection of minors in the audiovisual and information sector”
- www.dialogos.gov.gr, an open forum for public consultation on the issue of Children and Mass Media
- Annual audiovisual awards to films for children aged 6-12
- Education of 9 to 15 year-old children on issues related to Mass Media and Communication

REGIONAL PRESS

- www.perifereianews.gr, online portal and database for all regional newspapers of Greece
- Annual Regional Press Awards

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND MASS MEDIA

On the issue of “**People with disabilities and Mass Media**” the Secretariat General of Communication - Secretariat General of Information (SGC-SGI) has undertaken a series of actions in order to raise social awareness over the crucial issue of disability.

More precisely, the SGC-SGI has taken the following actions:

- The conceptualization and realization of the annual **International Conference “People with disabilities and Mass Media”**. This event, held in Athens in June since 2006 and hosted by the SGC-SGI, enjoys considerable international response, with many academics, media professionals and people with disabilities from Greece and abroad participating and exchanging valuable views on the matter.

During past events several issues were discussed, including “Journalistic Ethics: Overcoming the Stereotypes”, “The way Mass Media educate and shape opinions: The case of People with Disabilities”, “People with Disabilities and the entertainment TV: Disability in greek TV series”, “Disability in children’s programs”, “How People with Disabilities are featured in works of Art”, “The rights of People with Disabilities and Mass Media” (2007), “New Media and accessibility”, “Communication and autism”, “Paralympics and the Media”, “The rights of Children with Disabilities”, well as the tally of international experience (2008).

Approximately 500 people attended the 2008 event— including 90 organization representatives. This big turnout expresses a noteworthy social interest in this event, which has now been engrained in the audience’s consciousness.

The Conference is being held in Greek, English as well as in sign language; it is transmitted live via satellite and the internet (1,600 viewers followed the 2008 event via internet). From 2009 public organizations and people will be invited to present their relative views and proposals via internet and post.

The proceedings of the Conferences are published and distributed to various Institutions (also available on-line at our website).

- Within the framework of the annual International Conference “People with disabilities and Mass Media” the 1st **“Emotion Pictures - Documentary on Disability - International Festival”** first took place in 2007. More than 300 films from 45 countries worldwide participated in the event, signaling the beginning of an annual institutionalised international meeting. The 2nd International Festival took place on June 21-23, 2008 at the New Benaki Museum for Contemporary Art and Design. More than 350 films from 38 countries participated in the event, paving the way for an even bigger cultural meeting in the future. The Documentary Festival is organized in collaboration with the Greek Film Centre.

The conference and the festival constitute now a point of reference as well as common ground for advancing issues concerning people with disabilities and their rapport with the media.

- In the meantime, on the initiative of Minister of State and Government Spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos, the SGC-SGI undertook **a series of conferences through Greece, in order to inform and educate local communities on issues relating to Disabled People and Mass Media.**

Local population and local authorities in several cities around the country

warmly welcomed the initiative, providing us with a motive to continue our efforts.

- In this context we thought it would be wise to issue **a media guide on how to report on disabilities**. The 77-page guide, entitled “**Issues of disability and Mass Media**”, was issued in November 2006. It aims to become a practical tool that will help abolish negative views of disabled people. The guide was distributed to all major journalistic unions in Greece and was recently re-issued in 2.000 copies. We also issued a media guide entitled “**Mental health and Mass Media**” concerning the way the Media deal with issues of mental health.

The SGC-SGI also issued **a guide on rules of behavior towards disabled people**. This concise guide is a useful tool for every citizen.

- The SGC-SGI undertook the initiative to create **a special website (www.ameamedia.gr)**, is the first of its kind in Greece. In August 2006 voice-support services were added to the website in order to become accessible to blind people. Each year, the Hellenic Audiovisual Institute (IOM), which is the national organization for applied research in the field of audiovisual communication in Greece, supervised by the SGC-SGI, conducts **a survey focusing on mass media attitudes towards people with disabilities, as well as on broader issues of accessibility**. The results are announced each year in the context of the International Conference.

- SGC-SGI has also printed **in Braille form a series of selective annual publications** (Political events 2006 and 2007, Ecology Papers etc.).

