



Oliveira, M.; Portela, P. & Santos, L.A. (eds.) (2012)
ECREA Radio Research Section Congress: 'Radio Evolution: technology, contents, audiences'
September, 14-16, 2011, Braga, University of Minho: Communication and Society Research Centre
ISBN 978-989-97244-9-5

The presence and the future of community radio in Poland

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Abstract:

Community radio in Europe is maturing more and more. However, in Central and Eastern Europe, in which countries are still coping with a fatal heritage of the totalitarian history, community radio is now struggling for its rightful place. This is also the case in Poland. Because of insufficient legal recognition of the community sector in media law, radio stations with non-commercial goals exist often outside the official licensed third sector of media. These are, for example, religious stations, student broadcasters as well as stations run by NGOs and local governments. Moreover, in some communities closed circuit radio stations play a significant role – for example, in prisons, at schools and student hostels. There are also a lot of internet radio initiatives in very diverse communities. In this article I would like to explain the legal situation of community broadcasting, to characterize the community media movement as well as to shortly present stations with non-commercial goals in Poland. Moreover, a research project about such stations in Poland will be discussed

Keywords: radio, internet radio, community radio, media in Poland

Introduction

The great value of democracy is not that it guarantees peace and quiet, and good decisions, but that it offers people the right to judge, and to reconsider the quality of their decision (Byrne 2006: 43). Nowadays it is rather hard to imagine the fulfilment of this assumption without media. Media should provide an opportunity for a continuous diversity of opinions and a forum for discussion. In Poland and in many other countries the dual public-commercial system of media makes it more and more difficult. The answer is, to some extent, community broadcasting. However, as an alternative to public and commercial broadcast media - community radio and television have increased their presence in some Western European countries they have grown much slower, not only in Poland but in almost all countries in this region.

Community Media World Wide

The history of community radio is almost as long as the history of radio itself. The expectations connected with radio as a new medium that is accessible almost to everyone were huge. In radio's early amateur phase, low economic barriers and diverse voices gave rise to an almost limitless development. Churches, clubs, universities and sports entrepreneurs launched radio stations. By the end of 1924, more than two million radio sets capable of broadcasting had been sold in America (Coll 2011). One of the first lobbying campaigns for amateur radio of limited scope dates back to 1906 and was initiated by an 11 year old New Yorker, Jessie Walker (Rennie 2006: 62). It is true that in the following years the radio market in the USA was no longer so open and

diverse mainly because of Federal Communication Commission regulations and the development of big and powerful media groups. However, the US remain an example of rather open access to the airwaves. One of the most important forms of community media development regulations was the Federal Communication Commission's decision to make the frequency between 88.0 and 92.0 MHz only for non-commercial stations available (Buckley and others 2008: 211). To this day, the American non-commercial radio and TV sector is one of the most developed in the world with over 2 500 non-commercial, licensed radio stations and over 400 TV stations of the same type (Buckley and others 2008: 211).

However, community media are not only an American domain. Three segments (public, commercial and community) broadcast media systems are present in over 100 countries in the world (Jakubowicz 2008: 44). Many countries in Europe have introduced advantageous legal regulations which have resulted in the development of this type of media on an unprecedented scale. Presently, there is legal regulation supporting the existence of the third sector in many European countries such as France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Germany and Great Britain (Doliwa 2010a: 67). The list of friendly to community media countries is, of course, not limited to 'old' EU countries. One other country in which this media sector is considered particularly developed is Hungary where there are several dozen licensed community media.

According to many media experts, the creation of friendly to community broadcasters legal regulation is crucial to the development of this type of media. A good example of this is Great Britain where special regulation on broadcast community media – Community Radio Order – was introduced in 2004 and in 2005 the first licenses were awarded. In licenses for community radio broadcasting there have been conditions included which require them to provide "social gain" in the form of community information, accessibility for audiences and accountability to their local community. Moreover, licensed community radio must not be for profit and must be funded by a diversity of funding sources: there is a limit of 50% on the proportion of their funding that can come from on-air advertising and sponsorship. Such stations have the right to apply for financial support from the Community Radio Broadcasters Fund, managed by the Office of Communications (Ofcom), an organ regulating the activity of broadcasters in Great Britain.

