



## NEWS REPORT

<b>Date:</b>	29 October 2010
<b>Expert :</b>	Corina Demetriou
<b>Title:</b>	The equality body issues guidelines for the media
<b>Country:</b>	Cyprus
<b><u>Context</u></b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	A set of guidelines are published by the equality body to assist mass media outlets to avoid racial and ethnic discrimination
<b>Ground of discrimination:</b>	Race/ethnic origin
<b>Source:</b>	Equality body guidelines
<b>Field:</b>	All fields
<b>Legislative provisions:</b>	The Combating of Racial and Other forms of Discrimination (Commissioner) Law N.42(I)/2004, article 40.

### Content

**Description:** In September 2010 the equality body published a set of guidelines for the media in the framework of a PROGRESS program. The initiative, which was initially intended to lead to a binding Code of Conduct within the mandate of the equality body (Law N. 43(I)/2004), has instead resulted in a set of guidelines to the media, based on the logic of self-regulation of journalists. The journalists' organisations in Cyprus, as well as the author of the publication who is a journalist himself, reject any 'external intervention' to the conduct of journalism, such as Codes of Practice, as these are seen as restricting freedom of speech which is, according to the author, an inalienable constitutional right. The publication states that international and European experience has shown that regulatory frameworks with prohibitions and restrictions may have prevented the more obvious and extrovert manifestations of racism in the media but have not prevented 'new racism' in the media which is covert and implied. With the exception of regulations for television and radio, there is no binding law against racism in the media, only non-binding recommendations in the Code of Journalistic Ethics. The author admits that in practice there are gaps and distortions often leading to the production and reproduction of racist and



xenophobic stereotypes but does not consider that a strict legislative framework or a Code of Conduct, which will in any case lead to restrictions in the freedom of speech, will solve these problems. Instead a set of guidelines, contained in the last two pages of the publication are proposed aiming at sensitising media actors so as to avoid racist and xenophobic discourses. It also lists a number of other recommended initiatives to promote awareness and sensitisation of journalists, such as training programs, the setting up of journalistic ethics committees, research on journalists' perceptions of migrants, measures to encourage media outlets to hire migrants and other vulnerable groups, good practice manuals, conferences and others.