



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The Representative on Freedom of the Media**

HDIM side event on self-regulation: Annotated Agenda

Towards enhanced media self-regulation in the OSCE area

Highlighting the Representative on Freedom of the Media's focus on support for media self-regulation, invited experts will explore the merits of self-regulation for developing quality of the media while maintaining editorial freedom. They will analyze some of the typical challenges encountered when establishing journalists' self-regulation bodies.

The term 'self-regulation' refers to civil-society mechanisms, drafted by and for media professionals, that are independent from governmental control and that aim to uphold the quality and responsibility of media. Well-known forms of self-regulation mechanisms are:

- Inter-editorial Codes of Ethics, Press Councils, Media Councils
- Complaint Commissions and other reader/viewer/listener's representations
- Independent in-house editorial Ombudspersons.

In new democracies, self-regulatory bodies emerged after 1989, often following the model of Western countries. This trend fostered a consensus around the essential role that media accountability systems play in guaranteeing freedom of the media. Unfortunately, many of these new self-regulatory mechanisms are still striving to overcome initial shortcomings. In some OSCE participating States, self-regulatory systems are not in place.

The Representative on Freedom of the Media is therefore assisting the media in participating States to create or enhance self-regulation mechanisms.

The side event will provide an opportunity to explore the benefits of self-regulation. Two experts, representing respectively a long-established and a new self-regulatory body will share their experiences. They will also focus on the practical challenges and obstacles faced during their work.

Topics and questions that could be discussed are:

- The situation of self-regulation in the OSCE area.
- The role of RFOM in assisting civil society in the OSCE participating States to establish, implement or enhance self-regulatory mechanisms.
- Self-regulation as an antidote to judicial action against the media.
- Merits of media self-regulation as compared to state regulation.
- Benefits/inconveniences of a national or regional self-regulatory body in addition to self-regulation within a media outlet
- How does self-regulation increase media freedom?
- Challenges faced by self-regulation mechanisms.

- Is a Press Council a ‘watchdog without teeth’? Are Codes of Ethics enforceable? What are the alternatives?
- Is there a “one-fits-all” model for a Press Council/Press Code?
- Difficulties of setting up a self-regulatory body in new democracies.
- Economic and institutional challenges.
- The causes of reluctance to endorse self-regulatory mechanisms by editors-publishers-journalists, and by politicians.
- Enhancing knowledge of ethics by media professionals.
- Ensuring the financial sustainability of a self-regulatory body.
- Did the media gain since the establishment of a self-regulatory body and are they aware of it?
- Print, broadcast and Internet: different ways to self-regulation?

Chairperson: Miklós Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Introduction: Adeline Hulin, RFOM Assistant Project Officer

First speaker: Ms. Daphne Koene, Secretary of the Netherlands Press Council (Raad voor de Journalistiek).

Ms. Koene became the Secretary General of the Netherlands Press Council in 2001. From 1999 until 2001 she was the Assisting Secretary of the Council. Prior to taking up her functions at the Press Council she worked as a lawyer at the Netherlands Union of Journalists

The Netherlands Press Council was founded in 1960, and has reformed several times to keep up with the changing press environment.

Second speaker: Mr. Ognian Zlatev, Member of the Founding Board of the National Council for Journalistic Ethics in Bulgaria

Mr. Zlatev is one of the founding members of the National Council for Journalistic Ethics in Bulgaria, created in 2005, which hosted this year and headed the annual meeting of the Alliance of European Press Councils.

He has been the Director of the Media Development Centre in Sofia since 1998. This Centre promotes good practice in journalism, ethics, networking and cross-border cooperation.