

# Media Literacy in 2014: Forthcoming Research and Call to Action

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*In 2013, research and policy continued to tackle issues around engagement, participation and digital inclusion. [Svenja Ottovordemgentschenfelde](#) is a PhD candidate at LSE and a researcher on ‘[The Class](#),’ a project that examines the emerging mix of on- and offline experiences in teenagers’ daily learning. In this post, she looks at the growing interest from various stakeholders in Europe to advance the media literacy agenda, and asks where are we now, and what will 2014 bring for media literacy, in the UK, Europe, and internationally?*



In December, [Sonia Livingstone](#) and [Monica Bulger](#) pooled the insights of 25 media literacy experts from academia, policy, and regulatory institutions to clarify the current state of play and identify future directions for media literacy research and policy in Europe. Their report, “[Media literacy research and policy in Europe](#)”, finds a genuine political consensus in favour of promoting media literacy among the European Commission, the Council of Europe, and other national and international organisations. Since the multiple and contested dimensions of media literacy may challenge efforts to locate it within a specific policy framework, it is timely to call on diverse policy work strands to take it forward, together with a strategy for coordination and knowledge sharing, as Bulger [recently pointed out](#).

On an international level, this is a task that UNESCO is now taking on. Its new “[Global media and information literacy assessment framework](#)” measures individual country readiness and competencies so as to provide a methodological frame for the national adaption of its measurement tool. It is hoped that, if widely adopted, this will facilitate international comparisons and stimulate effective, action-oriented policy.

## Research results, but policy stagnation in the UK

While there are many overarching initiatives trying to advance media literacy policies across the continent, new research indicates a need for specific action in Britain, where political will seems to be waning.

[Julian McDougall](#), University of Bournemouth, together with Sonia Livingstone and [Julian Sefton-Green](#), LSE, just finished examining the UK strand of a Europe-wide review of media and education policy and provision. In their forthcoming report<sup>[1]</sup>, they find that the model of media literacy currently provided by the various EU and EC strategies needs to be matched to the curriculum for Media Studies in the UK. It also needs clear government endorsement, and sufficient funding for both teacher and evaluation research.

Other research based recommendations have come include Livingstone’s call for “[More Attention to Media Literacy in EU AVMS Directive](#)” and [commentary](#) on Ofcom’s 2013 “[Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes](#)” report. See also [Ellen Helsper’s post](#) on increased internet use and the implications for digital exclusion.

Recent research also shows the benefits of media literacy in informal learning settings: see Julian Sefton-Green’s reflections on the question of “[What Counts as Learning?](#)” and his account of “[What \(and When\) is the ‘Learning’ When We Talk about Learning in the Home?](#)” Further insights along these lines will be forthcoming in 2014 as Livingstone and Sefton-Green publish the findings of “[The Class](#)”, an ethnographic study of the emerging mix of on- and offline experiences in teenagers’ daily learning lives.

Until recently, Britain has been a leader in media literacy and media education, with experts from academia (e.g. special issue of [Media Studies](#)), regulators (especially [Ofcom](#)) and the industry (e.g. see the [BBC’s strategy](#)). These have resulted in innovative school curricula and teaching resources (e.g. [English and Media Centre](#)) as well as media and regulatory provisions. However, now political will seems to be lacking and it is time for Culture Secretary

Maria Miller to push inclusive and sustainable initiatives forward. Ofcom continues to produce valuable research (and will release its qualitative “Media Lives” in January and its quantitative “Children’s media use and attitudes” in the spring), but we note that it is charged under the 2003 Communications Act with not only supporting but also actively promoting media literacy for all UK citizens.

### **Attention and action**

In the EC, media literacy as a policy domain is now part of the [Creative Europe](#) agenda which includes a teacher training programme. However, the core tasks of the EC and its Member States under AVMS Directive to promote media literacy for all EU citizens have not yet been achieved (see its [implementation report](#)). In 2014, researchers will continue to report on new findings (e.g. at the “[Media education futures](#)” meeting, Finland, May). But evidence-based policy requires an active policy landscape also. I urge policy makers to pay attention to the research coming out in the coming months, and I hope for more action this year than there was in the last.

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[1] The report was shared with EU member states’ representatives at a conference convened on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> December by the French National Research Agency project [TRANSLIT](#) (convergence between computer, media and information literacies), in association with the European network COST “Transforming Audiences/Transforming Societies,” at Sorbonne Nouvelle University in Paris.

*This blog post gives the views of the author, and does not represent the position of the LSE Media Policy Project blog, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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