

## PRESS RELEASE

### Successful first edition of the Migration and Media Awareness Conference in Hamburg

*A forum to promote social empowerment  
and participation through media*

Hamburg, 01 December 2017

The first [Conference on Migration and Media Awareness](#) gathered 280+ international participants from civil society, institutions and media in Hamburg on November 24.-25.

Organized by [Refugee Radio Awareness Network](#), the CMMA2017 took place at [Kampnagel Internationale Kulturfabrik](#) and focused on the role and responsibilities of media in enabling (or hindering) social empowerment and participation of all members of society. Media makers and activists with a refugee or migrant background played a key role in discussion panels, workshops and exhibitions.

Anas Aboura, human rights activist and former chemistry student from Damascus, illustrated the initiatives of the [Migrantopolitan](#) collective in Hamburg and stated that ***“Integration means to exchange our cultures, not just to absorb one. Kampnagel provides a platform for that”***.

This philosophy is at the heart of Refugee Radio Network, the project founded by Nigerian Activist \ Social commentator [Larry Macaulay](#) in 2014: ***“We are here to connect cultures, share knowledge, share history and contribute to a peaceful cohesive society. That’s our vision. We facilitate dialogue through the radio so that we can deconstruct this migrant fear in Europe, which is still very high”***.

The psycho-social effect of mainstream media’s reporting on migration and refugees was discussed in the panel “From solidarity to fear - life in a post welcome culture”, involving also Kampnagel’s Artistic Director Amelie Deuflhard who reminded that ***“We need to find new and different narratives around migration”*** and that ***“The government and funding bodies are wrong to think that the ‘refugee crisis’ is solved and they should spend money on other things”***.

Good practices for inclusion and freedom of expression in community media were presented at the opening panel by Prof. Brigitta Busch of the University of Vienna: ***“Self-representation for refugees in media is essential to counter misrepresentations and be part of more inclusive national communication spaces”***. Community radio has been key in providing accessible media production and social integration opportunities for new arrivals in Germany, but community media need much more support across Europe.

Professional, “mainstream” media was criticized for reproducing structural inequalities and xenophobic political discourse, with too little efforts made to ensure refugee voices are heard in the media - for example through exiled journalists expressing their lived experience. The CMMA2017 provided a forum where all stakeholders (citizens, policy makers, educators, social workers, activists, bloggers, artists, journalists and representatives of communities) could share their initiatives and strategies for social change.

Dr. Silvia Grundmann, Head of the Media and Internet Division at the [Council of Europe](#) commented that *“events like these are what allows to close the divide between institutions and citizens”*.

Adetayo George-Adewoye Publisher and Editor of Africa Reporters *“To whom much is given, much is expected. Your contributions and struggles we acknowledge and appreciate all over Africa. Thank you for been there for all.”*

Prof. Kanchan K. Malik, Head of department university of Hyderabad and faculty fellow UNESCO chair on community media *“it was a wonderful conference! I feel so inspired by all the good work that RRN is doing, and also by the passion with which all the groups are advocating for the rights of migrants and for social justice. The UNESCO Chair on Community Media is hoping to be engaged more actively in this area of endeavor.”*

The explorative study “Spaces of Inclusion - needs of refugees and migrants in the domain of media communication and on responses by community media”, commissioned by the Council of Europe to the University of Vienna, will be available later in December at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression> and <https://www.commit.at/>

The third [CMFE media literacy workshop](#) part of the [Media Against Hate](#) campaign took place as a Conference pre-event and addressed the topic of Empowerment and protection of women journalists and media makers.

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The CMMA2017 was organized by Refugee Radio Awareness Network in cooperation with the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Radio e.V Freies Sender Kombinat and Kampnagel Internationale Kulturfabrik and in partnership with CMFE - Community Media Forum Europe, BFR - Bundesverband Freier Radios, COMMIT, AMARC Europe, Culture Wise Productions and Stiftung :do.

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