

25TH CENTRAL ASIA MEDIA CONFERENCE

DRAFT AGENDA

Venue: Hotel InterContinental Tashkent
(2 Shakhrisabz Street)

DAY 1: THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2025

- 09:30 – 10:00** **Registration**
- 10:00 – 10:40** **High-level opening panel**
- 10:40 – 11:00** **From value to values: viable media for trust, social cohesion and democracy**
Keynote address
- 11:00 – 11:20** **Coffee break**
- 11:20 – 12:35** **SESSION 1:**
Navigating challenges to public interest journalism in the age of Big Tech and AI
- 12:35 – 12:45** **Group photo**
- 12:45 – 14:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:15** **SESSION 2:**
Media freedom policy and legislative frameworks to enable viable media in Central Asia
- 15:15 – 15:45** **Coffee Break**
- 15:45 – 17:00** **SESSION 3:**
Safety of journalists as a prerequisite for free and independent journalism
- 17:00 – 18:30** **Ten tips on using AI tools responsibly in the newsroom**
- 19:00 – 21:00** **Reception**

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DAY 2: FRIDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2025

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| 10:00 – 11:15 | SESSION 4:
Engaging audiences: media literacy as a frontline response to disinformation
<i>Room: Great Ballroom</i> | SESSION 5:
Presentation of the RFoM's and UNESCO's Handbook on Environmental Journalism
<i>Room: Syrdaryo 2</i> |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Coffee Break | |
| 11:30 – 12:45 | SESSION 6:
What works for media? Media Viability Manifesto in action
<i>Room: Great Ballroom</i> | SESSION 7:
Interactive workshop on safeguarding media freedom in the age of Big Tech platforms and AI
<i>Room: Syrdaryo 2</i> |
| 12:45 – 13:00 | Takeaways from the Conference | |
| 13:00 – 13:10 | Closing remarks | |
| 13:10 – 14:45 | Lunch | |

END OF CONFERENCE

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DAY 1 SESSIONS

Keynote address

**From value to values:
viable media for trust,
social cohesion and
democracy**

This keynote will explore the deeper role of media beyond financial sustainability, highlighting how truly viable media serve the public good. Drawing on concrete examples, the keynote speaker will examine the ways in which independent, trusted journalism reinforces democratic institutions, fosters social cohesion, and upholds shared values in times of polarization and information disorders. Particular attention will be given to developments in Central Asia, where digital innovation and increased regional cooperation are fostering closer partnerships for sustainable development, stability, and good neighbourly relations. In this context, it is crucial to ensure freedom of expression, and to create an environment that enables civil society and independent media to fulfil their roles. This is central to broader efforts to promote the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

SESSION 1: Navigating challenges to public interest journalism in the age of Big Tech and AI

Public interest journalism is under growing pressure as Big Tech platforms and AI technologies reshape the media landscape. AI-generated content, platform dependency, and audience fragmentation are disrupting business models and editorial control. This session will examine how power imbalances between tech companies and editorial media, combined with declining advertising revenues and complex algorithmic systems, threaten the visibility, viability, and integrity of independent journalism. Speakers will examine the risks of marginalization, disinformation, and commodification of content, while also discussing opportunities in Central Asia and beyond for innovation, collaboration, and regulation that can help safeguard journalism's role in democratic societies.

SESSION 2: Media freedom policy and legislative frameworks to enable viable media in Central Asia

Media viability does not exist in a vacuum and is directly shaped by the legal landscape in which journalists and media operate. Independent media cannot thrive without supportive policy frameworks and legal protections. At the same time, governments have a responsibility to protect societies from extremist content and harmful disinformation, yet such efforts must be carefully balanced with OSCE commitments to media

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freedom and the protection of fundamental rights. This session will consider how to ensure that legitimate national security concerns are addressed without unduly restricting independent journalism. This session will explore the legal and regulatory environment in which media actors operate, with particular attention to initiatives addressing foreign involvement in the media and civil society sectors, and the need to ensure such measures are implemented in a manner that allow journalists to carry out their work without undue interference. The discussion will further address the broader legal safeguards necessary to ensure a viable, independent, and free media ecosystem, such as clarity in the application of defamation and security related provisions that can contribute to a transparent, proportionate, and enabling framework for a resilient and independent media landscape.

SESSION 3: Safety of journalists as a prerequisite for free and independent journalism

Threats to journalist safety, ranging from physical violence to online harassment and various forms of intimidation, directly impact the ability of media outlets to operate independently and sustainably. States play a key role in fostering an enabling environment by ensuring that such threats are promptly investigated and appropriately addressed through legal and institutional safeguards. This session explores how journalist safety contributes to editorial resilience and the ability to maintain professional capacity within newsrooms. Special attention will be given to the distinct risks faced by female journalists, including gender-based online harassment. Drawing upon the commitments outlined in OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 3/18 on the Safety of Journalists, speakers will discuss practical measures to improve journalist protection and examine how ensuring safety contributes to newsroom resilience and long-term media viability.