Within six years of the regulation being in effect in Great Britain, a dramatic growth of this media sector was noted. According to an Ofcom Annual Report on the Sector 2009/2010, so far 181 licensed community stations have been registered and there are 17 more waiting to begin their activity. Community radio serves a diverse range of communities: some serve communities defined by geography; others serve more targeted local communities of interest. The majority of stations broadcast for a general audience in either an urban/suburban area (17%) or a town/rural area (43%). Many services, however, serve smaller communities of interest like minority ethnic groups (14%), a youth audience (11%) and religious groups (7%) (Ofcom 2010).

When talking about community media, we cannot forget about the activity of organizations representing this type of media. In Europe, they are the European World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC Europe) and Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE). It was thanks to their initiatives that two imperative EU documents were created specifying the character and role of community media in Europe – the Council of Europe Declaration from February 2009 (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2009) and the European Parliament Resolution of 25 September 2008 on Community Media in Europe (European Parliament 2008). In both of these documents we can find the encouragement to develop community media sector on air but they are both of a declarative not obligatory character.

Community Media Regulations in Poland

The Polish dual model of radio was created after the transformation in the political system in 1989. In 1990 the first Polish commercial radio stations started broadcasting: the big ones - like RMF FM and Radio Zet - but also a lot of small local radio stations. They were broadcasting as pirate radio stations. The legal system of

electronic media was only beginning to take shape. Three years later – on 29 December 1992 - the Broadcasting Act (Ustawa o radiofonii i telewizji) was passed. By virtue of this act public radio and television and commercial radio and TV stations emerged. Yet, there was no recognition of community radio sector.

A significant change in radio and television regulations took place in 2001. In this year a new category of broadcast media – ‘social broadcaster’ was created. This new regulation opened the possibility of development in the third sector of electronic media in Poland but only theoretically. The number of broadcasters that could exercise the right was significantly limited. For this legal status may apply only to:

- an association, within the framework of implementing its statutory objectives,
- a foundation, within the framework of implementing its statutory objectives,
- a church or a religious legal person of a given church, or a religious organization whose status is regulated by an Act of Parliament.

This type of broadcaster should propagate learning and educational activities, promote charitable deeds, respect the Christian system of values, be guided by the universal principles of ethics, and strive to preserve national identity in the programme service. Moreover, this type of station cannot transmit any advertising or teleshopping, sponsored programmes or other sponsored broadcasts (Parlament Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2001).

It seems that the lack of alternative systems of financing for ‘social broadcasters’ legally excluded by this regulation from the advertising market caused a lack of interest in applying for such a status among, for example, NGOs and limited beneficiaries of this regulation only to religious radio stations. In contrast to other kinds of radio broadcasters with non-commercial goals, religious radio stations in Poland can count on supplementary funding from dioceses or donations. Other types of stations found the system of financing based on the financial support of the civil society not possible at fulfilling, mainly because of a lack of the culture of donation for non-religious and non-charitable purposes. As a result, there are only nine radio ‘social broadcasters’. All of them are connected to church – eight broadcast locally and one is a powerful nationwide radio station called Radio Maryja (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji 2011).

Radio Stations with non-commercial goals in Poland

Although in 2001 a new category of broadcast media – ‘social broadcaster’ was introduced, the number of stations that benefit from this legal regulation, as mentioned before, is very limited. Other stations which try to fulfill non-commercial goals applied for commercial licences. At least some of them introduced strategies important in community broadcasting like ‘participation’, ‘having their voices heard’, ‘providing alternative representations, discourses and formats that vary from those originating from mainstream media’, ‘allowing for its members to co-decide on the media organisations’ policies and management’ (Carpentier, Scifo 2010: 116). Such strategies may be found among others in stations run by universities, by religious institutions, by local government and by NGOs. Their offer can be treated as a supplementation of the social broadcasting in Poland.

There are, for example, 10 licensed student radio stations, which are all located in big cities. That is the reason why student radio broadcasting is within reach of more than 5 million people – almost 15 per cent of the population of Poland (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji 2010). In comparison with other radio stations in the market, licensed radio stations broadcast ambitious and diversified programmes. The audience tired of listening to formatted radio stations that prevail can find interesting spoken word broadcasts on student radio, as well as alternative music that is a rarity on other types of radio on air (Doliwa in press).

The non-governmental sector is also active in the radio market. Despite having commercial licences, commercial success is not the main goal of stations run by NGOs. In 2011 there were six such radio stations serving diverse groups: children (Radio Bajka), students (Radiofonia), ethnic minorities (Radio Kaszëbë), Christians (Radio Mazury) and local communities (Radio Źnin, Radio EL).

