

Experts discuss internet policy

ON INITIATIVE OF KAS, EXPERTS FROM SOUTH EAST EUROPE AND GERMANY DISCUSS CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AND GIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Many internet users consider personal information to be insecure and feel threatened by unauthorized disclosure of their data. How is the situation in the Balkan countries? The KAS Media Program South East Europe gathered experts from 27 to 29 October 2014 in Bucharest to give an overview on the topic. They also formulated joint recommendations.

On legal issues, the KAS Media Program cooperates with the "Article 10 EHCR" Task Force of Prof. Dr. Johannes Weberling (Viadrina European University Frankfurt/Oder). Experts from Germany and South East Europe analyse the media development in their countries from a legal point of view. The name of the Task Force is derived from the European Convention on Human Rights – it describes the right to freedom of expression in Article 10.

On invitation by Prof. Dr. Weberling and KAS, experts from South East Europe discussed the situation of media rights on the internet. The working group also sought dialogue with the Rumanian public. Prof. Dr. Weberling discussed the trade-off between freedom and online security with Oliver Vujović, Secretary General of the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO).

During the seminar, the participants formed two working groups of six participants each, concentrating on the subdivisions "Legislation for online media" and "Self-regulation of online media". Thereby a priority was set on the exchange of experiences between different countries.

Gelu Trandafir (Freedom House Romania) for instance noticed numerous undefined

issues in the field of legislation in his country. Ioana Avadani, Head of the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) added that in regard to privacy there were contradictions between the criminal and the civil law. According to her, the disclosure of certain information is punished more severely than violations of privacy. The participants also stressed that the acquisition of media competence among the youth has to be further supported.

Media law experts provide recommendations for South East Europe

Several recommendations for the media sector in South East Europe were formulated – among others:

- Media owners should protect journalists more actively in court procedures.
- Paid media content should be clearly labelled as such.
- Governments have to transparently disclose which websites receive state and EU funds, e.g. for advertisement.
- Publishing an imprint should be mandatory for online media.

A detailed conference report was published in "Südosteuropa-Mitteilungen" (Edition 1/2015, Author: Judith Wachinger, Viadrina European University).



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