

FREEDOM OF THE MEDIA AND SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND IN THE OSCE REGION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

MOSCOW
6 NOVEMBER 2019



Organized by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



Conference venue: [Radisson Collection Hotel](#) (2/1 Kutuzovskiy Avenue Bld. 1, Moscow)
Conference hall, 2nd floor

ANNOTATED AGENDA

09.00 – 09.30 REGISTRATION

09.30 – 10.30 OPENING PLENARY

Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Moderator: **Sergey Brilev**, Deputy Director for special information projects, TV channel Rossiya

10.30 – 12.00 SESSION 1: Freedom of the Media and Media Pluralism in Russia and in the OSCE Region

Media freedom and pluralism are pillars of democracy, as they are essential components and safeguards of an open and free debate. The OSCE participating States, including the Russian Federation, have undertaken a number of commitments and international obligations related to freedom of expression, media freedom and the safety of journalists. They underline the democratic commitments of maintaining an enabling environment for media activities and media pluralism, keeping society informed about issues of public interest, and holding those in power accountable. The OSCE commitments on freedom of the media also include the facilitation of accreditation and travel of journalists coming from other participating States, as well as the free flow of information. They are part of the broad concept of security of the organization.

There are many examples in the OSCE region, however, where a country may have robust laws protecting freedom of expression, media freedom and media pluralism, but which may not be implemented or enforced effectively in practice. Sometimes, constitutional guarantees and international obligations may be eroded by exceptions and derogations, or by other laws and practices that may apply limits in an arbitrary and discriminative manner.

This session aims to address the effectiveness of a regulatory framework and relevant practices that guarantee freedom of the media and media pluralism, both offline and online, as well as challenges and restrictions faced by media workers in the course of fulfilling their professional activities.

Panellists:

Diana Kachalova, Editor-in-Chief, Novaya Gazeta in St. Petersburg

Ivan Golunov, Investigative journalist, Meduza news website

Elena Chernenko, Deputy Head of Foreign Policy Desk, Kommersant newspaper

Kirill Vyshinsky, Executive Director, Rossiya Segodnya International Information Agency

Alexander Zharov, Head of the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor)

Moderator: **Sergey Brilev**, Deputy Director for special information projects, TV channel Rossiya

12.00 – 12.30 COFFEE BREAK

12.30 – 14.00 **SESSION 2: Safety of Journalists: New Challenges and Responses**

The OSCE participating States have positive obligations in relation to freedom of expression and free media to ensure a favourable working environment for safe, inclusive and pluralistic public debates. However, there is a staggering gap in addressing the safety of journalists and other media actors, including due to the lack of an adequate framework or practices aimed at preventing crimes against them, protecting them when needed, and prosecuting, in a timely manner, the perpetrators and masterminds of relevant illegal acts. Political commitments to protect media freedom are only effective when backed up by strong political will, as well as by solid policies and practices to bolster journalists' safety.

The OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 3/18 on Safety of Journalists, adopted by the participating States in December 2018 in Milan, highlights various contemporary challenges faced by media actors, and provides recommendations for the protection of journalists, the fight against impunity for crimes against journalists, establishing or strengthening, where possible, national data collection, analysis, and reporting on attacks and violence against journalists.

This session aims to address issues related to threats and restrictions faced by journalists in the Russian Federation and the OSCE region, including legal challenges and their implication for safety of media workers; existing frameworks and initiatives relevant to addressing the safety of journalists and the effectiveness of their implementation; safety of female journalists online: the nature of offences and measures to counter them; available monitoring mechanisms and methodologies, national data collection, and the ways they can be established and strengthened.