There are also seven radio stations run by local governments. Most of them are active in the framework of community centers administered by these governments which try to serve local communities (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji 2011).

Finally, as many as 44 licences belong to dioceses, orders and parishes of the Catholic Church. Only half of them operate as independent radio stations (also as 'social broadcasters'). The other half is a part of the big network 'Plus' administered by a powerful media group in Poland called Eurozet. Additionally, there are few radio stations in Poland which address their programme to representatives of other religions (Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji 2011).

Except from licensed radio stations on air there are also other radio initiatives with non-commercial goals – for example closed circuit cable radio stations. This type of transmitting radio signal was very popular in Poland after WWII. The new communist regime was interested in the development of radio broadcasting as a tool of propaganda. Nowadays, this way of signal transmission is not very common but still there are places where closed circuit radios work: for example, schools, student hostels and prisons. Polish prisons remain one of the rare places where one can find monophonic loudspeakers joined by means of cable in almost every room. Closed circuit prison radio stations are located in each of 157 prisons in Poland and perform many important functions which partly coincide with these which are usually attributed to community broadcasting.

Moreover, a lot of legal, technical and financial problems connected with running a licensed radio station resulted in the activity of many radio stations only on the Internet. The history of internet broadcasting is quite short. Internet Talk Radio, founded by Carl Malamud in 1993, was probably the first internet radio in the world (Olszański 2006: 17). The first Polish internet radio station Radio Net emerged five years later - in 1995. This station became a model for other internet radio initiatives in Poland. Nowadays several hundred internet radio stations exist.

One of the obvious advantage of broadcasting on the web is a low running cost. Tomasz Lida – the founder of the internet culture oriented Radio ART estimates that the budget of this station came to only 25 thousand zlotys (7 thousand euro) per year. The main costs connected with running such a station are rental charges, internet connection fee and copyrights (Doliwa 2010b: 115).

The most severe costs for Internet broadcasters are these connected with copyrights, which are rather high in Poland. What is more, there are several organisations which are entitled to raise such fees. According to the law, every single small internet radio station (also the one which broadcasts for one or two listeners simultaneously) has to pay fees at least for five main copyright organisations. All in all, the lowest rate of these fees is 340 zloty (100 Euros) per month. It may seem to be not much but it is worth mentioning that many internet radio stations function as non-profit organisations. They are founded by enthusiasts with the idea of free radio, who invest not only their free time but also their own money to set up and develop such a station. It appears that the height of the copyright fee is for many stations a barrier difficult to overcome. As a result the majority of internet radio stations pay only the copyright fee for the main organisation authorised to raise copyright fees Association of the Authors ZAIKS (Doliwa 2010b: 18).

The penalty for illegal use of musical compositions in Poland is severe, up to 2 years imprisonment. There are examples of requirements concerning copyright fees are more and more rigid. The first internet radio station which was closed down for not paying copyright fees was Radio Rebelia in 2006 (Doliwa 2010b: 116).

The research conducted in 2008 on the basis of one of the most popular internet radio catalogues *nadaje.com* showed that the level of variety in Polish internet radio stations market is high – there is something for almost everyone (Doliwa 2010b: 112-122). The Poles show that it is possible to work without asking for money. It is one of the signs of Polish democracy becoming more and more mature. Yet, one of the grounds of a well functioning democracy is the activity of the society. The more people are active in local communities, working places, churches, the better they are informed and the more responsible they vote (Stokes 2002: 37).

On the Polish websites one can find a lot of interesting and non-standard initiatives. They provide an offer which is lacking on the Polish airwaves. Not only because of the type of music but also, or even mainly, because of spoken word programmes.

An example can be 'Radio bez Kitu' which is an alternative radio station from Cracow. It started in 2002. In the station's programme there are a lot of music, film, theatre and literature author's broadcasts. We can also find a lot of radio forms like features, reportages and commentaries there. The station promotes independent artists and alternative music. The director of this station Romuald Stankiewicz, in spite of his young age, is the prize-winner of a few reportage contests. He won his first prize as he was just 11.

Another example of interesting internet radio initiatives may be also Radio Art. It started as 'an active protest against commercialization of media in Poland'. The founder of this radio is a conductor and composer Tomasz Lida. Classical music prevails on this station. One can also hear reportages, debates about literature and art there. It is worth mentioning that the radio is an organiser of events during which famous Polish actors read books in public places (Doliwa 2010a: 71).

