

5. MEDIA SUPPORT BY THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

Supporting and consolidating independent media are core elements of promoting democracy and one of the most important goals of international cooperation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. On the one hand, it is a part of most country programmes; on the other hand, it is also the subject of various regional programmes which are especially tailored to this issue. In contrast to other political foundations and other development cooperation bodies, the KAF's media work has been considerably strengthened in recent years, and in many places it has become a hallmark of the Foundation's international work. This meets the development objective of becoming a global information and media society as well as the increased demand, particularly by political partners, to more closely consider political communication in their planning activities, to be aware of the importance a pluralistic media order plays for the dialogue with the citizen and to encounter journalists who do their job in a professional way based on ethics.

Principal goals of media support

The media plays an indispensable role in developing and securing democratic structures. It is able to give a vital impetus to economic and social development. In the light of an increasing internationalisation of communication and information, the media has, moreover, a growing importance for peaceful international cooperation and for tackling global challenges. Within the framework of media promotion, the KAF therefore strongly supports the following goals:

- promoting a culture of democracy which comprises the creation and further development of legal framework conditions for the media in order to secure the freedom of the press and information as well as pluralistic media structures
- phasing out governmental and commercial media monopolies, greater efficiency and independence of the media in order to

fulfil its controlling function as well as adequate education and training for journalists

- supporting economic and social development which includes the contribution of communication and information made by the media in order to reach social transparency and participation
- consolidating communicative skills of institutions and organisations of the democratic state as far as the dialogue with the citizen is concerned
- commitment to international dialogue and cooperation in the field of the media
- fostering user-oriented research and the exchange of experiences in the field of the media.

These fundamental goals have hardly been changed within the last years. However, there has been a clear focus on activities in order to sharpen the profile of the KAF programme as that of a political foundation. This becomes particularly obvious in the four regional sector programmes in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Southeastern Europe.

The media programme in Latin America

With its regional sector programme 'Media and Democracy', the KAF wants to contribute to the development of a pluralistic media landscape where the media acts responsibly. This is where the responsibility of journalists, media owners, media politicians and media scientists has to be strengthened for the democratic development of their countries as well as for embedding democracy and market economy in the consciousness of the citizens. At the same time, it is also necessary to make clear, again and again, the importance of adequate institutional communication for political processes, and above all the legitimisation of democratic institutions and processes, and to sensitise the players - politicians and journalists.

Defending the freedom of the press and opinion with unlimited access to all information, which citizens need in order to make democratic decisions and sound judgements, is the aim of all measures taken by this programme, especially in the field of communication policy and media law. This is where the political framework is created in order to make sure that basic and human rights, which are stipulated by most constitutions, can be realised efficiently in the field of communication.

The aim of special education programmes that are offered to those who work in the media is to improve their knowledge on central questions about the current political, economic and social development in order to enable them to really fulfil their mission of disseminating information in a world that becomes more and more complex, and to make knowledge, necessary for orientation, available to the society. In this regard, specific questions are just as important as questions of journalistic ethics. Both of these aspects hold true for representatives of the print media as well as for those who represent radio and television stations and for the fast growing number of internet journalists. The introduction of journalistic ethics and standards for media begins with university studies. At this level, the KAF co-operates with the Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communication (FELAFACS). Corresponding measures are being realised in cooperation with journalistically or media-law oriented non-governmental organisations and experts.

This work is targeted to enable political players to act professionally and to raise their sensitivities to provide comprehensive information on political decisions, positions and processes to the citizens in order to strengthen confidence as well as an active participation of the people in democratic development. Media representatives are to be qualified to responsibly fulfil their role as independent mediators between those who rule and those who are ruled, to scrutinise political events and to equip the citizens with as objective information as possible to enable them to form a well-founded political opinion. In order to guarantee and consolidate journalistic independence, the KAF also supports the further development of appropriate framework conditions based on media law.

The media programme in Sub-Saharan Africa

One of the most serious difficulties the regional media programme faces in Sub-Saharan Africa is poverty which is far above the average in developing countries. This also has an impact on opportunities to shape the media landscape. At the moment, this programme includes Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

All countries involved in this sector are still undergoing a transition phase from autocracies to pluralistic democracies. The freedom of the press, of speech and of opinion are still exceptions rather than the rule in these countries. There are only a few politicians who regard freedom of the media as a precondition for democratic societies. Television stations are owned by the state in the majority of these countries. As monopolists, they dominate advertising markets and dictate prices. Normally, print media only operates without problems

in urban centres. Consequently, there are sometimes good legal framework conditions but everyday professional life still is determined by political pressures, massive influence on editorial contents and obedience shown in advance by journalists. Self-censorship is part of everyday professional life. The only exceptions with regard to these practices are Kenya and South Africa.

