



Grassroots Radio FACTSHEET #01

COMMUNITY RADIO in the *21st Century*

Communities need information, much as they need energy, capital, and water. Without information flowing into, within, and out of a community, it may be isolated, inefficient, and unempowered.

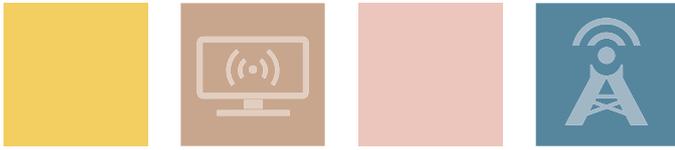
As many people have moved to the Internet for much of their communications, community information has been changing. In some countries, the Internet has eroded local newspaper markets, bankrupting the platforms for investigation, deliberation, and forms of local advertising that Europeans had been relying on for hundreds of years. In all countries, communities are struggling to balance information against major social media powers.

In this changing environment of citizens over the past 10 years, the public audience has discovered digital platforms and the Internet as more and more accessible and mobile. As a result, we have a new world of multi-sized

screens: from desktop and laptop computers, to mobile phones and tablets, to GPS, and beyond. Meanwhile, few if any changes have been realized over the past 30 years for radio.

And yet, radio (and Community Radio, in particular) remains strong in many European countries, such as the UK, France, Italy, Austria, and Ireland (to name only a few). Throughout the world, communities continue to find radio to be an inexpensive, geographically specific, and easy-to-use information platform. And the sector is growing.

In France, for example, 94% of the country's 775 radio stations are local, and 550 are non-commercial association driven, community stations. These local stations employ more people than the largest commercial stations [[combined]], with 71% of their employees involved in produ-



cing news content and information, at almost double the rate of the commercial stations. Thus, a significant portion of a France's local information is provided through community radio.

Running a community station is not easy, and not every community is up to the task. The Grassroots Radio project aims to take on this task by launching community run and owned stations across Europe, with the capacity for volunteers to interact with audiences on air, over the phone, and via the Internet. The Grassroots Radio project has four specific objectives:

1. *deploy and test a network of low-power community radio stations in Ireland, Portugal, and Romania;*
2. *work with community groups, journalists, and public good experts to develop a robust platform for expansion across Europe;*
3. *enhance use and accessibility of networked community radio, including the integration of existing technologies;*
4. *work within the EU framework to establish a public support infrastructure for local ownership and revenue generation.*

Community Radio Matters:

- *European Parliament: "Community media contribute to media pluralism and are an effective means of strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity."*
- *Council of Europe: "Community media serve needs which are not met by public service and commercial media."*
- *UN Human Rights Committee: "Licensing regimes... should provide for an equitable allocation of access and frequencies between public, commercial and community broadcasters."*

International legal framework:

- *The European Parliament resolution on Community Media in Europe (25 September 2008), which stresses that community media contribute to media pluralism and are an effective means of strengthening cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity.*
- *The Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (11 February 2009) on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, which stresses that community media serve needs which are not met by public service and commercial media.*
- *General Comment No. 34 of the United Nations Hu-*

man Rights Committee on Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (12 September 2011), which states that licensing regimes for broadcasting via media with limited capacity, such as audiovisual terrestrial and satellite services, should provide for an equitable allocation of access and frequencies between public, commercial, and community broadcasters.

While national legislation and regulations vary, the third media sector (alongside the public and commercial broadcasting sector) exists in all continents across the globe, from Papua New Guinea to Kyrgyzstan, from Mongolia to Iraq, and from Tunisia to South Africa. Elsewhere, e.g. Zimbabwe, transitional democratic signal hope for the development of a third media sector in these countries that accords with international standards.

The following map (source:) illustrates the estimation of Community Media activity across Europe:

