

## Journalism Studies: Multimedia and democratic values

WORKSHOP OF A KAS TASK FORCE WITH EXPERTS FROM UNIVERSITIES AND NGO'S IN BELGRADE

**Since the political system changed in the beginning of the 1990s, the media landscapes in South East Europe have altered fundamentally. A lot of new media outlets emerged and the role of journalism in society modified as well. How future journalists can be educated as watchdogs of the democracy, was the topic of an expert workshop of KAS in Belgrade. It was discussed how universities can keep with new technical developments.**

The "Task Force Journalism Education" of the Media Program South East Europe of KAS, existing since 2013, continued its work during a three-day workshop. After the founding meeting in May 2013 in Sofia and another meeting in Sarajevo in October, the results of numerous country reports were now presented and summed up in Belgrade. In these reports, experts from universities and NGOs give an overview over the status quo of journalism studies and further training opportunities in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania and Serbia.

Conclusions from all countries show that journalism education has made big evolutionary steps – but still is not satisfying. Due to the triumph of the internet, traditional journalistic formats got into the background and the news consumption changed massively. This is why journalism education not only has to react to a democratic political environment, but also to the quick technical progress. Currently velocity, an easy access in transit

and the visualization of content are more important for reporting than ever. All experts agreed that journalism education needs to adapt to this more strongly.

The balance of theory and practice has to be tarred over and over again: training in digital communication, multimedia and data journalism are just some of the educational elements that should be ranked higher in the region. Moreover, more young journalists need to be trained for self-employment, as there are less and less fulltime jobs available due to the difficult financial situation of many media. In order to be successful as a freelancer, management and communication skills are important in addition to journalistic competence. This is what the Media Program South East Europe of KAS aims at since 2013 with its conference "Entrepreneurial Journalism".

### **Optional priorities shall enable specialization in other subjects**

According to the media experts, next to the profound basic education, optional majors should lead to a better quality in reporting. The experts think that students of journalism should be enabled to also attend courses in other subjects, which will then influence their final mark. By this means, future journalists can specialize themselves for example in economy, law, or medicine. In some of the Balkan countries the legislation on higher education would need to be adjusted in order to achieve that. Very important to the experts are well known

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journalists as guest lecturers, who can share experiences from their workplace. Moreover, the participants agreed that the career paths of graduates should be better evaluated in order to adjust the education to the job market.

#### **KAS working group discusses with students of University of Belgrade**

Job and career also were two of the main focuses of a panel discussion at the University of Belgrade, which was organised next to the expert workshop by the Media Program of KAS. Among others, Prof. Dr. Miroljub Radojkovic, head of the faculty of journalism, explained the model of Belgrade's journalism career days, which are hosted annually by the university and media companies. Prof. Radojkovic outlined the role of the dialogue between students and teaching staff for the further development of the education.

Christian Spahr, Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe, stressed the importance of a modern journalism education for the development of democracy. Journalists needed to be trained systematically in order to work in an interest of the public and to have clear ethical standards. Dr. Liana Ionescu from University of Bucharest and Dr. Orlin Spassov from University of Sofia shared experiences from their countries with the Serbian students. The discussion was not only well-attended with it's around 50 attendees, the present students also participated intensively in the discussion. All in all, the aim of Prof. Radojkovic was reached – a real exchange of opinions between lecturers and students.



#### **Imprint**

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