Ten tips on using AI tools responsibly in the newsroom

With artificial intelligence becoming increasingly integrated into journalism, newsrooms face both exciting opportunities and pressing ethical challenges. This session explores practical approaches for integrating AI into editorial processes – from content generation and fact checking to audience engagement and automation, while safeguarding journalistic standards, ethics, and public trust. Centred on newsroom practices, the

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session also addresses implications relevant to media freedom advocates, civil society, and policy makers. Drawing on examples and emerging global standards, the discussion will explore how AI can be leveraged to support - rather than compromise - the credibility, independence, and transparency of journalism.

DAY 2 SESSIONS

SESSION 4:
Engaging audiences:
media literacy as a
frontline response to
disinformation

In an age of information overload and coordinated disinformation campaigns, media literacy is not just an educational tool, it is essential for an informed public discourse and social development. At the same time, it is essential to view media literacy not only as a tool to ensure individuals can consume media critically, but also as a means to promote the broader democratic functions of a free and pluralistic media ecosystem, strengthening both individual understanding and collective resilience to disinformation. In this Session, speakers will discuss the evolving tactics of disinformation actors, the role of fact-checking, and why cultivating a media-literate public is key to building societal resilience and safeguarding trust in journalism. Drawing on the RFoM's work on media freedom literacy, including its guidelines and actionable recommendations developed to support actors across sectors, the session will explore ways to adapt these practical resources to the regional context. Equipping audiences with media literacy also supports media viability by enhancing public trust and engagement, which are essential for sustainable, independent journalism.

SESSION 5:
Presentation of the
RFoM's and UNESCO's
Handbook on
Environmental Journalism

With climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and environmental injustice, the role of journalism in covering these issues with accuracy and urgency has never been more vital. This Session presents a new Handbook on Environmental Journalism, part of [UNESCO's Series on Journalism Education](#), developed jointly by the RFoM's Office and UNESCO. This practical resource is designed to support journalists in reporting complex environmental topics in ways that inform the public engagingly, contribute to transparency and accountability, and inspire meaningful dialogue and action. The session will highlight key

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elements of the handbook, including effective reporting techniques, storytelling methods tailored for environmental topics, and strategies to ensure accuracy while capturing audience interest. It will also address the challenges of mis- and disinformation, including climate denial and greenwashing, as well as the impact of AI on environmental journalism. In addition, it will also address the safety challenges that environmental journalists may face, particularly when covering high-interest topics or working in high-risk areas and discuss different editorial strategies to disseminate fact-based journalistic content about environmental topics.

SESSION 6: **What works for media?** **Media Viability Manifesto** **in action**

In rapidly shifting media environments, where contextual factors-political, economic, and technological-may pose challenges to independent journalism, media viability is more urgent than ever. This session introduces the Media Viability Manifesto, a strategic framework built on global lessons for sustaining media as a public good. Developed through extensive field experience and dialogue with media actors worldwide, its aim is three-pronged: to foster conceptual clarity, to strengthen strategic collaboration between multiple stakeholders, and to align practical implementation in the field of media viability. The session will explore how these values can be translated into practical strategies in the Central Asian context. Speakers and participants will reflect on ways to adapt the Manifesto's guidance to local realities, whether by strengthening business models, fostering cross-sector collaboration, or navigating policy challenges.

SESSION 7: **Interactive workshop on** **safeguarding media** **freedom in the age of Big** **Tech platforms and AI**

The workshop will unveil the RFoM's new Policy Manual on Safeguarding Media Freedom in the Age of Big Tech Platforms and AI. The Manual examines the evolving relationship between media and Big Tech, offering analysis of regulatory efforts to reduce systemic dependencies and mitigate harms. It provides actionable recommendations to help pS address the implications of platform-driven information flows and promote media freedom, with guidance on strengthening media visibility, viability, and vigilance in the age of platforms and AI. The workshop will explore how the new policy guidance and recommendations can be adapted and applied in the Central

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Asian context, addressing regional challenges and opportunities in promoting the availability of and accessibility to public interest journalism in the digital age. The participants will have the opportunity to engage on these issues through real-world case studies and collaborative dialogue.

The workshop is intended for media professionals, government actors, policymakers, civil society advocates, legal experts, tech developers, and anyone working at the intersection of media, technology, and human rights.
