

## OSCE SOUTH EAST EUROPE MEDIA CONFERENCE

Organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media  
in co-operation with OSCE Field Operations in South East Europe

10-11 MAY 2018 | HOTEL IZGREV, STRUGA

### ANNOTATED AGENDA

Media freedom — an essential human right and crucial feature of democracy — faces entrenched and emerging threats not just in South East Europe, but across the entire OSCE region and the world as a whole. The 5th Annual South East Europe Media Conference, organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in co-operation with the OSCE Field Operations in South East Europe, will provide a platform to discuss an array of media freedom issues and holistic approaches to improve the media landscape in the region, including through showcasing best practices.

Safety of journalists — an absolute precondition for free media — remains one of the most serious issues in South East Europe. The number of registered cases of physical and verbal attacks, intimidation, threats against journalists, and hacking of news websites has increased, creating an environment of fear amongst journalists and threatening the existence of a free and vibrant media environment.

Women working as journalists and media actors are especially vulnerable to particular types of attacks. When women face intimidation and harassment and when female reporters face daily death threats and online attacks, plurality and media freedom are challenged.

This conference will also confront the challenges surrounding “fake news”, propaganda and disinformation, which are not only increasingly prevalent in the region, but measures being taken to tackle these issues are also dangerous for critical or dissident voices. How might we identify, combat and raise awareness about disinformation, in a way that fully respects the right to freedom of expression?

Moreover, the challenges that freelance journalists and independent media outlets face when it comes to economic security will also be discussed during this event. Journalists in South East Europe continue to face direct threats or fears of job loss, preventing them from publishing certain stories of public interest. Lack of work contracts, delays in salary payment, unpaid overtime work and social insecurity are just some of the various problems that media workers face in the region. How might we better protect journalists from difficult financial situations, which often result in self-censorship or even a change of profession?

Beyond identifying the various challenges to media freedom in the region, the conference will draw on the hard work and engagement of the expert speakers and participants to highlight lessons learned and best practices from across the region. As we highlight the successes of journalists, NGOs, government officials, civil society actors, and academics, we will also learn about and from effective models of vigilant reporting, research and advocacy.

We will hear from panellists on ways to improve and ensure professional journalistic standards, and about the importance of media self-regulation in this regard. We will workshop best practices for Public Service Broadcasters, so that they are able to speak with an authoritative and independent voice, maintain editorial independence and serve as watchdogs for the public.

## Day 1: Thursday, 10 May

**08:45 - 9:30** Registration of participants

**09:30 - 10:30** **Opening panel**

Welcoming remarks: **Harlem Désir** - OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

**H.E. Robert Popovski** - Minister without Portfolio in Charge of Communications, Accountability and Transparency

**H.E. Zoran Janković** - State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**H.E. Artemis Dralo** - Deputy Minister of Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

**10:30 - 11:45** **Session 1**

**Session 1** **Safety of Journalists**

This panel discussion will present an overview of regional trends and current challenges related to the safety of journalists. The legal framework for protecting journalists' safety, reporting threats and bringing perpetrators of crimes against journalists to justice will be discussed. We will also hear perspectives from journalists on how safe they feel doing their work, and the most common risks they face on and offline. The purpose of this panel is also to highlight best practices for increasing safety, and explore the role of the government in protecting journalists and combatting impunity. Overall, the panel will assess the impact of attacks on and threats against journalists and media workers, both on and offline, and their ability to exercise their right to freedom of expression.

**Key questions this panel will address include:**

- What is the correlation between the safety of journalists and self-censorship?
- How has online harassment, especially of female journalists, contributed to an environment of self-censorship and fear?
- How can individuals, governments, associations and international organizations working on improving the safety of journalists further support this cause?