Panellists:

Mikhail Fedotov, Co-Chair of the Public Collegium for Press Complaints, Secretary of the Russian Union of Journalists

Nadezhda Prusenkova, Head of Press Service, Novaya Gazeta newspaper

Vladimir Solovyev, Chair, Russian Union of Journalists

Svetlana Kuzevanova, Senior Media Lawyer, NGO Mass Media Defence Centre

Igor Rudnikov, Editor and Founder of the Noviye Kolyosa newspaper

Anna Knishenko, Correspondent and Host, RT news channel

Andrei Jvirblis, Moscow Correspondent, Reporters Without Borders

Moderator: **Nadezhda Azhgikhina**, Executive Director, PEN Moscow

14.00 – 15.00 **LUNCH**

15.00 – 16.30

SESSION 3: Fake News, Disinformation: how to tackle them, including through Internet regulation, and international standards on freedom of expression

The widespread proliferation of “fake news” and disinformation confront media entities with numerous new challenges, and place a heavier burden on journalists and standards of journalism. By blurring the line between false and true, disinformation undermines public trust in the media and in journalism, and their role in a democratic society. This is particularly important when new media technologies advance new forms of journalism and communication. In the long run, the prevalence of online and offline disinformation may also threaten sovereignty and political independence of states, their territorial integrity and the security of citizens.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to the problem of disinformation in the OSCE region. The problem calls upon politicians, intergovernmental organizations, the media community, journalists, civil society and internet intermediaries, among the major stakeholders, to address the urgent need of assessing existing measures to counteract the intentional spread of disinformation, as well as their conformity with OSCE commitments and international standards on freedom of expression. There are many political challenges to designing regulatory measures to address disinformation, one of them being to avoid measures which would curtail freedom of expression or limit the free flow of information.

This session aims to discuss the policies and practices of counteracting disinformation, while respecting freedom of expression and freedom of the media, through a multi-stakeholder approach, the role of quality journalism, media diversity, the internet intermediaries and media literacy.

Panellists:

Leonid Levin, Chair of the Committee on Information Policy, Information Technologies and Communication, State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Elizaveta Osetinskaya, Founder of The Bell online news project

Maria Zakharova, Director of the Information and Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Ilya Shepelin, Host of the Fake News program, Dozhd television channel

Pavel Gusev, Editor-in-Chief, Moskovskii Komsomolets newspaper

Moderator: **Anton Krasovsky**, journalist and director of AIDS.CENTER Foundation

16.30 – 17.00

COFFEE BREAK

17.00 – 18.30 **SESSION 4: Media Self-Regulation, Fact-checking and the Role of Journalism, Ethical Standards and Media Literacy**

Adherence to recognized professional journalism standards and principles fosters editorial freedom, independence of media and pluralism, and contributes to the improvement of the quality of information. This process goes hand-in-hand with efforts to maintain and enhance voluntary mechanisms of media self-regulation and ethical journalism, both offline and online – important safeguards for media freedom, as well as the social standing of journalism and media accountability and reliability.

As the digital transformation has lifted barriers for entry to create professional media content, by democratising content production and giving people the opportunity to contribute, so too has the need to verify the credibility of information and trust in journalism. In this regard, fact-checking and media and information literacy initiatives, both by professional media and independent groups, have the potential to empower audiences to critically analyse media content, verify information and distinguish between news, disinformation and misinformation.

This session aims to address the state of affairs with regards to journalistic ethics and standards and their application in the digital age; self-regulation mechanisms and examples of their application; and, the practices of advancing fact-checking and media literacy efforts, both by state and non-state actors.

Panellists:

Victoria Polikarpova, Head of International News Desk, Sputnik News Agency

Damian Kudryavtsev, Media manager and owner of Vedomosti newspaper

Yurii Pogorelyi, Director of Internet Projects, Interfax agency

Tikhon Dzyadko, Deputy Editor-in-Chief and host, RTVI channel

Ekaterina Vinokurova, member of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, journalist with RT

Moderator: **Anna Kachkayeva**, Director of the Centre for Digital Cultures and Media Literacy with Higher School of Economics (HSE), Member of the Public Collegium for Press Complaints

18.30 – 19.00 **CLOSING PLENARY**

Closing remarks:

Harlem Désir, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

19.00 – 20.00 **RECEPTION**

Hosted by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media