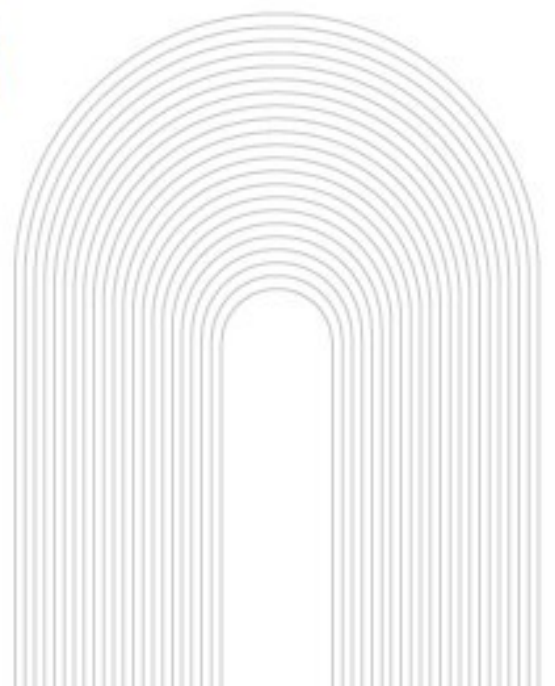




Guidelines  
for a journalism  
sensitive  
to ***diversity,***  
***equity***  
and ***inclusion***



ADVANCING  
**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**  
IN JOURNALISM



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The document and the attached one are provided in four languages: English, French, Italian, Spanish. You can download them from the following addresses:

**<https://diversityinjournalism.eu/>** (English)

**<https://diversityinjournalism.eu/fr/>** (French)

**<https://diversityinjournalism.eu/it/>** (Italian)

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# Introduction

## Role of the media in society

The news media plays a crucial role in democratic life, first and foremost as a source of knowledge. However, ‘a nation or society that does not fully know itself cannot respond to its citizens’ aspirations. Who and what appears in the news and how people and events are portrayed matters. Who is left out and what is not covered are equally important’ (Azzalini & Padovani, 2020, p. 8<sup>1</sup>). Moreover, in recent years, it has become increasingly clear that without a diverse and inclusive team, a newsroom does a disservice to its mission of accurate and impartial news coverage. ‘It will inevitably miss out on critical angles, perspectives and voices.’ (WEF, 2021, p.3<sup>2</sup>).

Tangible instruments are required to outline the processes for implementing ‘diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I<sup>3</sup>), considering the unique characteristics of each industry. This particularly applies to the media and journalism because they produce symbolic content [the term symbolic content is unfamiliar to me] rather than generic goods or services.

The media shapes public perceptions of society. As such, it transmits social norms and values and can challenge historical discrimination based on age, disability, race, gender, being LGBT+, social background and body diversity. It can also welcome social changes, such as the progressive diversification of identities and cultures living within

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<sup>1</sup> M. AZZALINI; C. PADOVANI, Global Media Monitoring Project Report, Italy, 2020 Link: <https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Italy-Report-GMMPrev2.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> WEF (World Economic Forum), Tackling Diversity and Inclusion in newsrooms, 2021. Link: [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Tackling\\_Diversity\\_and\\_Inclusion\\_in\\_the\\_Newsroom\\_2021.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Tackling_Diversity_and_Inclusion_in_the_Newsroom_2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> We’re using “DE&I” (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) throughout this document, but there also exist other acronyms, such as “D&I” (Diversity and Inclusion) and “DEIA” (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility).

European borders also due to migration flows as well as conveying DE&I values and practices.

## Why we need advancing DE&I in Journalism

In order to truly work on inclusive news content, it is essential to create newsrooms that are fully representative of the public, including underrepresented groups. This is why this guide is divided in two sections: the first section will highlight the main challenges facing journalists when it comes to telling stories that accurately represent every part of society, while the second section tackles diversity within newsrooms and how to create workplaces that are diversified, accessible and safe for all media workers.

## Methodology

These Guidelines are the outcome of a bottom-up approach, based on two strengths:

1) the direct involvement of the target groups, i.e. journalists, communication professionals, media and broadcasting organisations, companies specializing in communication, journalism and media students; 2) the transfer of good practices.