**Moderator:** Renate Schroeder - Director, European Federation of Journalists

**Panellists:** Veran Matic - CEO, B92 Broadcasting Company and Chairman of the Commission for investigating killings of journalists

Naser Selmani - President, Association of Journalists (AJM)

Dragana Pećo - Investigative journalist, KRIK

Meri Jordanovska - Journalist, BIRN

Tufik Softić - Journalist, Monitor and Vijesti

Parim Olluri - Chief Executive Director, Insajderi

**11:45-12:00** **Coffee break**

**12:00 - 13:15** Session 2

## Session 2 Working conditions of journalists and media outlets

Despite overall improvements, problems persist in South East Europe's media landscape and journalists continue to face challenges—including threats and physical attacks—in relation to their work, while institutional mechanisms fail to provide a fully adequate response or safeguard to the problem. A lack of recognition of the problems journalists face means that most of the general public remains uninformed on the urgency of the problem. Working conditions are further hampered by the absence of trade unions to represent journalists and the wider media industry. The journalism profession continues to be characterized by job insecurity, low wages and a lack of contracts. As a result, journalists face ongoing threats of litigation with little support, political interference in their work, including refusal of entry and access to places and people of interest on pretexts such as lack of accreditation or publishing critical articles.

**Moderator:** Evliana Berani - Editor-in-Chief, InfoGlobi

**Panellists:** Borka Rudić - Secretary General, BH Journalists Association

Agron Bajrami - Editor-in-Chief, Koha Ditore

Aleksander Cipa - Founder, Union of Albanian Journalists

Milka Tadić - President, Center for Investigative Journalism of Montenegro

Petrit Collaku - Researcher, AJK

Budimir Ničić - Chairperson, AJSRK

**13:15 - 14:45** Lunch

**14:45 - 16:00** Session 3

## Session 3 Strengthening Public Service Broadcasters

The role of Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) is of extreme importance to the overall health of the media landscape and democratic processes in the South East Europe region. PSBs are currently facing general hardships, and certain issues they confront even threaten their future existence. Only when strong, properly financed and free from any kind of pressure can PSBs be fully functional and serve our societies. This session will focus on the legal and institutional frameworks which govern PSBs in the region in order to provide concrete recommendations and share best practices. In addition, panellists will discuss the influence and impact of PSBs on society and the challenges they face in the digital age. Directors and representatives from PSBs in the region will present their views of the situation and will cover topics such as financial, institutional and editorial independence, public trust, digitalization and competition with private media.

### Key questions this panel will address include:

- Despite a solid legal framework, what could be done to ensure laws concerning PSBs are properly implemented and enforced?
- What are the most pressing challenges PSBs face in the region face and how can we overcome them?

**Moderator:** Radka Betcheva - Head of Member Relations Eastern Europe, Director General's Office of the European Broadcasting Union

**Panellists:** Senada Ćumurović - Assistant to the General Director, BHRT  
 Sandra Bašič-Hrvatin - Professor, University of Primorska  
 Editorial Board, Media Watch  
 Migena Gorenca - Editor, MTV2  
 Mufail Limani - Deputy Director, RTK  
 Andrijana Kadija - General Director, RTCG  
 Lutfi Dervishi - Analyst, RTSH

**16:00 - 16:15** Coffee Break

**16:15 - 17:30** **Session 4**

### **Session 4 Media self-regulation and improving professional standards**

This panel will provide an opportunity for presenting the self-regulatory mechanisms in the region and will offer an overview of current opportunities and challenges to tackling self-regulation. The achievements of the Technical Working Group on Self-Regulation, composed of representatives of the Media Council for Self-Regulation and the ombudspersons of Dan, Vijesti and Monitor, will be presented, with a special emphasis on the revised Code of Ethics of Montenegrin Journalists and the organizations' ongoing joint activities. Panellists will discuss the current state of affairs of respect for professional standards and ethical reporting in the region. Special attention will also be paid to the potential for self-regulation of online media, the responsibility of Internet-based media outlets and freedom of expression on the internet, since there is currently no legislative framework in this area, opening up the possibility for hate speech and intolerance on the internet. The panel will also serve as a platform for presenting regional experiences and best practices in the field of self-regulation.