CHILDREN AND MASS MEDIA

The SGC-SGI undertakes a series of initiatives aiming to educate 9 to 15 year-old children on issues related to Mass Media and Mass Communication.

- Working closely with the Ministry of Education we have concluded a series of **visits to children summer camps since 2005**. With the assistance of National Television professionals and in a friendly way we have tried to inform children about the Media. We aim to expand this project gradually to all schools.
- Since 2006, the SGC-SGI in cooperation with the Directors Unions and other related institutions established the annual **audiovisual awards to films for children aged 6-12**. The participants have to compete in works of fiction, documentaries and cartoons.
- Touching on the major issue of the protection of minors from potentially harmful content in audiovisual and information services, the SGC-SGI staged a one-day conference on the subject of **“Children and Mass Media: protection of minors in audiovisual and information”** in April, 2008. Journalists, academics, advertisers, officials and community representatives took part in the conference.
- **Public consultation on the issue of Children and Mass Media** continues online at **www.dialogos.gov.gr, an open forum** where all concerned parties may voice their opinions, ideas and proposals.

GREEK REGIONAL PRESS

- The SGC-SCI has created the **online portal www.perifereianews.gr to host all regional newspapers of Greece**. The portal allows quick access and a broad covering of all the news from the Greek periphery.

It also serves as a forum of interaction between the local press, as daily papers can publish their content online. At the same time the service provides a unique opportunity for Greek citizens and Greek natives living abroad to learn news from their prefecture and keep track of their birthplace from distance. The portal gives access to a database of about 6.500 print media (newspapers and magazines) from the Greek periphery.

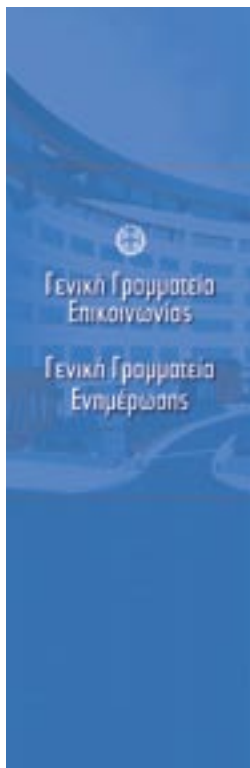
- SGC-SGI has also established the **Annual Regional Press Awards** in order to stress the significance of the regional press and to honour both publishers and journalists who excel in their line of work.

- Along the same lines, SGC-SGI undertook an ambitious project with a view **to research the audience and the acceptance of all regional daily and weekly newspapers, TV and radio stations**. This was the first research of its kind ever in Greece.

More than 1400 regional print and electronic media in 49 prefectures (482 daily and weekly regional newspapers and magazines, 810 regional radio stations, 103 regional television stations) were researched, while the total sample of respondents amounted to 35.200. The outcome is a ready-to-use, complete database, easily accessible both to citizens, media professional and publishers.

OTHER “MEDIA AND SOCIETY” INITIATIVES

- In an attempt to provide better information to all citizens, the SGC-SGI offers an **online, live satellite feed of the Government’s Spokesman daily briefing**. The satellite feed is accessible in almost all of Europe and the Middle East, so that Greeks living abroad, as well as Greek regional press staff can access it anytime, from any given location.
- **“News features Archives: A Moving History”**, a one-day conference focusing on the SGC-SGI historical News Features archives. The conference was co-organised by the National Audiovisual Archives and the SGC-SGI.
- **“Literature and the Media: the present and the future of a common path”**, a two day conference held in co-operation with the Greek Writers Guild. Guest speakers included writers, journalists, critics, translators and publishers.
- **“The Daily challenge - Newspapers: Particularities and Challenges”**, a one-day conference open to media representatives, journalists, university media department students and all interested parties. The conference focused on the Greek Press and the challenging issues of viability and reliability.
- **“Media and Communication Students’ Conference”**, organised annually by the SGC-SGI in co-operation with the Media and Communication Departments of the University of Athens, Panteion University and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki.



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PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THE MEDIA



CHILDREN AND MASS MEDIA



GREEK REGIONAL PRESS



LITERATURE AND THE MEDIA

