

BIRN and KAS: Tools for investigative Journalists

THE KAS MEDIA PROGRAM SOUTH EAST EUROPE IS CO-HOST OF "BIRN SUMMER SCHOOL OF INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING" – 2014 IN BEČIĆI, MONTENEGRO

"This summer school is the best workshop for investigative journalists that I know" was the conclusion of Paul Lewis, an experienced reporter for the "Guardian", who took over the role of lead trainer this year. 14 trainers and speakers from all across Europe imparted the challenges and tricks of investigative journalism.

Over 35 participants in the week-long training came from South East Europe, but also from Germany, Austria, Spain and the United States. Selected candidates from the Balkan countries received scholarships for the summer school, mostly funded by the KAS. Other supporters of the training from 24 to 29 August 2014 in Montenegro's Becici included the NATO and the OSCE. The main organiser is the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), a major regional media NGO.

Meticulous reporter ensure greater transparency in politics and business

The motivation to train investigative journalists, for the KAS Media Program, lies especially in the social effect of meticulous investigations – they create more transparency in politics and business. Especially in emerging countries, there is still room for improvement. Without investigative journalism many events of public interest would remain undisclosed. If investigative journalism is based on ethical principles, it can contribute to the strengthening and development of democracy.

The following topics were on the agenda of the Summer School:

- Formulating the right research questions
- Advanced methods of information retrieval in the Internet
- Specifics of research in the field of politicians and other VIPs
- Automated analysis of extensive tables and statistics
- Tactics to obtain government information on the basis of existing laws
- Proper handling of sources and their personal protection
- Ethical aspects on the use of research results

"Journalists must be careful not to get wrong information or information from wrong sources," pointed out Marcus Lindemann, founder of the Berlin journalist offices "Autorenwerk" and one of the trainers. He showed the participants how to find hidden information on the web or how Excel files can be properly evaluated.

Other trainers included Helen Darbishire, head of the NGO "Access Info Europe", the Romanian anti-corruption reporter Paul Radu and specialists from the BBC and South East Europe media organisations. Finally, the three best research concepts of the participants were awarded with sponsorships. The KAS will support the program in the future.



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