

SHARED GOALS ACROSS BORDERS: EUROPEAN UNIONS WORKING FOR INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE AND ETHICAL JOURNALISM
by **Mike SMITH** (Wales) / **Svetla STOYKOVA** (Bulgaria)

Summary

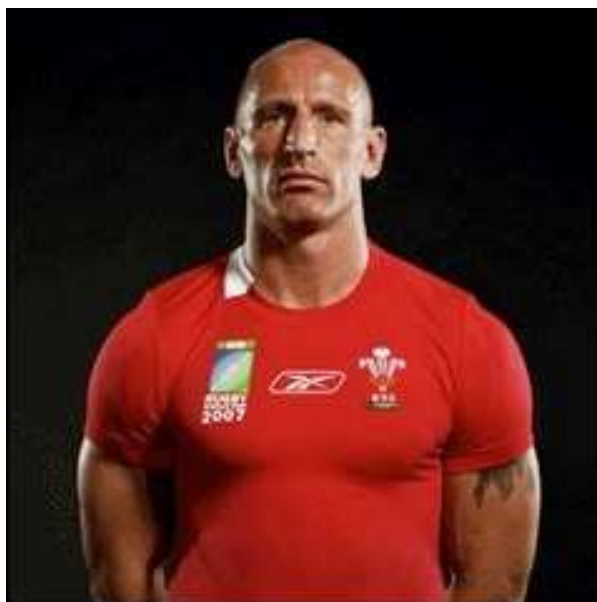
The experience of trade unions working with their members in different countries and in different types of journalism shows that there are some contrasting priorities and "hierarchy of equality" based on the political, economic and social conditions in their own state. This is also influenced by the size of the unions, whether they are the only union, the legal code, such as whether there are gender and disability employment laws, and the culture of union membership – all of which affect the effectiveness of this work. However, showed that while there are these differences the pan-European journalism unions share a common goal and tactics, tools and strategies that each can learn from and implement within their own borders. Our research has considered attitudes to the progress in the reporting and coverage of the LGBT community but has found that even here there is much work to be done by unions across Europe's nations.

Article

Unions across Europe share a common commitment to promoting ethical, diverse journalism by their members. However, each country's cultural climate influences priorities and Journalism unions place equality strands such as and sexual orientation, national context.

The National Union of Ireland's only journalism members. The NUJ is Leveson Inquiry into greater ethical journalism inclusive reporting.

General Secretary Michelle NUJ promotes the ethical representation of groups such as disabled, young people, travellers and women, especially those who are disproportionately affected by austerity measures.



political, economic and their equality work effectiveness. varying emphasis on the race, gender, disability depending on the

Journalists is the UK and union with 38,000 campaigning through the Media Standards for to ensure diverse and

Stanistreet said, "The reporting and

"The NUJ encourages greater diversity in the media industry and the Paralympics was an excellent example of the industry at its best. Similarly, while there has been a transformation in attitudes to LGBT and some ethnic minority reporting there are still many challenges, such as immigration, Islamophobia and multiculturalism."

Snejana Todorova, acting President of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, the sole media union with 5,000 members, said their main equality priority was the Roma. The union tackles diversity issues with seminars and roundtables to show journalists how to prevent discrimination and segregation by gender, religious, ethnic and sexual differences. "Some of these involve Roma community representatives Journalists, especially the UBJ's 'Investigative Journalism' section; investigate cases by signals and whistle-blower published material on the subject."

Race was seen as a vital diversity reporting issue in France, where there are five journalism unions. Emmanuel Vire, Secrétaire General of the 1,200 member SNJ-CGT, said that while this affects the union's effectiveness, the main barrier was that "newsrooms are too white, too male".

"Race is a huge issue for us but it is a problem to talk about race as there is no data we can access – it is not recorded by the state. But even when we have a law for companies to employ disabled people or be fined, they prefer to pay the fine," he said.

The unions point to successes in LGBT reporting, for example, as shown when former Cardiff and Wales rugby player Gareth Thomas "came out". He is well-known to Bordeaux rugby fans, having scored two tries against Union Bordeaux Bègles in 30 minutes in a 1995 European Cup game!

Stonewall Cymru (Wales) Director Andrew White said "Gareth gave hope to many lesbian, gay and bisexual sports people. Research to be published next month will show just how important such role models are to gay people in sport. Our Living Together report will also show that for a significant number of people in his home country of Wales, their opinion of him actually improved."

Martin Shipton, chief reporter of the Western Mail, said, "The way the media favourably reported the Gareth Thomas coming out reflected a remarkable transformation in LGBT reporting. Perhaps other vulnerable groups across Europe will be able to learn from this success in how they also gain improvements in media representation."

Armelle Maze, vice-president of European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation, said across Europe the story was well reported but there remained "a very strong tradition of open sexism and more or less 'homophobic attitude' perhaps reflecting a lack a reflection on these issues". She said the situation is changing partly through changes in newsrooms, such as more women TV sports journalists.

But Michelle Stanistreet stressed, "We must challenge existing models of media ownership so that citizens can access a plurality of voices, accurate representations and ethical reportage."

SMITH Mike is a member of the National Union of Journalist's National Executive representing disabled workers.



I am also the vice chair of the Equality Council which has the remit for gender and sexual orientation policy and campaigning. I am also a member of the Union's committees that represent freelance journalists. I am also a member of the Ethics Council which devises policy and monitors ethical aspects of journalism. I am a former member of the Stonewall Cymru Council and chair of Wales TUC's LGBT Committee. My main work is as a writer, publicist and trainer. I am based in Cardiff.



STOYKOVA Svetla is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Journalist since 1986. I have a 30 years long experience as a journalist in sport. I have worked at the biggest newspapers in Bulgaria - "24 Chasa", "Standart", "Otechestven Front" and "Pogled" - a issue of Union of Bulgarian Journalists (SBJ), sports department. Nine years I was PR-Manager of the Bulgaria Olympic Committee (BOC) and Editor-in-chief of a magazine Olympic Horizons - a issue of BOCq and of a website www.olympic.bg. I have done the coverage of the Summer Olympics in Atlanta (1996), Athens (2004), Beijing (2008) and the Winter Olympic Games in Turin (2006).

