

10TH SOUTH EAST EUROPE MEDIA CONFERENCE

29 – 30 May 2025 | Swissôtel, Sarajevo

DRAFT AGENDA

DAY 1: OPENING AND PLENARY SESSIONS

08:45 – 09:30 **Registration and Welcome Coffee**

09:30 – 10:10 **High-Level Opening Panel**

Moderator: **Philippe Tremblay**, Director, RFoM Office

Opening remarks:

Ambassador Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM)

H.E Elmedin Konaković, Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH

Ambassador Terhi Hakala, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Special Envoy

Ambassador Brian Aggeler, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH

10:10 – 10:30 **Why investing in media viability pays off?**

Keynote address:

Einar Hålien, Group Editor and Senior Public Policy Adviser at Schibsted media

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break (networking)**

11:00 – 12:15 **PLENARY 1: Safety of journalists: The costs of reporting the facts**

Journalists in the South East Europe region are increasingly exposed to safety risks, ranging from physical and online violence to digital surveillance and legal harassment, particularly when investigating and reporting on sensitive public interest issues. Meanwhile, women journalists continue to face even greater risks due the intersectionality of the attacks. This panel will feature first-hand testimonies highlighting the gendered dimensions of journalist safety, along with the legal harassment and other tactics used to silence investigative journalists and discredit their work. The discussion will also address the physical, psychological, and financial toll these threats take on journalists. Panellists will review existing safety measures, including legal protections and other mechanisms, and propose solutions to close the gap in current safeguards to protect journalists' safety.

Introducer:

Ambassador Andrea Cascone, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE

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Moderator:

Dalija Hasanbegović, Journalist, Al Jazeera Balkans

Speakers:

Ivana Stevanović, Executive Director, Slavko Ćuruvija Foundation

Danijela Đuković, State Prosecutor, Bijelo Polje Basic State Prosecutor's Office, Montenegro

Naile Dema Selmani, Board Vice Chairperson, AJK

Renate Schroeder, Director, European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)

12:15 – 13:15 **PLENARY 2: Legal and regulatory trends shaping media freedom and viability**

An enabling environment for media freedom depends on a robust legal framework that guarantees the freedom, independence, and economic sustainability of the media, allowing it to serve the public interest effectively. This session will examine recent legislative and regulatory trends, with a particular focus on laws targeting foreign funding for independent media organizations and legal action such as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs). Drawing on experiences from the OSCE region, experts will discuss the challenges and implications of such legislation and legal action on the media sector and freedom of the media.

Moderator:

Andrei Richter, Professor Researcher, Comenius University in Bratislava

Speakers:

Aleksandar Trifunović, Editor-in-Chief, Buka portal

Nina Kheladze, Development Director of TOK TV

Alexander Kashumov, Human Rights Lawyer

13:15 – 15:00 **Lunch (networking)**

15:00 – 16:00 **PLENARY 3: Rethinking the economics of public interest journalism in the era of Big Tech and AI**

In an era dominated by Big Tech and AI, independent, public interest media faces significant existential challenges. This panel will delve into the economic realities of sustaining quality, independent journalism amidst the increasing dependency on Big Tech, the rise of generative AI, declining advertising revenue, changing audience engagement, and diminishing public trust. Experts will discuss innovative and sustainable business strategies, fair compensation models, competition law, and policy interventions that can ensure the availability and accessibility of independent, quality journalism and reliable, diverse, and public interest information online.

Moderator:

Emma Gruden, Policy Officer, Forum on Information and Democracy

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Speakers:

Tanja Maksić, Programme Coordinator, BIRN Serbia

Ryan Powell, Head of Innovation and Media Business, International Press Institute (IPI)

Zako Sapcey-Triomphe, Innovation Strategy Advisor for Libération

16:00 – 17:00

PLENARY 4: The future of Public Service Media in South East Europe

A robust and stable Public Service Media (PSM) is the central pillar of a healthy information landscape as it ensures public's access to independent, reliable and diverse information, supports democratic debate and protects against political influence. This panel will examine the benefits of PSM for society, discussing how its important role can be protected and strengthened at a time when its political independence and financial sustainability are under increasing pressure in the region. Panellists will also discuss how PSM can remain relevant and trustworthy, adapting to changing audience needs and new technologies. The conversation will highlight good practices and standards, collaborative approaches, and strategies that are vital to the future and mission of PSM in serving the public interest in an increasingly complex media landscape.

