

Data journalism is central to investigative reporters

A "LEGAL LEAKS" TRAINING BY THE KAS MEDIA PROGRAM SOUTH EAST EUROPE IN CHIȘINĂU INFORMS JOURNALISTS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND RESEARCH TRICKS

Journalists have more and more rights to access information – but when it comes to exercising these rights, authorities are often uncooperative. The development towards more transparency in South East Europe has still not been completed yet. The internet facilitates investigation, but journalists also need to protect themselves. This is what the participants of a seminar in Moldova were taught.

"Legal Leaks" has become a well-known training concept in the media scene. The name stands for a compact seminar with the best trainers of investigative research throughout Europe. It was created by the two media NGOs "Access Info Europe" and "n-ost" and supported by the KAS Media Program South East Europe. KAS funded the translation of the Legal Leaks toolkit into several South East European languages.

KAS and n-ost present Legal Leaks for the first time in Moldova

From June 12 to 13, 2014, shortly after a special Legal Leaks toolkit for Moldova had been fully assembled, KAS and the German journalist network n-ost have brought the training to Chișinău for the first time.

Twelve investigative journalists took part, amongst them four Romanian journalists. The participants from both countries had the opportunity to exchange their professional experiences.

The trainers Staffan Dahllöf from Copenhagen and Gavin Sheridan from Dublin covered all aspects of access to

information and data-driven journalism. The participants learned about legal strategies that can be used successfully when dealing with intransparent authorities and how to analyse public documents and statistics the best way possible. The technical evaluation of databases and search techniques on the internet play a crucial role for successful journalistic investigation. In order to be able to resist political pressure and to cover the financial risk of legal actions, it is also important that journalists build up networks amongst each other as well as with NGOs and civil society groups.

Increasingly important: Journalists have to protect themselves on the Web

Additionally, it gets more and more important for reporters to protect themselves and their investigations against the possibility of being surveilled. The discussion regarding WikiLeaks and Edward Snowden evoked the need for precautionary measures when doing investigations via Internet. Hauke Gierow from Reporters without Borders in Berlin explained how journalists can leave less traces on the Web and encrypt their communication in delicate matters.

Conclusion by the organizers and participants of the training: Much depends on a high level of know-how – but also on the right attitude of journalists. Being persistent and undeterred by obstacles are the two most important characteristics of investigative reporters.



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