



## Berlin Declaration 2013 Europeans United in Diversity!

The Federation of Open Channels (Bundesverband Offene Kanäle) in Germany has championed the European project for many years. The first major gathering of European community media representatives was held in Berlin in November 1997, and established a solid basis for increased mutual cooperation.

The participants in “Open Channels for Europe!” are committed to building a European coalition of community media as part of a global movement for media equity and democratic communication structures. The “Open Channels for Europe!” coalition was founded immediately after the 1997 conference. Ever since, it has encouraged and strengthened the various groups’ efforts at national level, as well as developing and consolidating international cooperation. At European level too, the coalition advocates non-discriminatory access for all citizens to all communication media as an important part of the civil right to free expression.

The Federation of Open Channels in Germany regularly organises European symposia together with Open Channels for Europe!, offering participants the opportunity to address a variety of themes such as intercultural dialogue, media literacy in Europe, integration, networks for democracy and citizen engagement.

Approximately 50 community media experts from seven European countries met in Berlin on 12 and 13 September to mark this year’s ‘European Year of Citizens – European Citizenship at Local and Regional Level’. They discussed the strategies that they can pursue within their available resources at local, regional, national and international level to give a soul to Europe. They jointly agreed on the principles outlined below.



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We are fully committed to ensuring that the citizens who use our services are able to:

- continue to exercise their right to freedom of expression in community media;
- use their broadcasts to
  - raise their fellow citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities,
  - get them interested in the subject of Europe,
  - inform them about European affairs,
  - so that they can play an active role in European society;
- promote intercultural dialogue;
- actively exercise their right to vote in the elections to the European Parliament in May 2014.

As organisers of community media, we commit ourselves to

- making greater use of the information resources provided by the European Union;
- actively supporting closer ties between the countries of Europe;
- improving the exchange of information between different countries;
- working together to develop creative and critical projects that serve to advance the European idea.

In order to succeed in achieving these goals together, we furthermore call on the European institutions to:

- fully commit to working with the individual Member States to achieve legal recognition of community media as a media category in its own right sitting alongside commercial and public media in those Member States where this is not yet the case;
- ensure that their own appeal to provide more active support to community media is met, in order to guarantee media pluralism;
- establish a specific European programme for promoting community media projects and initiatives that can be used to provide financial support for the huge range of underfunded initiatives that currently exist;
- and, in so doing, help alleviate the competitive disadvantage that many small community media initiatives have had to endure for several years.

Berlin, September 13, 2013