



**Event date: 27 & 28 October 2011**

**Region: EU**

**The Media Diversity Institute provided media relations training** for 16 Non-Governmental Organisations from across the European Union, on 27 & 28 October 2011, in London. The training was intended to help the NGOs learn how to use the media to assist them in their work of combating discrimination.

Experienced trainers and BBC journalists, Tim Grout-Smith and Lily Poberezhska, led the workshop, providing mainly hands-on practical training. Topics covered included: what journalists want, selecting media friendly aspects of NGO work, clarity of language and message creation and presentation. The training was interactive with many group exercises, culminating in individual on-camera interview practise.

The trainees came from a wide range of organisations from across the EU, most with a national remit but several with a pan-European mission (European Network against Racism, Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations and the European Forum of Muslim Women). Many had experienced difficulty in interesting the media in their organisation's

concerns, and so welcomed the emphasis on understanding what the media want. By the end of the two day training workshop, many of the trainees seemed convinced of the need to engage better with the media and were thinking about ways to do that.



Sinan Evsen of the Dutch NGO 'Islam and Dialogue' said his organisation was already planning to rebrand to a new title 'Muslims and Society', and said the training had helped him with this. Nasser Zitout from the French Collective Against Islamophobia said the training had made him confident he could write better press releases, and he looked forward to the free online consultancy support, which will be provided after the workshop, to help him develop a media strategy and plan more media-friendly events.

Electra Babouri of the British Equality and Diversity Forum said the training had been the highlight of her four years of professional life so far, and she had learnt a huge amount from it. While the trainers had encouraged them all to try to think like journalists, Electra had been delighted that the trainers themselves were clearly on the wavelength of the trainees and understood the way they thought too. Panos Christodoulou of the Greek Council for Refugees said the training had encouraged him to push ahead with plans to urge his board to develop a communications and media strategy. He said this sort of training was what Greek NGOs badly needed, but could not find, and he was grateful to the European Commission for providing the funding for the workshop.

After a busy and energetic two days, both the trainers and trainees looked forward to continuing their co-operation online and through some onsite visits to the NGOs by the trainers.

The workshop is part of an 18-month project – The Ethical Journalism Initiative – conducted by the International Federation of Journalists in cooperation with the Media Diversity Institute and

Article 19 to improve media coverage of ethnicity, race and religion and other forms of diversity, throughout the EU, and is funded by the European Commission.