Moderator:

Klaus Unterberger, Head of Public Value Competence Center, Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF)

Speakers:

Lejla Babović, Deputy Director General of Development and International Affairs, Radio Television of BiH (BHRT)

Omer Saraci, Business Journalist, Radio Television of Albania (RTSH)

Larissa Bieler, Director SWI swissinfo.ch / Member of the Executive Board SRG SSR

Attila Márton, Media Expert

19:00 – 21:00

Networking Reception Dinner (Hotel Holiday)

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DAY 2: PARALLEL SESSIONS AND CONCLUDING PANEL

09:00 – 10:30 **SESSION 1: Putting the Media Viability Manifesto in action – exploring regional collaboration for media viability and resilience in South East Europe**

The Media Viability Manifesto (MVM) provides a common framework for joint action within the global media development community, with the goal of ensuring long-term economic viability of independent public interest media. Its aim is threefold: to foster conceptual clarity, strengthen strategic collaboration among stakeholders, and align practical implementation in the field of media viability. This session will explore how these principles can be applied in South Eastern Europe, focusing on regional collaboration for a more viable and resilient media ecosystem in the region.

Moderator:

Guido Keel, Senior Adviser, RFoM Office

Speakers:

Elena Milliken, Project Manager, Research and Evaluation, DW Akademie

Blerjana Bino, Co-founder and Executive Director, Center for Science and Innovation for Development (SCiDEV)

Darko Dimitrijević, Owner-Editor-in-Chief, Radio Goraždevac

Peter Erdelyi, Founding Director, Center for Sustainable Media

Room: Geneva

SESSION 2: Workshop for young journalists on safety in crisis situations

This interactive workshop aims to equip young journalists with essential skills needed to stay safe while reporting in high-risk environments. Participants will gain insights into safety awareness, crisis preparedness, and digital security, introducing risk assessment and mitigation strategies and best practices for protecting both themselves and their work. An expert from the International Training Center for the Safety of Journalists (ICSJ) will provide hands-on training and practical tools to help journalists navigate challenging situations – on and offline – safely and effectively.

Introducers:

Cecilia Lagomarsino, Media Freedom Project Officer, RFoM Office

Assel Murat, Associate Project Officer, Office of the OSCE Secretary General

Trainer:

Ilias Nikezis, Senior Researcher, International and Peace Journalism Lab at the School of Journalism and Mass Media Communication, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Room: Basel

10:30 – 11:00 **Coffee Break (networking)**

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11:00 – 12:30 **SESSION 3: Boosting resilience to disinformation through fact-checking**

Whether working as part of newsrooms or as independent organisations, fact-checkers promote good journalistic practices while tackling disinformation, by helping preserve the integrity of the information ecosystem. Their work also supports media literacy, empowering the public to critically evaluate information sources and identify dubious content. This session will address the challenges fact-checkers face, including scaling their efforts and maintaining impartiality and credibility, while exploring innovative methods like AI-driven verification and cross-border collaboration. Experts will discuss how fact-checking can boost resilience to disinformation and foster a more informed and resilient public in an increasingly polarized information landscape.

Moderator:

Barbara Trionfi, Acting Principal Adviser, RFoM Office

Speakers:

Marija Vučić, Journalist, KRIK

Rašid Krupalija, Editor-in-Chief, Raskrinkavanje at Zašto Ne

Florian Schmidt, Head of Factchecking, Austria Press Agency (APA)

Milica Kovačević, Director, Center for Democratic Transition

Room: Geneva

12:30 – 13:00 **Concluding Panel**

Moderator: **Philippe Tremblay**, Director, RFoM Office

Closing remarks:

Ambassador Jan Braathu, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM)

H.E. Edin Forto, Minister of Communications and Transport of BiH

13:00 – 14:30 **Lunch**

SESSION 4: Youth consultation on the public interest framework for the future of journalism

In an era marked by rapid technological change and the spread of disinformation, strengthening and safeguarding the future of journalism is more crucial than ever, to protect democracy, peace, and security. This session introduces the Public Interest Framework: a forward-looking, policy-oriented approach designed to prioritize journalism and content that serve the public good. Built on core principles such as editorial independence, financial sustainability, and effective regulation, the framework supports a resilient information ecosystem where credible, fact-based reporting can thrive. Experts will highlight the main challenges and opportunities shaping the future of journalism, followed by an interactive discussion with participants on advancing media that serves the public interest.

Introducers:

Ryan Powell, Head of Innovation and Media Business, International Press Institute (IPI)

Maida Muminović, Executive Director, Mediacentar Sarajevo

Facilitator:

Deniz Wagner, Adviser, RFoM Office

Room: Basel