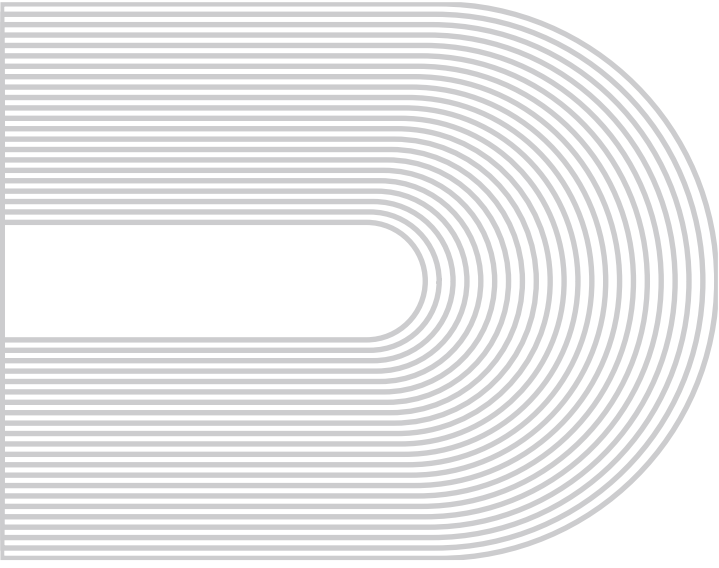
In order to ensure the direct involvement of the target groups, we shared a literacy pathway through workshops (online and in-person) bringing together media professionals from across Europe, that have been participative and based on the analysis of concrete cases of both news coverage and newsroom organisation.

The partnership focused on best practices implemented in the media industry with due respect to intersectionality and diversity.

## Our checklist and best practice guide

To address the challenges of implementing DE&I values and practices in journalism and offer a practical tool, the “Guidelines for a journalism sensitive to diversity, equity and inclusion” is accompanied by the “Diversity, equity and inclusion in journalism: a practical checklist”. This document offers a series of 'Alerts' for each stage of the news production process, i.e. some “alarm bells” that allow us to detect a possible risk with respect to a sensitive and not always evident theme.

For each Alert there is a 'Focus', i.e. a brief context to explain its relevance to any critical issues and impacts on people, operational processes and content production. Finally, it suggests some 'best practices' on how to produce the news in a way that is consistent with the principles of DE&I.



1<sup>ST</sup> Chapter.  
**Recommendations  
and alerts for journalists**





When it comes to diversity, there are a few main things one should be mindful of to ensure accurate representation in the media. The way diversity topics are framed, the topics covered and how news is written have a huge impact on reality, and it can very easily reinforce the systems of discrimination that already exist in our society: this is why it is essential to gain awareness on the way narratives can influence the lives of marginalised people.

### **1. Make marginalised groups more visible**

There are several barriers preventing marginalised communities from entering many areas of employment – such as bias in selection processes, lower access to education due to accessibility issues and lower incomes, pay gaps, lack of accessibility in the working field. Journalism is no exception and as a result, underrepresented groups are largely excluded from this world. Additionally, it is more difficult to find marginalised people as sources, as factors like exclusion from mainstream networks and fear of discrimination make them harder to find and to reach.

All of this culminates in a significant issue of underrepresentation of certain groups in the media. These groups are often excluded from contributing to the narratives we consume, denied the opportunity to have their voices heard or to present their perspectives, both in general and on matters directly affecting them, and this exclusion deprives journalism of critical and essential viewpoints.

### **2. Make issues related to marginalised groups more visible**

Due to a lack of marginalised people in newsrooms and low awareness among media workers and owners on how they experience systemic exclusion, issues that affect marginalised communities are often left out of the news.

### **3. Use inclusive language and images**

The words and images we use modify the way we interpret reality, shaping the neural pathways of our thoughts and influencing how we perceive others, ourselves, and the world.

The use of language, images and captions that do not accurately represent people contributes to the spread of stereotypes and fuels a negative perception of individuals, groups, or entire communities. Today, the media lags behind when it comes to representing marginalised communities, both through the use of stereotypical and negative narratives and images, and through the use of inaccurate terminology. Changing those narratives, and freeing them from stereotypes and prejudices, is essential to challenging discrimination.

#### **4. Represent marginalised individuals as people first**

Providing accurate information is the best way to combat harmful stereotypes and biases. When marginalised communities do get represented in media, it is often in stereotypical ways, that reinforce and maintain a social imbalance.

This is frequently done by using narratives that depict them as victims and seek to evoke compassion for them, without ever representing them as anything other than their suffering. Instead of defeating social differences, this evokes a feeling of pity towards them, that causes people outside of their groups to experience relief that “they aren’t like them” and reduces marginalised identities to the discrimination they face, rather than highlighting their value.

Heroism is another commonly recurring rhetoric, which elevates marginalised people to hero status for actions that, for anyone else, would not be considered extraordinary. This attitude culminates in what is known as "Inspiration Porn," which refers to the portrayal of underrepresented people as sources of inspiration for society, praising them for survival in a society that actively works against them, instead of shifting the focus on the systems of discrimination that make their existence so difficult.

