

## Community media in the Digital Decade - and Covid

**First of all we wish you all** – stations, associations, agencies and individual community media aficionados – **a very happy and healthy new year**. While we all found the past year different from we could have wanted, and easily could underline all the unwelcome challenges encountered, **the pandemic also served as a magnifying glass** towards tendencies already emerging.

So, what did we see? We found that analytical and evaluative frameworks already in the making before the crisis in Ireland and Austria, documented **Community Media to be Providing both social benefit and public value** – and the pandemic further underscored this.

As many stressed, the health crisis to less privileged segments of our populations also became an information crisis. And **in many European countries it was the community media**, who moved in and – sometimes overnight – added new, locally uncovered languages to their programming: **leaving no-one behind**.

Despite extraordinary Corona-efforts demonstrated also in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the 50-year-old renowned **Radio Študent. with few days' notice was informed about a 100% funding cut** by their founder, the University of Ljubljana Student Organisation. CMFE and our partners have swamped the offices with expressions of **why diversity and pluralism are so important**, also in Slovenia. Read more below.

We have in this newsletter over the past year documented many concrete cases of how community media in Europe have stepped up to meet the Covid-challenges, and in the present issue, **three CMFE board members share 2020-Covid stories from France, Austria and Syria-Paris**. Read on.

And entering this new decade, proclaimed to be the digital decade, also through the European Commissions 'Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation' in the digital decade, we stress **why it is so important that community media will be importantly included in the Recovery and Transformation action plans plans**.

This and much more below.

We, in the CMFE, look forward to accompany you - and your strides - during this new year, where **we vow to work with you to highlight and continually strengthen the understanding of the key importance played of community media for a healthy civil society and community development.**

**Happy New Year!**

**Birgitte Jallov**  
**CMFE President**

## CMFE Newsletters

Past newsletters

## Strengthening an enabling environment

CMFE & partners supporting

## Radio Študent's fight for survival



*The photo is from the Radio Študent website*

Radio Študent (RŠ), one of Europe's pioneer community radio stations based in Slovenia, risks losing all funding. Founded 50 years ago by the University of Ljubljana's Student Organisation (ŠOU), who have remained the radio station's core funder, RŠ was last week informed about the unforeseen budget cut. Following this Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) has had a busy couple of days mobilising support to prevent one of few critical voices in Slovenia from being shut.

Through CMFE's GFMD membership, our work as CoE observers, and through our wide membership-base, CMFE acted quickly to mobilise as many media freedom organisations as possible to share in the protests against this challenge to pluralism and diversity on the Slovenian airwaves.

Besides from [our own statement](#), the following were some of the other voices of protest, reaching the ŠOU before the council meeting January 14th :

- Alert published on **Council of Europe Platform to promote the protection of journalism and safety of journalists**:  
<https://go.coe.int/2oofY>
- Alert published on **ECPMF Mapping Media Freedom platform**:  
<https://mappingmediafreedom.usahidi.io/posts/23745>
- Article published by **European Federation of Journalists**:  
<https://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2021/01/12/slovenia-radio-student-threatened-to-lose-its-funding/>
- Article published by **Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso**:  
<https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/aree/Slovenia/Radio-Student-lotta-per-la-sopravvivenza-207673>
- Article published by **BIRN Balkan Insight**: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/13/legendary-slovenian-student-radio-threatened-with-loss-of-funding/>
- List of supporters via [GFMD](#)
- Statement by [Verband Freier Rundfunk Österreich](#)
- Statement by **Istar France - Radio Campus Network**

We will inform you of the final result next month.

