

PLENARY III: “DISABILITY PORTRAYAL IN ADVERTISING AND FICTION”

“By including disabilities in its creative output, advertising will help society gradually come to recognise that disability is not limited to just a few people in an insubstantial minority but that it is a normal and substantial part of the society in which we live”

*Images of Disability
UK Minister for Disabled People and COI Communications*

Probably the most relevant media for its important role as the everyday entertainment of the society, advertising and fiction (dramas and shows on television and/or cinema) represent the media where the everyday life of the average individual from each society is portrayed. In order to improve and increase the portrayal of disabled people in the media, advertising and fiction play a key role by influencing the general public.

The speakers on this panel will raise these issues of images of disability in advertising and fiction, which reflect the social representation of disability and remain a powerful tool to improve the portrayal of disabled people in the media.

As the General Secretary of the European Association of Communication Agencies, **Mr. Dominic Lyle** will present the images of disabled people in advertising, by specifically making a comparison of advertisements that are charity-oriented to the ones that are not necessary done by charity organisations.

Mr. Carlos Biern, Director of co-productions at BRB Internacional, will present the Spanish popular children’s cartoon where a blind boy plays the lead role, as an example of positive portrayal and a clear business success.

Ms Alison Wilde from the University of Leeds Disabilities Studies is the author of an empirical research project on disability representation in the media. Her presentation will mainly focus on disability representation in fiction, providing examples of good and bad portrayal in British and American fictions and analysing the impact these can have on media audiences.

The session will be moderated by **Mr. Enrique Tufet-Opi**, Director Communications Europe of the communication agency Weber & Shandwick.

Key issues for discussion:

- What is “good” and “bad” portrayal?
- To what extent the presence of disabled people in advertisements and fiction can contribute to viewing disability as one more element of human diversity?
- Can disability be stimulating and have creative potential in advertising and fiction?
- Why disabled characters are most of the times performed by non disabled actors?
- Will the audience be put off if disability is included in advertising and fiction?