#### **5. Portraying marginalised people through an intersectional lens**

The term "intersectionality," coined in the 1980s by lawyer and activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, highlights the interconnection between different forms of discrimination related to factors such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social background, and disability.

When we consider intersectionality in people's lives, we must take into account how their experiences can be shaped and complicated by multiple overlapping aspects of their identity, such as gender, ethnicity, disability, and so on. A black woman, for example, will have to face not only discriminations that are related to her gender, but also to her ethnicity; similarly, a transgender man with disabilities might have to confront oppressions concerning both their disability and gender identity. It is essential to consider this factor when reporting news and writing stories.



2<sup>ND</sup> Chapter.

**Recommendations and alerts  
for people and culture management  
in the media sector**



Diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) are three fundamental aspects in the workplace. Companies and organisations that promote DE&I not only foster a fair and equitable work environment, but also achieve significant benefits in terms of innovation, productivity, and employee satisfaction.

Promoting DE&I at work in the media industry requires a proactive and committed approach on the part of the organisation and all its staff. Below are some effective strategies to promote DE&I in the workplace.

### **1. Make a commitment at decision-making level.**

Media organisations should make a clear commitment to design a long-term DE&I strategy. To achieve this, it is essential to allocate a budget and appoint a person or team to design the strategy and act as a bridge between staff and management. This will help ensure coherence between internal policies and final news pieces, which should be unbiased, fact-checked and free from stereotypes. This commitment must be communicated to all employees.

### **2. Workplace audit**

Any strategy requires understanding the starting point. It is essential to carry out a diagnosis of the workforce composition by role (e.g., age, gender, nationality), salary gaps, existing diversity and inclusion policies, hiring and promotion processes and employees' perceptions regarding diversity and inclusion within the organisation.

### **3. Plan a DE&I action**

Once the diagnosis is complete, the organisation can set priorities, objectives, and specific diversity and inclusion actions (e.g. policies and strategies in hiring, management, training, and more), including indicators to monitor and evaluate impact on an annual basis. The plan should be communicated to all employees including freelancers.

#### **4. Engage an inclusive leadership**

Implementing a DE&I Action Plan requires inclusive leadership that encourages participation and diversity of opinions and representations. It also calls for a company culture where all individuals feel valued and heard, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, origin, religion, or other personal or social characteristics. This type of leadership involves awareness of one's own unconscious biases, empathy, collaboration, listening skills, and knowledge of diversity and inclusion.

#### **5. Ensure fair and inclusive employee lifecycle**

Diversity management covers the entire “life cycle” of employees: from attraction to recruitment and hiring to development and retirement. Processes should be standardised, reviewed periodically and adjusted if necessary to ensure equal opportunities for everyone, including freelancers. They also need to be communicated and transparent. Recommended good practices include for example:

- a) Rooney Rule in hiring:** The establishment of the obligation that there be an unrepresented person in all shortlists in the selection processes.
- b) Diverse hiring panels:** This helps make staff interviews more objective and reduces the impact of individual unconscious biases on the selection process.
- c) Training and guidelines for human resources on diversity and inclusion:** These are essential for eliminating biases and stereotypes in interviews and recruitment processes and also to grant a debiased and fair evaluation and career growth.
- d) HR data:** Analyse periodically HR data to understand how diverse a workforce is and if there are some specific underrepresented groups.

## **6. Be careful how you phrase job advertisements and where you look for candidates**

Job openings in the newsroom should be openly advertised and in a transparent manner. Postings should use inclusive language and avoid implicit biases or stereotypes to attract diverse talent. Additionally, job descriptions could include an explicit statement of the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and equal opportunities for all candidates.

To attract a wide range of diverse candidates, it is essential to use diverse recruiting sources. This involves searching for talent on different platforms, professional associations, events and specific communities. Additionally, we may collaborate with external organizations that are dedicated to promoting diversity in the workplace. By expanding our recruiting sources, we increase the chances of finding diverse and talented candidates.

## **7. Organise awareness-raising activities and training**

Diversity and inclusion awareness should be promoted among employees through actions such as workshops, training courses, awareness campaigns, and consistent internal communication. To foster an inclusive culture, it is essential to implement strategies involving all staff in newsrooms as well as freelancers to ensure alignment with DE&I goals.