Some of the internet radio stations try to play a role of local broadcasters. In their programme, as well as their internet sites one can find news important for local communities. These are stations such as Enerstacja from Nowa Ruda, Radio Fabryka from Tczew, Radio Śrem from the small city in Grade Poland and Radio Vis, which existed by Cultural Association Prowincja in Żywiec. Radio Fajer Mix tries to promote culture, folklore and local dialect from Silesia (Doliwa 2010a: 71).

However, the founders of internet radio stations which try to fulfil community media goals, feel underestimated and expect legal solutions that could improve their situation. Internet radio journalists try to do important public work, which is supported by their own money. The cost of copyright fees means that a lot of internet radio stations do not pay all organisations which are legally entitled to collect these fees. Home-bred grassroots journalists have to be aware of the possibility that one day the police will confiscate the transmitting equipment and close the station. The introduction of one smaller copyright fee for all organisations would certainly have a positive influence on this sector.

Furthermore, it seems that a lot of community orientated radio stations are active on the Internet because there is no other opportunity to exist. Founders of Radio bez Kitu and Radio Art as well as internet local and student radio stations have nothing against broadcasting on air. The most important barriers to do this are high running costs and lack of legal solutions that could help to deal with these problems.

Community Media movement in Poland

Polish internet radio representatives expressed a protest against the unclear situation of community broadcasting in Poland. In 2005 Independent Broadcast Initiative NINA (Niezależna Inicjatywa Nadawcza NINA) was founded. The aim of this organization, which was supported by pirate and internet radio stations in Poland, was lobbying for non-licensed access to air small local radio stations with a power of up to 10 watts. However, as the founder of NINA Tomasz Lida concluded, the members of NINA were not determined enough to convert this initiative into a long term lobbying organization (personal communication 2008).

Community radio practitioners were also involved in giving an opinion about subsequent media law projects like the new project of the broadcasting act entitled Ustawa o zadaniach publicznych w zakresie usług medialnych (Parlament Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej 2009) or the project of the broadcasting law prepared by the Civil Committee of Public Media (Komitet Obywatelski Mediów Publicznych 2010). Some of the postulates of community media practitioners have been taken into consideration while creating these projects. However, they did not become a law in force (Doliwa in press).

In 2009 the Association of Community Broadcasters (Stowarzyszenie Nadawców Społecznych) under the supervision of the manager of the student radio in Krakow Marcin Lewandowski was created but the only activity

of this organization till now was evaluating and making comments about new media law projects (Doliwa, in press).

A fairly important signal that the community media movement in Poland is becoming more and more conscious of its demands was also the conference of Community Media organized in 2010 by Elbląskie Stowarzyszenie Wspierania Inicjatyw Kulturalnych which is also an owner of the internet based community oriented TV 'Telewizja Obywatelska'. These conference gathered participants from Poland and representatives of community media from Russia and Germany. During the conference a 'Declaration concerning the access of citizens and NGOs to media' - signed by all 59 participants - was passed. The demands formulated in this declaration were as follows:

- facilitating access to the airwaves for citizens and NGOs (connected with the change in the license policy)
- creation of Community Media Fund
- facilitating access to public media (special time for NGOs)
- participation of the civil society representatives in the evaluation of public media content
- the promotion of the idea of media activity among the Polish society (media literacy).

This declaration was sent to institutions which may have an influence on the media system in Poland.

A small success of the NGOs' sector was also the community media recognition in the project of the national Strategy of the Development of the Social Capital in Poland as an important element in the fulfillment of the main goals defined in this strategy (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego 2011).

However, it must be said that the community media movement in Poland is still rather weak. It might be partly connected with the weakness of the non-governmental sector in Poland in general. As the all-Polish research entitled 'Diagnoza Społeczna 2009' showed, for example, only 16% of Poles declare the involvement into whatever form of the activity for the benefit of the local community (Czapiński, Panek 2009: 266). That is why it is rather hard to create a powerful pressure group constantly involved in community media movement in Poland.

Why Community Radio in Poland matters

It is worth mentioning that before 1989 Poland was in some sense a leader in the field of free community media and civil activity which was alternative to the official political system in the Central and Eastern Europe. There were, for example, more than 2000 illegal, independent press titles at state, regional, local level which were active before 1989 (Jakubowicz 2007: 165-166). What is more, in 1982 independent and illegal Radio Solidarity was born. The station broadcasted only short programmes to minimise the risk for broadcasters being caught. Some of these programmes were broadcasted not only on radio but also TV audio frequencies. According to official data, journalists of Radio Solidarity were active in 23 cities (Majchrzak 2010: 7). Freedom of speech was one of the main demands of the Solidarity movement.