**Europe's Media in the Digital Decade –  
but where are Community Media?**



## Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation

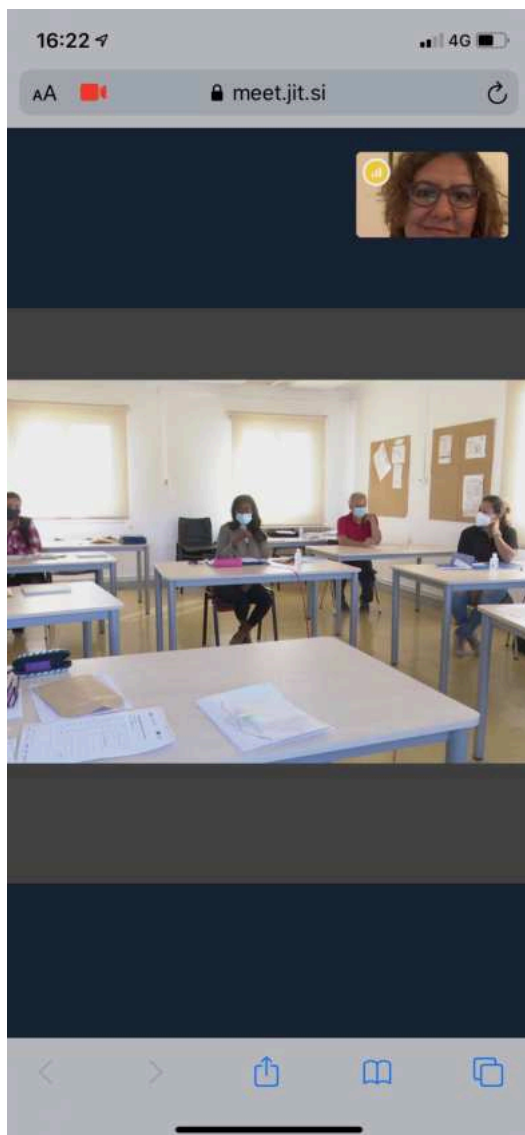
On December 3, 2020 the European Commission released its Action Plan [Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation](#). Articulated in 10 Actions, the plan aims to “set out a comprehensive vision for the media sector for exploiting the potential of a true European media market and embracing the Digital Decade.” The Action Plan includes important points to facilitate **access to funding** via a “new interactive tool, tailor-made for the media sector. This will offer guidance on how to apply for relevant EU support, in the context of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, but also through national recovery and resilience plans.”

It also recognises the need for more efforts to support **diversity and inclusion** of under-represented groups, in decision-making positions, as well as in front of and behind the camera. The European Commission would like media to improve diversified representations and add new ideas, stories, and voices. [Community media](#) have been pioneering participatory practices since decades. They offer [spaces of inclusion](#) to women, to LGBTIQ communities, to disadvantaged groups in society, such as people with disabilities or people with a minority racial or ethnic background, to engage in multilingual media productions, in training and in management.

It is thus with some disappointment that CMFE noted how **Action 9 - Empowering citizens** includes no mention of community media. Whilst the European Commission recognises the importance of **media literacy** to empower citizens in today's media environment, it seems unaware of the [role](#) played in this regard by community media. By providing digital media skills and ethical journalistic training to a variety of age, language and minority groups, including people with special needs, community media contribute to combating disinformation and promoting active participation. It is about time the European third media sector receives formal, legal recognition, fair access to distribution platforms and sustainable funding as a pillar of media pluralism.

## Visibility of Community Media

# Running workshops during a pandemic



## When on-site workshops are not possible - we find new ways...

What did our New Neighbours' workshops on multilingual programming look like in 2020? We certainly didn't expect to be holding them online but were looking forward to meeting and sharing and learning from one another! Luckily, September and October 2020 provided us with a short window for both – our international trainers worked remotely, while participants could gather, carefully distanced, to attend the training together. The three CMFE workshops aimed to empower more migrants and refugees, women in particular, to produce their own media contents on community media. All participants involved, and especially our partners and trainers, proved to be incredibly creative, patient and resilient – and we are grateful for that!

[Here](#) are some impressions of the workshops at [Radio Student](#) in Ljubljana, [RTV Cardedeu](#) in Cardedeu and [Mondinsieme](#) in Reggio Emilia. We also invited the authors of the New Neighbours [fact sheets](#) on media and migration to present their research and our partners from [VOA](#) to share their expertise on changing the narrative on refugees and women.



