

## Greater media pluralism through entrepreneurial thinking

THE KAS MEDIA PROGRAM SOUTH EAST EUROPA TRAINS YOUNG JOURNALISTS IN BELGRADE TO WORK INDEPENDENTLY IN THE INTERNET

**Journalism and entrepreneurship are currently entering into an important relationship in South East Europe: particularly in the Internet, freelancers are making a significant contribution to pluralism in the media, since conventional media are often uncritical and insufficiently independent. The KAS Media Program has developed a training course in self-employment for journalists, which took place for the first time from 23rd to 25th October.**

In the Balkans, young journalists are facing a dilemma. Many of them have already enjoyed a modern training and completed exchange programmes with Germany and other Western countries. But the conditions of working in many media concerns are not very attractive, not only on financial grounds. The media owners often have little interest in independent reporting since they exploit their newspapers and broadcasting channels for political or purely economic purposes. In addition professional management is found to be lacking here and there and those joining the profession cannot apply everything they have learned in practice.

As a result, self-employment may well be an alternative for many young journalists in the region – an opportunity for the KAS Media Program South East Europe to offer a training course on the subject in Belgrade, in cooperation with Serbian experts. Ten participants from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Romania attended the workshop, which was focussed on the

Internet. The target groups were freelance online journalists and employed journalistic staff who want to become self-employed.

The basic foundations of online journalism were first described. In addition, the participants were given in-depth insights into the development of business models in the Internet. An additional area covered in detail was the production of websites.

The basic principles were accompanied by practical advice on increasing the attractiveness of one's own texts in the Internet, for example the inclusion of key words for search engines and the right combination of text and photos. Participants were also made aware of the pitfalls of copyright law in relation to images.

### **Not only high quality, but also the right business model, is important**

The trainers argued, beside the quality of the journalism, the right business model is a key prerequisite for success in the Web. The young journalists received tips about how online projects can be prepared, how to develop cooperation with business partners and which service providers are of assistance in managing one's own offering. In addition, they received detailed guidance about how a website can be developed and the kind of strategic analyses which are necessary in advance.

Last but not least, successful online journalism is a question of credibility, so that the trainers also went into ethical

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aspects. Journalistic values should also be observed in online publications.

**Participants develop concrete ideas for online projects**

In practical exercises, the participants developed concrete ideas for possible online projects, including an information portal on Serbian foreign policy – an important topic in the light of the agreement with Kosovo and the wish to join the EU. At the end of the seminar, the young journalists said that knowledge conveyed was of great practical use. The KAS Media Program South East Europe will therefore offer further training courses of this kind and publish material on the subject.

Numerous Serbian online media reported the Workshop. Among others, the highly respected news portal B92.net carried an interview with Christian Spahr, the Director of the KAS Media Program South East Europe. In addition to the contribution of the Internet to media pluralism, this also covered the status quo of the landscape of South Eastern European media and the services offered by the KAS for journalists.



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