Now the situation is entirely different. The leader in the field of community radio in this region is now Hungary with 68 licensed community broadcasters in 2010 (Gosztanyi 2009: 302). Poland, a much bigger country, which has only 9 licensed social broadcasters (all of them are religiously oriented) and unfriendly community media regulations, lost the significant position in this field. However, an enabling environment for community media would probably cause this sector, in a country with such a long tradition of independent media, to flourish. There are several grounds why such a development should be desired in the Polish reality.

One of these grounds can be the difficult situation in the local radio markets. Similarly to other countries, after the breakdown of state monopolies on broadcasting 'state monopolies have been replaced by private ones with equally suspect aims' (Raboy 2003: 101). One can easily observe this by looking at the local radio market. There are about 200 local radio stations but most of them are connected to big media groups like: Agora, Eska S.A., Eurozet, Broker Fm (Beliczyński 2010: 29). This means that, to a high degree, they stop playing a role of a

typical local radio station (as a medium which may control the local government, promote local artists, initiatives and be the place where civil society could exchange views). In most cases they broadcast mainstream programmes, reduce their staff and play popular music most of the time. That is why broadcast community media may help to make the media offer more diversified and balanced.

The second very important ground is the low level of social capital in Poland. As Stanisław Jędrzejewski rightly noted the Central and Eastern European countries still wrestle with 'a fatal heritage of the totalitarian history'. He included the following into the main problems connected with this heritage:

- the weakness or even lack of the civil society
- the leading role of the state and 'the political society'
- the small credibility of the authorities elected in general elections
- the low level of the identification of the society with democratic processes and procedures (Jędrzejewski 2010: 44).

These problems also play a significant role in the Polish society. As one of the leading Polish journalists, Jacek Żakowski, said 'we do not grind the democracy throughout history and do not take care of it throughout generations' (Żakowski 2010: 16). He also underlined the mistakes made during the transformation process which interrupt the civil society progress: the disregard of the problem of social cohesion, the lack of activity aimed at the development of the civil culture and democracy, the educational system oriented to the individual success and not the cooperation for common good. What is more, which professor Janusz Czapliński emphasized, the pace of the development of the social capital in Poland is much slower than the dynamics of the economic development. It could be an important barrier in the development of Poland and probably other countries of the region (Żakowski 2009: 18).

To some extent community radio can be an effective tool to overcome these problems. All the more that there are some symptoms which suggest that the civil society in Poland exists and can flourish in an empowering environment. For example, the Polish version of Wikipedia – the encyclopedia based on voluntary work of the multitude of Internet users – in 2010 was the fourth biggest language version in the world (after the English, German and French version) with more than 700 000 entries (Bendyk 2010: 76). Probably the introduction of community media friendly regulations would contribute to the similar flourishing of the bottom-up initiatives on the Polish airwaves.

Community radio can be an effective tool in building the social capital of the country. It performs many important functions which may prove to be useful when talking about 'social change'. These functions are, for example; to reflect and promote local identity, character and culture by focusing principally on local content, to create a diversity of voices and opinions on the air through its openness to participation from all sectors, to encourage open dialogue and democratic process by providing an independent platform for interactive discussion about matters and decisions of importance to the community; to promote social change and development, to promote good governance and civil society by playing a community watchdog role that makes local authorities and politicians more conscious of their public responsibilities, to share information and innovation; to give a voice to the voiceless (Fraser, Restrepostrada 2002: 70-71).

The Research Project on Radio stations with non-commercial goals in Poland

One of the important barriers in the development of the CM sector is lack of data about the non-commercial potential in the broadcasting market (the condition, goals and requirements of different community oriented broadcasting initiatives). Social awareness as to what community media are, especially radio and TV community oriented projects, and what benefits the development of this sector of media could bring to the society is still small.