## What has the Covid reality meant for community media during 2020?

### 3 CMFE board members shared stories

In meetings, reports, interviews we at the CMFE have continually heard from members, colleagues and friends that in view of all the many devastating and challenging aspects of the present pandemic:

**COMMUNITY MEDIA HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT!**

We therefore asked CMFE's board members to share their stories for this 'new year issue' of the newsletter.

### **NICOLAS HORBER REPORTS FROM FRANCE'S 'CAMPUS RADIO'**

**A few thoughts after 2020 about CM role and issue.**

2020 has been a special year from all angles. Expressing it became a commonplace. It's trite to say it. Community medias have mobilized very widely





to maintain the antenna, capture the interest of confined populations and maintain the link; also known under the concept of phatic contact. To achieve this, volunteer and salary forces committed themselves in producing and supporting the production of programs in very large numbers.

Then come a number of questions. Future concerns may focus on infrastructure since it is obviously the

Internet that allows this growing interactivity, and the latter is faced with issues of neutrality, critical threshold of its infrastructure. Today, in FM or DAB +, many radios use the web to route their signal to the transmitter. Strategic error mainly linked to the very low costs of this means... the very low reliability moreover...

Another obvious subject for associative radios, that of the drop in income. In France, when they are not tempted by a formatting that seeks to increase the audience, advertising revenues, where they have the opportunity to be supported by various public authorities by responding to local social communication missions, community radios are constrained. A model entirely in the hands of volunteers hardly exists today...

And last but not least, what consequence will this Covid-thing on individual behaviors? How will everyone come out of these successive restrictions on bodies and 'social body'? A community media is a home, a house where people meet and exchange about their knowledge and for many other reasons. In France, a motto coming out of this context says that all the digital services that provides a solution for doing things even during lockdowns and confinement are temporary and definitely not the way of doing things. A new world seems on the way, accepting that **in an old pot we can do the best jam.**

Economical, social & structural issues are now on the table. We may definitely be aware and ready to deal with Europe about these thematic. CMFE takes part. 2021 here we are.

[Full report](#)



## 2020 - the year of social distancing saw increased social contribution by Community media in Austria

The past year with all the restrictions on social and cultural life was a great challenge for everyone in Austria but it hit everyone living in underprivileged situations harder. The

17 community radios and television stations took up these challenges in order to provide specific program and activities to counter the lack of communication in local spaces... Particularly noteworthy are the series "FAQ" by Radio Helsinki in Graz and "Corona Information Vienna" by Radio Orange in Vienna. These programmes and over 600 other shows have since the outbreak of the pandemic been produced on and around the topic of Covid 19. They can all be listened to permanently via the new radio library of the community radios.

<https://www.freie-radios.online/inhalt/corona>

COMMIT as a national training institution, but also most of the radio stations, switched most workshops to online at short notice from March. The first seminar where our members could meet again - in July - was dedicated to the question of the psychosocial consequences for disadvantaged groups and the challenges this poses for community media to fulfil their remit.

Besides all the problematic aspects of this very special year we have seen a supplementary funding to compensate the loss of income for the media due to the pandemic. For our Community Media organisations this opened the chance to set up new needed activities in this period but also to remunerate team members at a more fair level...

For the community media, this special funding corresponded to a long overdue adjustment of funding. A long-term increase in funding for community media remains the most important issue for political lobbying and is on top of the agenda for this new year...

We had to learn a lot about new forms of organising and training online but can see now upcoming political ambitions to use online as an overall argument for cuttings in cultural, social and educational budgets. The fight against these ambitions will undoubtedly accompany us in this new year in which community media should also increasingly connect with other social actors.

