

JÖRG ARMBRUSTER
SNESHINKA BLAGOEVA
YEVGEN FEDCHENKO
MARTINA KAISER
ALINA MATIS
CHRISTIAN MIHR
CHRISTIAN SPAHR
AIDAN WHITE
MANUELA ZLATEVA
LJILJANA ZUROVAĆ

JULY 2015

www.kas.de/medien-europa/en

Recommendations for war reporters

CONCLUSIONS BY PARTICIPANTS OF A CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP ON CONFLICT REPORTING (KAS MEDIA PROGRAM SOUTH EAST EUROPE, 13 FEBRUARY 2015, SOFIA)

Difficult living conditions and unclear political circumstances in times of crises have enormous impact on the work of war correspondents. Leading media experts and journalists from Germany, Austria and South East Europe discussed current tendencies of war reporting and formulated recommendations for reporters.

Preparation

Gathering information: Conducting research on the region is the first step. Stories by other journalists who came back from the war zone are an important source of information for the preparation. Good knowledge of the terrain and basics of the local language are of vital importance. War reporters should be aware of all dangers before going to the hot spot, including all types of weapons and their effect.

First aid kit: Learning basics of first aid can save the life of reporters working under threatening conditions. Protective gears, masks, a bullet proof vest, water filter systems and medicines should be considered as well. Being aware of organisations that offer security trainings such as the German Federal Armed Forces is of great importance. Media outlets should cooperate with each other in order to provide journalists with the necessary equipment.

Providing insurance: War reporters should consider insurance that includes emergency medical care and kidnapping. An organisation offering this service for freelancers is "Reporters Without Borders".

Technical equipment: Organisation of accommodation, transport and technical

facilities, which will be used on the spot, should be prepared in advance.

Setting goals: The research in the field will succeed more efficiently if correspondents know in detail on which topics they are going to report and which information they need to find out. In addition, a stringer – a local person living in the country and having diverse contacts – should be hired in order to help journalists to achieve their goals.

Psychological assistance: Mental preparation is needed to ensure that the person is ready to go to a war zone. Reporters need to be aware that they will probably make traumatic experiences which could have a lifelong impact.

Setting-up contacts: Contacting NGOs, the embassy of the home country and the professional community can help building a network of reliable partners and a personal community.

Digital security: Ensuring that communication devices are protected is a precondition for personal security. E-mails for example must be encrypted. In some cases, it is even necessary not to carry any communication devices such as smartphones with you. If reporters use one, they should be sure to be logged off from all social media accounts in critical situations. Only by doing this, they can protect their profiles on the social web and further contact details.

Team work: Guidelines for coordination with all the parties journalists are working with – stringers, fixers, and editors-in-chief – should be specified in advance.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

**MEDIA PROGRAM
SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

JÖRG ARMBRUSTER
SNESHINKA BLAGOEVA
YEVGEN FEDCHENKO
MARTINA KAISER
ALINA MATIS
CHRISTIAN MIHR
CHRISTIAN SPAHR
AIDAN WHITE
MANUELA ZLATEVA
LJILJANA ZUROVAĆ

JULY 2015

www.kas.de/medien-europa/en



**Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung**

Imprint

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Media Program
South East Europe

19, Yanko Sakazov Blvd.
1st floor, apt. 2
1504 Sofia
Bulgaria

Telephone
+359 2 942 49-71
Telefax
+359 2 942 49-79

E-Mail
media.europe@kas.de

Web
www.kas.de/medien-europa

Fieldwork

Trusted parties: After getting in touch with other journalists, the military and the locals, reporters have to determine with whom they can work with. If it is avoidable at all, reporters should beware of embedded journalism. In addition, it is a must to take a native speaker with you – somebody you can rely on and who is ideally coming from a country not involved in the conflict. Reporters should always inform their trusted parties about their current location and where they are going next.

Transparency & safety: Journalists have to decide to whom and how to disclose their project. They have to determine when they will go undercover and in which way they will legitimate themselves as a reporter. Important issue is also tactics: how to collect information when you are observed by the security agencies.

Ethical aspects

Explanation of the context: Reporters should describe their working process and context, especially, when they are interviewing only one part of the conflict. In this case, they should explicitly mention it in their coverage.

Different points of view: War reporters need to gather as many points of view as possible and always look for different voices in any situation.

Respect to the interviewees: Journalists should show respect to people they are going to interview and ask them if they would like to be filmed or recorded. It is important to ensure that the material is going to be used in an appropriate way and that the journalists have control over it. War reporters should not pay money for information and be sure that they will not endanger the life of other people through their activities.

Personal commitment: The decision to report and to be in a conflict zone is an ethical aspect itself. Exchange with colleagues can ensure journalists that they are on the right professional path.