

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Guidelines for cooperation between media and police

During the performance of their professional tasks and in the interest of the public, the police and the media realize cooperation and create responsible, professional and partnership relations and practices based on understanding, trust and proactive approach. Transparency of work, equal treatment of all media and journalists in the access to information and protection of rights of journalists are the basis of this cooperation. These guidelines represent the most important standards stemming from international documents and domestic legal framework and are not binding.

Police and media shall comply with the positive legal regulations.

1. Journalists are obliged to identify themselves at the legitimate request of police officer, i.e. to reveal their identity in the official contact with the police.
2. Journalists should wear press credentials while performing professional tasks. Press credentials containing a name, photograph, as well as the basic information about the media or association of journalists, are sufficient to establish a professional identity.
3. Journalists are obliged to respect police instructions, warnings and orders when approaching the places with restricted access.
4. Journalists may be required to ask the police and other competent authorities for permission to access special places (e.g. crime scene), and may be subject to special restrictions (e.g. not to take photographs). When reporting from the spot, journalists are obliged to take into account the interest of the public to be informed, but also to respect the human dignity and basic rights of others.
5. Journalists are obliged to adhere to the Code for Press and Online Media and Code of Audiovisual Services and Radio Media Services when performing their professional tasks, including when reporting on the police conduct.
6. Journalists should refrain from deliberate and aware publishing of material for which they may presume it will jeopardize police work and investigation.
7. Journalists have an obligation to protect the source of information during police interrogations and checks. Journalists, as well as citizens, have the right to hire a lawyer during a police interrogation.
8. Journalists are obliged to respect the right to privacy when reporting on the identity of the victim of a crime or accident. Journalists must not reveal the identity of a child or juvenile if it is a criminal offense to the detriment of children and juveniles or a criminal offense in which children and juveniles are perpetrators. Journalists are obliged to respect the right to privacy and the best interests of the child in each situation. The identity of victims of hate crimes, victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence must not be revealed without the

victim's permission or until the police officially announce their identity. The identity of the deceased victims may be revealed only when permission is obtained from the immediate family or after being formally announced by the police.

9. The police may not confiscate from journalists the equipment or materials which they collected through journalistic work, unless the execution of a court order is in question. Materials and equipment seized in accordance with the applicable law and which may serve as evidence in the court proceedings may be temporarily seized and handed over to the court for safekeeping. A certificate is issued for temporarily seized items.

10. Journalists have the right to report all cases of violence, threats, intimidation or harassment related to the performance of their professional duties, as well as complaints about the conduct of police officers, to the police and the competent prosecutor's office.