*For the full report with important political and social aspects, read [here!](#)*

[Full report](#)



## FROM SYRIAN EXILE RADIO IN PARIS CMFE's LINA CHAWAF REPORTS:

Covid is devastating in Syria in all ways. For the people still in Syria, and for the Syrian refugees wherever they are found. Lina Chawaf shares three representative stories with us:



[Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Corona and the Dream of a Return](#)

[Drama in a Covid 19 Centre](#)

[Corona in Syria: Distance Education is a Fake Procedure!](#)

**Action for Cooperation and Change**

**Diversifying the weather to diversify  
media**



What a surprise, our societies are diverse! Europe is a continent built on migration flows, with intercultural overlaps and second, third, fourth generation 'migrants' still not perceived as 'belonging'. The weather reports are just one example where names lack diversity – meteorological phenomena in Germany are mostly named Sabine or Franz, rather than reflecting the richness of our societies. Journalists from Germany, Switzerland and Austria have set out to challenge this perception – and are renaming the weather! Through their ['weather correction' campaign](#) they have acquired 14 weather names and switched them to make the many European Ahmets and Dragicas finally visible.

Check out the campaign on Twitter at [@Wetterkampagne](#)

# VOA Expands Broadcasts to Displaced Communities in Africa



Recognizing the deteriorating conditions in northern Ethiopia's Tigray region in December 2020, VOA rapidly added existing Tigrigna-language radio broadcasts to existing VOA FM radio stations in the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Misrata. These newscasts reach not only the newly displaced civilians, but also Eritreans in both cities who arrived prior to the current exodus and still have ties to the crisis-affected area. Newly created "micro sites" deliver digital content in Tigrigna, Amharic, Afan Oromo and English from VOA regional reporting teams.

In Kakuma, Kenya, site of one of the world's oldest refugee camps, VOA launched a new FM station to provide both refugees and the local community with news, music, and educational content in English, Swahili, and Somali. For the Dadaab refugee complex near Kenya's border with Somalia, a new VOA station offers local residents and refugees a mix of VOA English and Somali language content that airs in Somalia and Djibouti.

You can find more information and content here:

English: <https://www.voanews.com/ethiop...>

Amharic : <https://amharic.voanews.com/et...>

Afaan-Oromoo : <https://www.voafaanoromoo.com...>

Tigrina : <https://tigrina.voanews.com/e...>

<https://www.insidevoa.com/a/mi...>

All that you did not know you might be missing...

# CLASSIFIEDS

## Events

SAVE THE DATE:

**New Neighbours - final webinar**



new neighbours

New Neighbours final Webinar: Monday, February 22 from 14:00-15:30, online, with producers and participants from all project activities! For more information follow @newneighbours1 on Twitter or check out [www.newneighbours.eu](http://www.newneighbours.eu)

**Migration and Media Awareness 2021**



CMMA2020 has been postponed from its original 2020 programme plan due to Corona.

In 2021 the conference theme remains: “Looking Back, Thinking Ahead” and will focus on the importance of inclusion, diversity, and participation.

CMFE is happy to be a core partner of CMMA 2021.

**Save the date!!!**

[Read More!](#)

**Calls**

**Job opportunity at  
Media Diversity Institute**





**MDI** is seeking a social media campaigner to lead the strategic development, management, design, coordination, and delivery of the new phase of its *[Get the Trolls Out!](#)* project (GTTO) to counter hate speech against religious minorities in Europe.

For more information please visit <https://www.media-diversity.org/now-hiring-social-media-campaigner-2/>

**Deadline for applications:** 24 January 2021

## Publications

## REPRESENTOLOGY: THE JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND DIVERSITY



## REPRESENTOLOGY: THE JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND DIVERSITY

REPRESENTOLOGY is a new journal for research and best practice in how to make UK media more representative of all sections of society. It is published by the newly established Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity at Birmingham City University.

You can read or download the Journal [here](#).

**Community Media Forum Europe - [cmfe.eu](http://cmfe.eu)**

Rue de la Linière 11, Bruxelles  
Belgium

You received this email because you signed up on our website or have been in touch with CMFE through recent projects and events



[Unsubscribe](#)

mailer lite