

High-Level OSCE Chairmanship Conference
“Freedom of the Media in the Western Balkans”
in co-operation with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media
27 February 2017
Hofburg, Vienna

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Free media is essential to an open and free society; no nation can develop democratically without free expression or the publication and distribution of ideas and opinions. Democracies can function only when people are well informed and able to access and share information openly. Journalists have an essential role as public watchdogs and are therefore an integral part of the foundation every democratic society is built on, providing us with information on issues that directly affect our lives.

This OSCE Chairmanship High-Level Conference, organized in close cooperation with the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, will provide a platform for the sharing of initiatives and best practices from the Southeast Europe region on pertinent media freedom issues affecting countries across the entire OSCE region with a particular focus on the Safety of Journalists and Media Ethics. This conference will also showcase the activities of the OSCE, particularly of its field operations, and create synergies with regional experts, civil society networks, and government authorities in the area of media freedom.

09:15 Pre-Opening Session

Presentation by the OSCE Field Operations in the Western Balkans

The OSCE monitors the media environment in its participating States for violations of free expression, and engages in a wide range of media development activities such as supporting governments in reviewing legislation that can effect free expression and monitors its implementation; provides trainings for journalists, law enforcement, lawyers, judges, civil servants, councils, regulators, and other bodies; supporting independent media outlets; engaging with self-regulatory mechanisms to raise professional standards; and holding public discussions on pertinent issues, just to name a few.

Panelists of this session will provide an overview of media monitoring and development activities to illustrate how good cooperation and the sharing of best practices from across the region, between the OSCE structures, with the local authorities, with the media, and with civil society can lead to success stories.

Moderator: **Frane Maroević**, Director, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Panellists:

Ambassador Nina Suomalainen, Head of the OSCE Mission to Skopje
Ambassador Bernd Borchardt, Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania
Zeljka Sulc, Spokesperson, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
Christopher Tuetsch, Director of Democratization, OSCE Mission in Kosovo
Gordana Janković, Head of Media Department, OSCE Mission to Serbia
Samra Campara, Head of Media Department, OSCE Mission to Montenegro

10:30 *Coffee break*

11:00 **High-Level Opening**

Welcoming remarks: **H.E. Sebastian Kurz**, Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE and Austrian Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Dunja Mijatović, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

H.E. Ditmir Bushati, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania

H.E. Igor Crnadak, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina

11:45 **Keynote**

Andreas Ernst, Journalist, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Belgrade

12:00 *Lunch*

13:00 **Safety of Journalists**

This session will look at the overall safety of journalists online and offline as one of the preconditions for freedom of the media. Physical and verbal attacks, intimidations, threats against journalists, and hacking of news websites can create an environment of fear among journalists, putting journalism as a profession in great danger. Only through public and political condemnation and effective and prompt investigations into reported attacks on journalists and the media can trust be built between state institutions responsible for the protection of journalists and the media itself.

In addition to physical and legal protection, the economic status of journalists is also critical for ensuring independent, quality journalism. Fear of losing jobs, lack of work contracts, delays in receiving salaries, overtime work and social insecurity are just some of the various problems that media workers face. This difficult situation often results in self-censorship or even a change of profession. Strong journalists' unions and labour laws that are in accordance with international standards, are crucial to address and alleviate these issues.

Moderator: **Jeta Xharra**, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Panelists:

Veran Matić, Serbia's Commission for the Investigation of Murders of Journalists

Sandra Basic Hrvatinić, Head of the Media Studies Department at Slovenia's University of Primorska

Djordje Krivokapić, SHARE foundation

Mogens Blicher Bjerregard, President, EFJ

14:45 *Coffee Break*

15:00 **Media Ethics**

Hate speech, both online and offline is becoming more frequent in our societies. Improving media literacy and promoting counter-speech and counter-narratives is therefore an imperative. Political influence in the editorial policies of some media can still be seen throughout the region, while political pressure on numerous editors and journalists remains a matter of significant concern. Strengthening public broadcasters, broadcast regulators and media self-regulatory mechanisms contributes to a high level of professional standards, media quality, accountability and independence.

Panellists will discuss these key issues, and share their insights on practical solutions raising professional standards and rebuilding public trust in the media, whilst ensuring that the media remains pluralistic, independent and vibrant.

Moderator: **Remzi Lani**, Director, Albanian Media Institute

Panelists:

Ljiljana Zurovac, Executive Director, BiH Press Council

Ian Mayes, former Guardian ombudsman, author: Corrections and Clarifications

Marina Tuneva, the Executive Director of the Council of Media Ethics

Marija Šajkaš, Foreign Correspondent, Novi Magazine and Founder, 4 Better Media

16:45 **Closing Session**

Caricature Conclusions

Wrap-up by

Florian Raunig, Head of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship Taskforce; *and*

Frane Maroević, Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

17:30 **Reception @SOHO Hofburg**

***This conference will be graphically recorded by Markus Engelberger (www.visualfacilitator.at)*