

Self-regulation in the OSCE area

Office of the
Representative on
Freedom of the
Media

General Overview

Codes of ethics

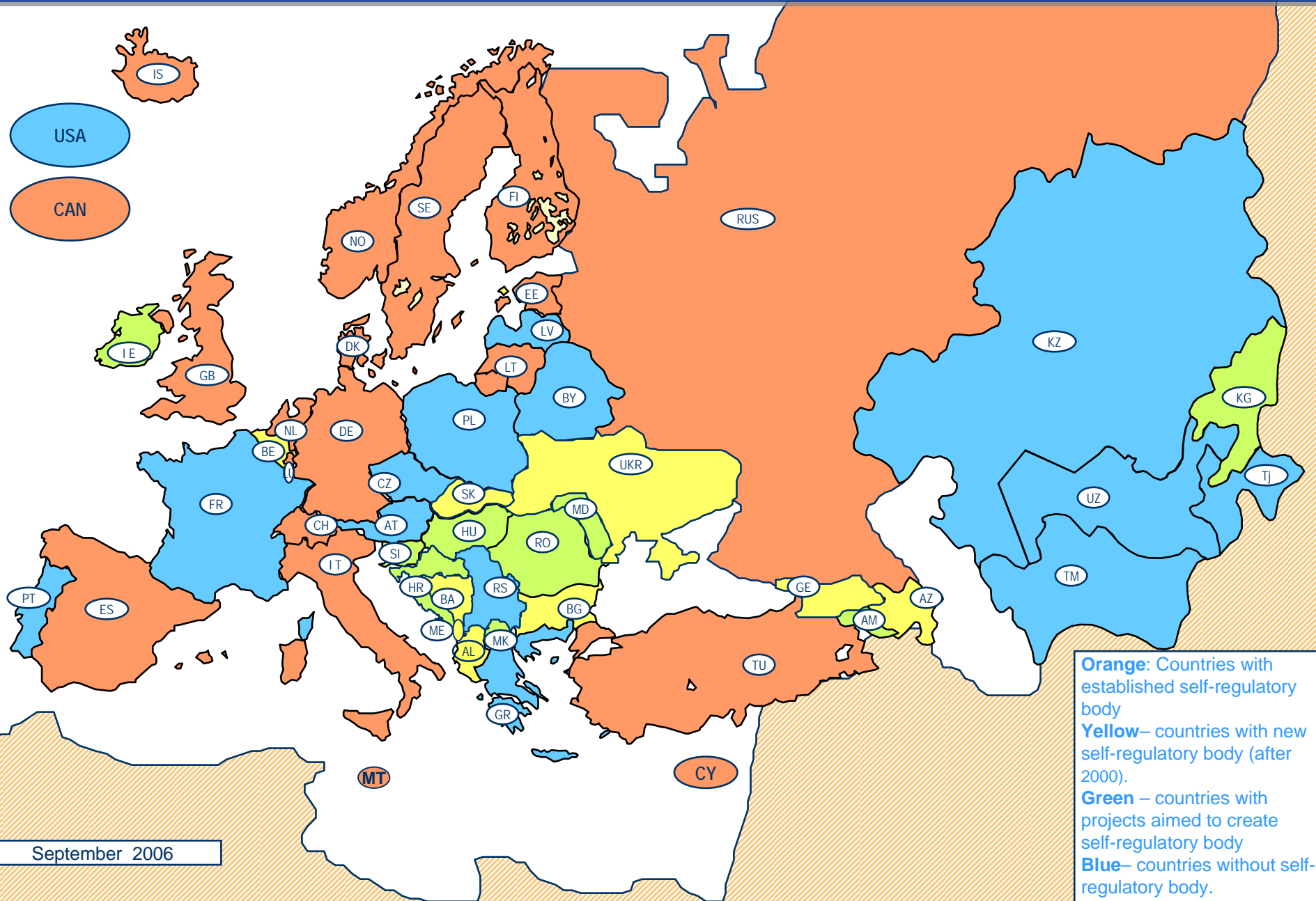
Codes of ethics exist in all OSCE participating States, but not always at the national level.

- **In established democracies: codes have a long tradition, are well-known and respected by media professionals.**
- **In new democracies : codes are not always well-known and often not adhered to by media professionals.**

Self-regulatory mechanisms

- **In established democracies**: These mechanisms are usually self-regulatory bodies (Media Councils, Press Councils)
They can also exist within the media (Ombudspersons), etc.
 - 80% of these countries have a self-regulatory body
- **In new democracies** : These mechanisms are usually part of the activities of journalists' associations (sometimes including a complaints commission). Whereas, Press Councils, Ombudspersons etc. are less developed
 - Today in the entire OSCE area: 45% of the countries have self-regulatory bodies
 - However, we can witness a new trend of establishing self-regulatory bodies

Self-regulatory bodies in OSCE area



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Orange: Countries with established self-regulatory body
Yellow– countries with new self-regulatory body (after 2000).
Green – countries with projects aimed to create self-regulatory body
Blue– countries without self-regulatory body.

Self-regulatory bodies in established democracies

No “One-fits-all” model of self-regulatory body:

- Different time and reason of creation
- Different statutes
- Different codes of ethics
- Different activities
- Different ways of financing

New self-regulatory bodies in the OSCE area since 2000

- South Eastern Europe: Bosnia i Hercegovina (2000), Montenegro (2005), Bulgaria (2005), Albania (2006), Kosovo (2006)
- EU: Belgium (2002), Slovakia (2002)
- Caucasus: Azerbaijan (2003) and Georgia (2005)
- Eastern Europe: Ukraine (2002)

Projects to create self-regulatory body in OSCE area

- South Eastern Europe: Croatia, fYR Macedonia, Romania
- Eastern Europe: Moldova
- EU: Ireland, Slovenia
- Caucasus: Armenia
- Central Asia: Kyrgyzstan

Raising awareness on the advantages of self-regulation

Increasing willingness in the OSCE participating States to establish self-regulatory mechanisms

Why?

Raising consensus on the essential role of self-regulation in new democracies, because:

- self-regulation fosters ethical standards and media quality
- self-regulation preserves editorial independence
- self-regulation is an antidote to judicial action against the media

Common obstacles and difficulties faced by self-regulatory bodies

- **Lack of financial sustainability of the body**
- **Lack of involvement of all media professionals, including publishers**
- **Lack of healthy media situation: weak economy, no pluralism, etc**
- **Lack of knowledge of media professionals concerning ethics**

OSCE Projects

To assist participating States in:

- creating or enhancing self-regulatory mechanisms in order to ensure respect for the code of ethics, and in order to minimize state regulation

How?

- by gathering various case studies and sharing best practices
- by developing a set of trainings for media professionals