

## Reviews



### Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe. Cross-Country Comparisons

Divina Frau-Meigs, Irma Velez, Julieta Flores Michel (eds.). *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe. Cross-Country Comparisons*. London: Routledge, 2017. 304 p. ISBN 978-1-138-64437-3.

Media and information literacy is a phenomenon the importance of which has recently been underestimated by many actors in public policy. Until the onset and dynamic spread of fake news in the social media environment, most politicians and public policy actors have their eyes opened. They understood that the issue of media and work with information resources is not just a little useful academic entertainment, but a serious topic that needs to be paid attention to as an intercultural phenomenon revealing various new trends and influences in public and media discourse.

In this context, a new publication *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe* by Divina Frau-Meigs, Irma Velez and Juliet Flores Michel (eds.), Published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group in 2017, is a useful contribution to the debate on these issues. The publication is the result of a several year effort of 69 experts from 28 participating countries, many of whom participated in two research networks ANR Translit and COST - Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies. The scientific teams from across Europe first worked out national reports on the current status of Media and Information literacy (MIL) in all EU countries as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey. Subsequently, narrower working teams consisting of 24 experts were created to deeply analyze and interpret the data obtained from different perspectives.

Contributors bring different views of topics directly related to media and information literacy and offer the reader the first comprehensive analysis of public policies on Media and Information Literacy in Europe. Firstly, the authors map the current state, definition and historical context of these relatively new concepts, which we can include in the intersection of media studies, information studies, and educational science. The part of this effort is a global analysis of European public policies in MIL, while in the existing and expected trends and perspectives of public policies at European Union and national level are analyzed. The book also includes a detailed analysis of the legal framework of MIL in cross-national policy context. An interesting finding is that across Europe there are relatively large differences in the perception of the importance of the MIL and the current location of this phenomenon in legislation as well as in the professional public discourse.

An interesting contribution to the discourse on these issues is the chapter dedicated to the provision of MIL teacher training, professional development and resources for MIL teachers. Julian McDougall, Nurcay Türkoğlu and Igor Kanižaj argue that „there is a discernible gap between empirical research in the field of MIL and teacher training and

development.“ (p.131). They found that „formal teacher training in ME for capacity-building mainly depends on the presence or absence of ME policies in a country, but there is no clear correlation between formal curriculum inclusion and capacity building.“ (p. 133).

The current state of Media and Information Literacy is the result of various factors and stakeholders. In addition to governmental institutions and public policy makers, non-governmental organizations play an important role in this process. The book illustrates in detail the current state and place of MIL in the context of civil society, current policies and trends in this field, as well as examples of good practice and various comparative analyzes from individual European countries. Piermarco Aroldi, Miguel Vicente Mariño and Norbert Vrabec focus on the structure and modalities of the evaluation and financial support of the MIL initiatives and funding conditions provided by governments, corporations, NGO's and other stakeholders. They also emphasise the issue of the sustainability of MIL projects and initiatives and argue that more coordination of efforts and actors in this area is needed.

Conceição Costa, Viktorija Car and Sofia Papadimitriou discuss the issues of good practices in the field of MIL and also emerging trends in the teacher training, MIL governance and various expert activities and opportunities. Chapter 8 provide critical and theoretical discussion on public policies in the cross-national comparison and the implications for MIL governance. Kirsten Drotner, Divina Frau-Meigs, Sirkku Kotilainen and Niina Uisitalo argue that the “shift in the definition of MIL from a focus on diverse abilities for rounded character formation to an emphasis on efficiency and operational skills may be seen as a neo-liberal aim to create flexible and confident actors. Hence, a series of juxtapositions are currently inherent in the promotion of MIL as individual competences, and attitudes are prioritized over diverse knowledge construction and societal values.” (p. 270).

The importance of the book *Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe* is primarily in its comprehensive approach and very detailed analysis of the various contextual factors related to the issue of Media and Information literacy. The authors are studying a wide range of secondary data sources, such as research reports, legislative, historical, cultural, social and political documents, and case studies. The content of the book is also valuable because it is the first comprehensive set of knowledge mapping the current European public policies in the MIL, in the context of political, social and economic changes that go through the field of education policy, the civil sector, as well as other stakeholders and institutions concerned.

**Mária Kusá**

### **Good Media: A New Methodological Guide for Teachers**

Viera Kačínová (ed.): *Dobré médiá. Príklady dobrej praxe výučby mediálnej výchovy na základných a stredných školách. Metodická príručka pre učiteľov.* [CD-ROM]. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2017. ISBN 978-80-8105-847-9.

The international Media Literacy Center IMEC at the Faculty of Mass Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava has already organised two years of the competition named Examples of good practice of teaching media education at elementary and secondary schools. The topic of the second year was Good media and the result of the hard work of the teachers involved is a methodological guide which can help with teaching media education.

Teachers at elementary and secondary schools usually encounter a lack of methodological materials in teaching media education. The new methodological guide *Good Media* should help teachers in this field and offer them valuable information, experiences and proven examples of exercises for pedagogical teaching practice.