This media programme gives priority to the following current objectives:

- strengthening the ability to analyse and thus increasing professionalisation
- strengthening shared responsibility and the representation of interests
- opening the media environment beyond the national horizon
- enhancing investigation opportunities in material and legal terms.

Almost all activities of the KAF are targeted to establish a regional network. Moreover, an additional training programme has been created for experienced journalists. In addition to that, the 'SADC Media Law: A Handbook for Media Practitioners Vol. 1' has laid the basis for a broad knowledge on working situations of journalists in the respective countries. It also provides an overview on legal framework conditions under which they work. In addition, there is a special need for a further development of the KAF media programme in the following areas:

- raising the standard of education and ethics for journalists and media owners
- improving their analytical abilities
- internationalisation of a democratic consciousness of values
- commitment for tolerance, equality and equal opportunities
- understanding the political and economic situation in the rest of the countries in the region
- understanding the role of the media as 'watchdog' and 'fourth power' of the democratic system.

Assistance and support provided by local KAF offices make it possible to export parts of the existing programme to West and Central Africa thereby advancing the establishment of a professional network in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The media programme in Asia

The regional programme 'Media in Asia' has been in existence since 1996 and is based in Singapore. It is mainly focused on the region of the ASEAN states. The main emphasis of this programme is on print media which plays a pivotal role in forming public opinion in this region. At the same time, however, it entails a variety of problems which make it very difficult to design newspapers in a responsible way. In the face of poor payment, a lack of education and catastrophic working conditions, the quality of print media products has to be described as being quite poor on the whole. In addition, professional mistakes are an open door to legal actions and / or to systematically undermining their credibility so that they are not, or only to a limited extent, able to fulfil their original controlling function. This is made worse by attempted manipulation by politics, the police or economic interests which try to prevent undesired reporting by using a combination of political, economic and personal pressure.

For the states of this region which are often at a very early stage of their democratic development, independent media as a pillar of democratic structures is a very important component for forming political opinions, and is therefore indispensable. By transmitting information, making statements and exercising control, the media accompanies the political process. The media is able to support transparency in the political process, thus giving an impetus for social, political and economic development of the country. The KAF media programme in Asia wants to contribute to making it possible that these diverse key functions can also increasingly be assumed in Asia to ensure the functioning of democracy based on the rule of law.

With its regional programme 'Media in Asia' and by means of independent, efficient and qualitative media, the KAF wants to promote and strengthen democratic structures by improving information and opinion forming processes within the population of the individual countries of this region. Therefore, priority is given to:

- an increased exchange of information between Asian countries within the framework of the 'Asia News Network' (ANN)
- strengthening the European-Asian media dialogue
- establishing and fostering an Asian internet editorial department within the framework of ANN which is to produce an internet newspaper for all countries with ANN members via ANN

- promoting specific qualification and ethical standards of journalists in this region, legal and economic independence of the media and the legal status of journalists.

The media programme in Southeastern Europe

The regional sector programme 'Media and Democracy in Southeastern Europe' was launched in 2005. It includes: Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia / Montenegro, Bosnia, Macedonia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Albania. The objective of this project is to consolidate the role the media plays in the process of democratisation and conflict prevention in Southeastern Europe. The project focuses on how political content is transmitted to citizens. Activities of this project are targeted to the areas of political communication, education and training of special journalists and applied media research. Target groups comprise the staff of parties, parliaments and governments who are responsible for public relations, journalists, politicians as well as media training institutions.

In the young democracies of Southeastern Europe, the media has a strong influence on shaping political processes. In particular, television stations are mainly dominated by the state and therefore one-sidedly oriented. Private media has interests other than transmitting political content. However, media who do transmit political content have a considerable need for professional skills. The image parties, parliaments and other political institutions enjoy among the population is alarming. As a consequence, the participation in elections is quite low which has often caused the invalidity of an election.

In such a difficult transformation process, which is experienced by these countries, it is necessary to inform the citizens about political necessities for reforms. The same applies to the issue of Europe. In many countries, there are still nationalistic or ethnically determined views which are supported by corresponding media. This project is designed in a way which addresses specific issues which are not dealt with, or only to a limited extent, by other international institutions. Due to its long-term on-site presence, the KAF has access to crucial target groups and political decision-making bodies. This is also where it differs from many other players. This media project is integrated in the KAF country programmes and constitutes an important focus. It uses experiences the KAF has gained from media projects on other continents.

For many years, the KAF has been active with projects that promote democracy in this region. It has established a large network of contacts and cooperation partners. This project makes it possible to further deepen and broaden singular measures in individual country programmes and to give them a professional image. The regional aspect

can contribute to overcoming prejudices, and this way to preventing conflicts. After all, the future of all of these countries is in Europe. Launching a cross-border dialogue with professional opinion makers is a vital contribution for the process of integration.

Helmut Reifeld

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