

## Young journalists learn fair reporting and ethical standards

JOURNALISM STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS VISIT SUMMER SCHOOL AT THE INVITATION OF KAS AND PRESS COUNCIL BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**The Summer School of Media Ethics in Konjic took place for the second time. Based on a concept of the Press Council Bosnia-Herzegovina, the KAS Media Program South East Europe enabled a five-day seminar for young journalists from ten countries. The participants learned from Europe-wide leading experts and exchanged professional experiences.**

20 participants from South East Europe were invited to Konjic, a city between Sarajevo and Mostar, from 3 to 8 July. The KAS Media Program and the Press Council Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperated for the organisation of the Summer School. Their goal was to promote responsible reporting. In addition, a network of young journalists from South East Europe should be built, in order to facilitate a long-term exchange of Best Practices.

The event was opened by the directors of both partner organisations: **Ljiljana Zurovac** (Press Council Bosnia-Herzegovina) and **Christian Spahr** (KAS Media Program South East Europe). The main topics of the programme were presented according to the following leitmotiv: The purpose of journalism is to inform and to remain precise, ethically responsible and respectful.

**Aidan White**, Director of the Ethical Journalism Network from London, explained the ethical principles with examples of media reporting. Media are being used for manipulation, hate speech is not being recognised and sanctioned. It is important to keep in mind basic ethical values, Aidan

White said. Social responsibility can and must be combined with good journalism. White underlined the importance of the context of every journalistic material. Furthermore, the participants discussed ethical boundaries of reporting.

Behavioural scientist **Aleksandar Jagi Bibanović** brought the students back to basic principles of moral, ethics and humanism. How do we perceive others, how do we build prejudices, when are the boundaries of tolerance exceeded? A better understanding of these questions would help the young participants in their journalistic work and interpersonal skills.

### How do Press Councils work?

The participants received an insight into the work of Press Councils from **Alexander Warzilek**, Director of the Australian Press Council, and **Maida Bahto-Kestendžić**, Project Coordinator for complaints at the Press Council Bosnia-Herzegovina. The role of the Press Council as a mediator between civil society, politics and media was explained. Despite different forms of organisation in Europe, all Press Councils have the following tasks: Supervision over the compliance regarding the press code, protection of citizens from manipulative and unprofessional reporting, protection of media from political pressure and taking action for the freedom of media.

The young journalists discussed examples of violation of ethical standards. They could defend their standpoints from the

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perspective of media houses or complaints committees in a moderated role play.

**Ethics at investigative journalism**

**Miranda Patručić**, Journalist at the “Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project” (OCCRP), offered an introduction in investigative reporting. She explained the elements of investigative journalism in a lively discussion with the group and described her leitmotiv: Disclose injustice and thereby remain objective, precise and fair. „It is all about proof, stick to the facts“, said Patručić, who was awarded in May 2015 with the prestigious “Knight” award. She motivated the young journalists to ask ethical questions based on examples from the daily work routine. Patručić said that the perspective of the reader should not be forgotten, as it is crucial for the impact of stories.

**Milica Šarić**, reporter and fact-checker at the Center for investigative Journalism in Serbia (CINS), gave advice for the responsible cooperation with whistle-blowers. In her presentation, she also explained self-protection mechanisms for journalists, as well as fact checking and the usage of freedom of information laws.

**Christian Spahr** summed up that workshops like the Summer School of Media Ethics encourage fair reporting but also build a strong network of young journalists with ethical consciousness.



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