That is why I decided to conduct a research project on radio stations with non-commercial goals which can be treated as a stub of community radio in Poland. This sector of radio as a whole has not been investigated yet in Poland, although these kind of stations are certainly worth describing as a mainstay of the creativity, originality and passion for radio on a very homogenous and standardized radio market in Poland. What is more, they can be interesting as a basis of community media sector flourishing in Europe and still not fully recognized in Poland. It is worth mentioning that the situation is completely different in other, especially western European, countries. In these countries there are numerous books, articles, conferences, research projects and other initiatives devoted to community radio. That is why, in my opinion, the accomplishment of this project can contribute to somehow filling the research gap.

Although this project is of strict scientific character I believe that the data collected during research would contribute also to the popularization and development of community radio in Poland. They also may prove useful when creating new media laws and implementing regulations more favorable to community radio sector as it is recommended in the European documents mentioned above. As some researchers report, research data about community media can influence the policy making process in this field very positively (Milan 2010: 309).

Creating this research project I have been inspired especially by the research conducted by Helmut Peissl and discussed in the book *Nichtkommerzieller Rundfunk in Österreich und Europa* (Purkartthofer and others 2008) and the research concerning community media in Scotland conducted by Chris Atton (Atton 2007). The project aims at investigating the condition, organization models and expectations of non-public radio initiatives with non-commercial goals. More precisely, the goals of the project can be defined as follows:

- to characterize radio stations with non-commercial goals in Poland – the licensed and non-licensed ones
- to determine to what extent they may be called community radio stations and to what extent they are similar to other community radio projects in Europe
- to identify the main problems of this sector and obstacles in the development of such radio initiatives in Poland
- to collect opinions and ideas about changes in the media system, which would contribute to the development of the third sector of media in Poland.

The project comprises of research of licensed and non-licensed radio stations all around Poland. Six main groups of radio stations with non-commercial goals have been identified: student radio stations, NGOs radio stations, local government radios, religious radio stations, Internet radio stations (different types and coverage) and closed-circuit cable radio stations (for example in prisons, schools). The implemented research methods will be: telephone interviews with representatives of radio stations with non-commercial goals, case studies of one radio station from each identified group combined with a visit to the station, the analysis of leaflets, guest books, chronicles and other documents which will be collected in the stations selected for case studies, the content analysis of the weekly programme of the stations selected for case studies, interviews with workers, part-timers and volunteers. Hopefully, this research will help to characterize radio stations with non-commercial goals more deeply and suggest some welcome changes for the sector.

Summary

There is not one single right answer for the question: how to create the third sector of broadcasting in Poland. The representatives of grassroots journalism in Poland are looking now for best examples of community broadcasting around the world and are trying to formulate some recommendations. There are a lot of possibilities of supporting this radio sector that play significant role in different countries (open channels, grants for community radio stations, use of the funds from the licence fee, special frequencies, exemptions from some fees etc. (Buckley and others 2008: 220-226)). However, community media development in the Polish reality seems to

be not possible without full legal recognition of this sector, allocation of some frequencies to community media sector and establishing a small but stable fund for community broadcasters.

One of the main problems connected to the development of the third sector of electronic media in Poland is a rather low level of social awareness of what community media are and what benefits the civil society could gain because of this kind of media not only among the Polish society but also among Polish authorities. This is important because as community radio representatives at the International Forum of Social and Solidarity Economy which took place from October 17th to 20th 2011 in Montreal underlined: 'States can play a vital role by adopting regulations and policies that enable the establishment and sustainability of community radios. By supporting the independence of their governance structures, of their contents' choices and of their financing mechanisms, states can allow them to reach their full potential in the democratization of the societies, on sustainable human development and cultural diversity promotion' (International Forum of Social and Solidarity Economy 2011). However, to do so state authorities must be aware of the benefits of community media development. There are some movements that can initiate public debate about the third sector in electronic media but they are probably still not strong enough to force more friendly legal solutions for such initiatives. That is why it is hard to escape the impression that Poland is still at the starting point of building this sector.

One of the factors which can positively influence the development of community media sector on the air, may be the increase of the knowledge and social awareness about this sector. That is why a research project on radio initiatives with non-commercial goals which can be treated as a stub of community media sector in Poland was prepared. The project aims at investigating the condition, organization models, expectations as well as ideas of such kind of radio stations on how to develop and in what form the community radio sector in Poland. The way for fully recognized and financially supported community radio sector is often reported by community media researchers as a long march (Howley 2010: 18, Pavarala, Malik: 137-136, Carpentier, Scifo 2010: 115-118). I hope that the accomplishment of the above research project can be one small but meaningful step on the way to fully recognized community radio sector in Poland.

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