#### **Key topics this panel will address include:**

- To briefly present the mechanisms of self-regulation; specifically, to present the work and achievements of the Technical Working Group on Self-Regulation in Montenegro.
- To discuss the challenges of self-regulation and the most common and most difficult violations of Code of Ethics; and to discuss the current level of professional standards in the region.
- To discuss the necessity of regulation of user comments on online news portals; the impact of the absence of legislation in this field; and ongoing activities in this field.
- To hear regional experiences and best practices.

**Moderator:** Ljiljana Zurovac - Executive Director, Press Council Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Panellists:** Darko Ivanović - General Secretary, Civic Alliance Montenegro  
 Paula Petričević - Ombudsperson, Vijesti  
 Mirce Adamceovski - President, Council of Media Ethics' Complaints Commission  
 Gordana Novaković - Secretary General, Press Council

**19:00 -** Reception/Dinner

**Day 2: Friday, 11 May****09:00 - 10:15 Session 5****Session 5 Impact of the digitalization on freedom of expression and media in the region**

The focus of this panel will be the impact of digitalization on the media and freedom of expression, and digitalization as a method for further advancing democratic processes and reforms in the region. Democracy relies on the ability of citizens to shape their society by expressing themselves freely. The technological revolution has offered journalists and other media actors great tools for exercising their important social function. But, despite this, it is up for debate whether or not media pluralism in the digital ecosystem of South East Europe exists. How should the quality journalism that is of utmost importance to democracy be produced and distributed online in order to increase its impact on development of our societies? This panel session will also explore successful examples of the print media transition and adaptation to the digital ecosystem.

**Key questions this panel will address include:**

- Is freedom of expression online causing political and economic pressures on media in the region today? How is freedom of expression online related to offline media trends and debates?
- How are global policy developments related to freedom of expression online actually reflected in individual countries' policies? What are the inter-governmental mechanisms and international standards dictating how are those followed and reflected during in-country debates?
- How are the regional media and journalists' networking initiatives and joint regional advocacy projects contributing to protection of freedom of expression online?
- What is the perspective of journalists on working within the digital media ecosystem?
- What concrete recommendations are offered in the latest paper put out by the RFoM office on the regulation of online media, and what is the OSCE's approach to this issue?

**Moderator:** Branko Čečen - Director, Center for Investigative Journalism Serbia (CINS)**Panellists:** Nani Jansen Reventlow - Founding Director, Digital Freedom Fund

Aleksandar Trifunović - Editor-in-chief, 6uka.com Media Project

Faik Ispahiu - Executive Director, Internews Kosova

Jovanka Matić - Research Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade

10:15 - 11:30 Session 6

## Session 6 “Fake news” world phenomenon and regional reality

The aim of this panel is to provide a better understanding of the concept of and perceptions on the “fake news” phenomenon, and whether it differs from propaganda and disinformation. The panel will discuss the root causes of such phenomenon, including political pressure and unprofessional reporting. This panel will also consider practices for addressing these emerging threats to a pluralistic media landscape through media and digital literacy, the upholding of industry established professional standards, strengthening media community solidarity, and by guaranteeing media independence.

Key questions this panel will address include:

- Why is “fake news” such a popular subject of discussion in the current political climate? How has “fake news” influenced the way we talk about the relationship between politics and the media?
- What is new about the way “fake news” spreads in the digital landscape? What has been done historically to combat disinformation and what are the emerging challenges of the digital age?
- Who is behind “fake news” and how dangerous is it to society?
- What can we do to combat “fake news” without encouraging censorship?

**Moderator:** Sejal Parmar - Senior Advisor, OSCE RFoM

**Panellists:** Remzi Lani - Director, Albanian Media Institute  
Tijana Cvjetičanin - Researcher and fact-checker, Raskrinkavanje.ba  
Mirko Ceselkoski - Internet Marketing Consultant  
Sashka Cvetkovska - Journalist, OCCRP and Investigative Reporting Lab  
Djordje Krivokapić - Legal and Policy Director of SHARE Foundation

11:30 - 11:45 Coffee break

## 11:45 - 13:00 Concluding panel and recommendations

Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

H.E. Damjan Mancevski, Minister of Information Society and Administration

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

DEPARTURE