

## **ECREA SECTION REPORT 2008-2009.**

### **Communications Law and Policy**

#### **The Section**

In 2006 the Communication Law and Policy section of ECREA was launched, on the initiative of its current chair Katharine Sarikakis. It seeks to provide a forum for the debate and analysis of past and current policy directions in the field of media and communication. Its aim is twofold. First, to provide a forum for academic debate and research collaboration on the broadly defined field of communication law and policy, including questions of media, information, telecoms, and cultural policy. Second, to provide informed and critical policy analysis and recommendations; to collaborate with policy makers and NGOs and civil society; and to provide opinions on most important themes, while drawing attention to others. The section chair is Katharine Sarikakis, Senior Lecturer in Communications Policy and Director of the Centre for International Communications Research at the Institute of Communications Studies, the University of Leeds, UK.

The section has two vice chairs: Caroline Pauwels, Professor of Communication and Director of the centre for Studies of Media, Information and Telecommunication (SMIT) at the Free University of Brussels; and Peter Humphreys, Professor of Politics at the University of Manchester.

ECREA CLP maintains a mailing list for those interested in subscribing: <http://lists.leeds.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/ecrea-clp>

The Section's website is <http://commlawpolicy.wordpress.com/>

#### **Activities**

The two principal activities of the Section this past year have been the staging of two highly successful and well attended international symposia, one at the Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster, London, the other at the Institute for Mass Communication and Media Research (IPMZ), University of Zurich. The section extends its thanks to the convenors, Professor Steve Barnett (CAMRI), Dr. Maria Michalis (CAMRI), Dr. Natascha Just (IPMZ) and Dr. Manuel Puppis (IPMZ).

The Section also collaborated in the co-organisation of an International Workshop in Brussels with GigaNet and the ECREA IIC and CD Sections on May 11, 2009.

- On 2nd October 2009 a joint Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster and ECREA Communication Law and Policy Section symposium was held at the University of Westminster, London, on the theme of "Is the Public Interest under threat? Media Policy responses to the private sector recession in Europe". Thirty five academics, media regulators and media policy practitioners from around Europe discussed the nature of new policy initiatives being canvassed or implemented, and their repercussions for promoting (or foreclosing) the public interest.. Papers were presented by a number of academics from across Europe and there were two

keynote speakers: Matteo Maggiore, BBC Group Controller, European and International Policy; and Carole Tongue, former MEP and current Chair of the UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity. The objective of the symposium was to promote a better understanding of how governments and regulators within Europe are responding to the inevitable pressure to accommodate the private sector and to anticipate some of the consequences. Around ten of the papers will appear in a special issue of the journal 'Interactions', published by Intellect. For further information on the symposium, including the full programme and list of presenters, see: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/mad/page-2156>.

- On 6th and 7th November 2009 a joint Institute for Mass Communication and Media Research (IPMZ) and ECREA Communication Law and Policy Section symposium was held at IPMZ, University of Zurich, Switzerland on the theme of "New Directions for Communications Policy Research". Forty participants from across Europe (and several from further afield, notably USA and Australia) attended. The symposium was organised around five themes. In the first session five papers discussed 'New Theories'. In the second session, four papers discussed 'New Methods'. The third session, with three papers, looked at 'New Subjects'. The fourth session, with four papers, discussed 'New Subjects'. The final session, consisting of three papers, examined 'New Regulatory Structures and Instruments'. It is intended that papers from this conference will be published in an edited collection (we will provide any further news about this in our next report). The conference programme can be viewed at: [http://www.mediapolicy.uzh.ch/ecrea/ecrea\\_program.pdf](http://www.mediapolicy.uzh.ch/ecrea/ecrea_program.pdf).
- A Communications Law and Policy business meeting was held at the Zurich symposium. The principal matters discussed were the CLP section's preparations for the forthcoming ECREA 2010 conference in Hamburg and the pressing need to find candidates for election of a new team of officers (Chair and at least one Vice Chair) for the section, since all the incumbents will have served two full terms by the time of the Hamburg conference.
- At the Zurich symposium it was decided that a one-day follow-up Communications Law and Policy Section event should be organized around the theme of the 'state aid' debate surrounding public service broadcasting. This has been organized by section members at the IBBT-SMIT (Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology/Studies on Media, Information and Telecommunication) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels) and it will occur on 25th May 2010. The conference will address the use of ex ante evaluations in several EU Member States.
- On May 11, 2009 CLP participated in the international workshop on ***Global Internet Governance: An Interdisciplinary Research Field in Construction***. The purpose of this workshop was the presentation and discussion of work-in-progress in Internet Governance-related research with the aim to identify emerging research themes and design a research agenda. The aim was to exchange information and ideas about national and regional projects and networks currently pursuing research on global Internet governance, but also to identify academic syllabi or other education programs dedicated to these issues, in

order to share ideas and forge possible collaborations. Scholars from various academic disciplines and all regions of the world contributed to this reflexive exercise, with the long-term objective of collectively building this interdisciplinary research field. The workshop was organized around 4 panels. Around 35 presentations addressed research issues, as well as research methodologies.

(<http://giganet.igloogroups.org/publiclibr/giganetcos/2009brusse>)