## **8. Ensure work-life balance and flexible work**

Work-life balance, flexible schedules, and teleworking are not widely available in the media industry. In addition to job insecurity and precarity, many professionals, especially women journalists, work on freelance contracts, often with less favourable conditions. Establishing a clear methodology for managing workflows, shifts, and responsibilities during peak news periods is essential to avoid disrupting employees' personal or family lives.

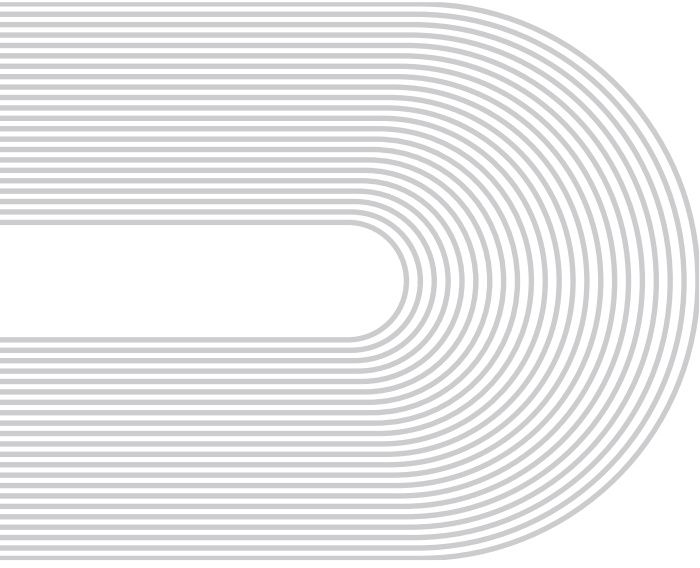
## **9. Use an inclusive language in communication**

Any DE&I business strategy must be supported by proactive and continuous communication. Specific attention should be paid to ensure newly enrolled staff and freelancers are fully aware of the newsroom's DE&I culture. Additionally, the language used should be free from stereotypes and biases. Most countries around the world now have specific guidelines for inclusive language, tailored to the characteristics of their languages and their specific socio-cultural contexts. Using these guides is advisable to achieve this goal.

## **10. Guarantee accessibility**

Universal accessibility enables people with disabilities to live equally, freely, and independently and to participate fully in all aspects of life, including employment. For individuals with disabilities to work effectively in newsroom, it is essential that offices and workplaces are accessible, and that all necessary assistive technologies are provided to support their tasks.





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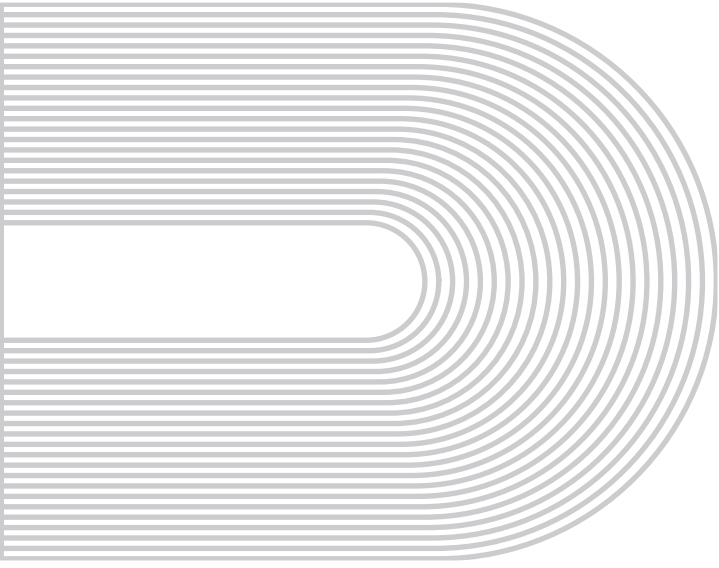
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## **About the project and partners**



These Guidelines were developed within the framework of the project Advancing Diversity & Inclusion In Journalism (AD&IJ) and are provided in four languages: English, French, Italian and Spanish. The AD&IJ project was carried out by a partnership of five organisations: C.A.R.E.S. scrl Osservatorio di Pavia (Project coordinator, Italy), COPEAM (Italy), Fondazione Diversity ETS (Italy), Fundación para la Diversidad (Spain), IFJ (Belgium).

**C.A.R.E.S. s.c.r.l. Osservatorio di Pavia** is an independent non-profit media analysis and research organisation. Since 1994 it has developed several media analysis methodologies, leading to a long-term collaboration with RAI, the Italian public service broadcasting company. It also has a broad portfolio of activities related to mass communication, including media monitoring on a variety of topics, legal analysis and researches. Since 1997 it collaborates with a number of international organisations (e.g., United Nations, European Commission, Council of Europe) in the frame of their activities of capacity building and technical assistance for democratic development and human rights as well as their election observation missions. The organisation is involved in educational and training activities. Website: [www.osservatorio.it](http://www.osservatorio.it).

**COPEAM – Permanent Conference of the Mediterranean Audiovisual Operators**

a non-profit association devoted to the promotion of intercultural dialogue in the Mediterranean Region through the involvement of major private, public and institutional players of the audiovisual sector. It gathers among its members the public service radio and TV broadcasters from 26 countries of the area, professional and cultural organisations, media enterprises, higher education institutes and local authorities from Europe, the Balkans, North Africa and Middle East. COPEAM, whose operational headquarters are based in Rome – at the premises of RAI-Italian Radio and Television, which ensures its General Secretariat since the foundation in 1996 - focuses its action on a multilateral cooperation formula aimed at enhancing and exchanging expertise within its large network. The main fields of action are: TV, radio coproduction; training and capacity building; promotion and creative use of audiovisual archives; carries out initiatives on cross-cutting

issues of global relevance such as environment, immigration, gender equality and Diversity. Website: <http://www.copeam.org>.

**Fondazione Diversity** ETS has been engaged since 2013 in the diffusion of a culture of inclusion through communication, research, monitoring, training, and advocacy. Its work is therefore aimed at fighting discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, LGBT+, race, age, physical aspect, socioeconomic status, and religion. To do so, Fondazione Diversity has developed -and is expert in- research activities, data collection, analysis and disclosure, media monitoring, training, networking, events (e.g. our “Diversity Media Awards” and “Diversity Brand Summit” projects), communication campaigns, debiasing, behavioural analysis, inclusive management transformations and accessibility, working intersectionally as a non-profit. Fondazione Diversity also deals with inclusive representation, through analysis, consultancy and training for the media, dealing both with on-screen and off-screen representation. Website: [www.diversitylab.it](http://www.diversitylab.it)

**Fundación para la Diversidad** is a non-profit foundation, aiming to promote diversity and inclusion in companies and institutions. The foundation's mission is to create inclusive work environments for all people, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, origin, culture, religion, LGTBIQ+ status, disability, or social origin. Fundación Diversidad promotes the Diversity Charter in Spain, an initiative supported by the European Commission in favour of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The Diversity Charter was launched in 2009 in Spain, with the support of the Ministry of Equality and the European Commission. More than 1,600 organisations, from all sectors and sizes, have signed the Diversity Charter in Spain. Website: [www.fundaciondiversidad.com](http://www.fundaciondiversidad.com)

**IFJ** is the International Federation of Journalists. It is the world's largest journalists' organisation representing over 600,000 media professionals in 190 national journalists' unions and associations in 146 countries. The IFJ is a leading advocate of freedom of expression and quality journalism, using its networks to advocate for and implement reform across the media sectors to place independent journalism at the centre of strategies to

build quality media that serves the public. The IFJ is the drafter of the Bordeaux Charter and the Tunis Global Charter of ethical for Journalists (2019)

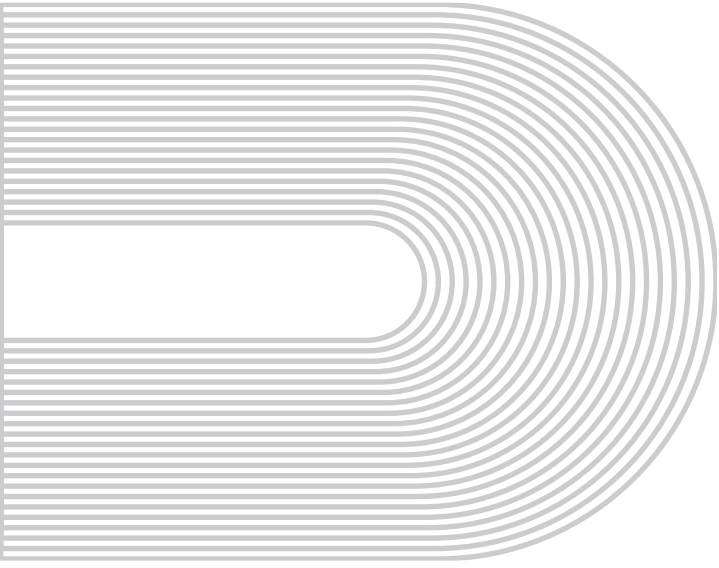
**<https://www.ifj.org/who/rules-and-policy/global-charter-of-ethics-for-journalists>**

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*More information about the AD&IJ project are available online at*

**<https://diversityinjournalism.eu>**



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