

Journalism education in SEE: Students need more practice

EXPERTS DEBATE ON EDUCATION OF JOURNALISTS – STUDENTS AND MEDIA OUTLETS ARE OFTEN DISSATISFIED WITH THE PRATICAL KNOWLEDGE GAINED AT UNIVERSITIES

On 28 March 2017, media scholars, students, NGO experts and representatives of state institutions from 15 countries have exchanged views and recommendations about reforms in journalism education in South East Europe. The conference in Sofia was based on a previous survey of a KAS expert group. It was conducted among journalism students in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia, who expressed the need for more practical elements in university courses and better implementation of technological changes.

The conference was opened by **Christian Spahr**, Head of the KAS Media Program South East Europe. He addressed the challenges to which journalism education needs to respond in better ways. He referred, amongst others, to the technical revolution, the civic responsibility of journalists and the collaboration between universities, media outlets, state institutions and NGOs in the field of education. In addition, **Thorsten Geissler**, Head of the KAS Bulgaria office, pointed out in his welcome speech, that professional journalism education should have highest priority for politics, media management and the universities. "High-grade and independent journalism is an important precondition for a viable democracy," he said. The President of the European Journalism Training Association, **Nico Drok**, said in his keynote that it is necessary to rethink the goals of professional journalism in the digital era. He presented a general framework for future journalism education in Europe, including journalism and language

skills, general knowledge, research and critical thinking. "We need reflective practitioners," Drok said.

Journalism in the digital age and media ethics – two sides of the same coin

The first panel was focused on the role of journalists for democracy in the digital era. The discussion was moderated by **Andreas Ernst**, Western Balkans Correspondent for the Neue Zürcher Zeitung daily. **Jonila Godole**, Executive Director of the Institute for Democracy, Media and Culture in Tirana, addressed media ethics as an issue for journalism education and the so called "copy and paste" journalism in particular. Another problem she sees in the inability of students to make a difference between journalistic reports and PR articles. **Tom Law**, Director of Campaigns and Communications of the Ethical Journalism Network in London, expressed the opinion that the difference between journalism and other types of communication are the professional values of journalists. According to **Bertrand Pecquerie**, CEO of the Global Editors Network in Paris, journalism schools are not preparing young journalists for the work life that comes after graduation. "Only one third will become journalists. More journalism students start in communication departments than in the newsrooms," he said. In terms of journalism education, Pecquerie stated that mobile journalism is the future and this is what students should learn nowadays first. **Ljiljana Zurovac**, Executive Director of the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, argued that technological revolution is something that

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

**MEDIA PROGRAM
SOUTH EAST EUROPE**
MANUELA ZLATEVA

March 2017

www.kas.de/medien-europa/en

will keep developing, but what makes journalism a profession, are its core values and ethical principles. Tom Law added that journalists and their audience should not need to choose between new forms of journalism and media ethics, because professional standards are the basis of quality journalism.

KAS survey on journalism education in South East Europe

Manuela Zlateva, Communications Manager of the KAS Media Program South East Europe, presented key findings of the KAS survey among journalism students and the book "[Requirements for modern journalism education](#)". The results show that 34 percent of the respondents defined journalism as their dream job. Another 34 percent declared their motivation to study journalism with the possibility to engage in society and politics. However, the career perspectives in the field are discouraging: Only half of the students want to start working in journalism after their graduation. The respondents in all examined countries estimated that the technical equipment of the faculties is critical. Every second student declares that the universities are insufficiently technically equipped. Moreover, a majority of students think that practical exercises are not sufficient. Zlateva drew conclusions and recommendations based on the survey such as deepening the dialogue between media owners, academics and Ministries of Educations as well as attracting new state and private investments for providing modern teaching technology. The study was a starting point for the next panel discussion on reforms in universities and political support.

Journalism – not just a job, but a profession with standards

Liana Ionescu, Associate Professor at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration in Bucharest, presented new standards for journalism education in Romania, which should be implemented in the next academic year. She pointed out that these standards are obligatory criteria for accreditation of

journalism faculties. She outlined the need for such kind of regulation. The Executive Director of the Council of Media Ethics in Macedonia **Marina Tuneva** said that the learning conditions at private universities are better than those at state universities in her country. According to her, more coordination between higher education and politics is needed in order to improve journalism education. **Mirosljub Radojković**, Professor of Communication Science at the University of Belgrade, criticised the primarily technological debate in the journalism education. He stated that theory is needed in order to teach students how to think critically and to provide news with context. **Maria Stoyanova**, President of the Council for Electronic Media in Sofia, said that journalism is not just a job, but a profession, which is based on standards and values. **Marko Milosavljević**, Associate Professor at the University of Ljubljana, moderated the discussion.

Internships at media outlets – key for better education and cooperation

The last panel discussion was focused on the cooperation with media outlets and their contribution to journalism education. **Viktorija Car**, Associate Professor at the University of Zagreb, gave examples for the cooperation between her faculty and public media. However, she said that internships are scarce, which had been confirmed in the KAS survey. **Ivan Lovreček**, Deputy CEO and Editor-in-Chief of RTL Croatia, commented that students have good general knowledge, but need more practical skills that can hardly be acquired at the universities. **Klaus Dahmann**, Country Manager Western Balkans of the Deutsche Welle Academy in Bonn, said that young journalists are digital natives who bring new forms of creativity and use different forms of interactivity: "They need more guidance than teaching." **Ivo Prokopiev**, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bulgarian publishing house Economedia, supported this thesis with the argument that multimedia, visual and animation tools have become part of reporting. **Orlin Spassov**, Associate Professor at Sofia University, chaired the debate.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

MEDIA PROGRAM
SOUTH EAST EUROPE
 MANUELA ZLATEVA

March 2017

www.kas.de/medien-europa/en

The panel discussions evoked not only the interest of media experts and journalism students, but also the media in Bulgaria, who interviewed several experts for their news programmes.

**Recommendations for
 future journalism education**

Following the conference, expert workshops on recommendations for reforms took place. They were chaired by **Lejla Turčilo**, Professor of Journalism at the University of Sarajevo, **Viktorija Car** and KAS Media Program Coordinator **Rahma Janetzke**. Moreover, students could raise their voice on their expectations for their future education in one of the workshops. All recommendations will be published in a separate policy paper by the KAS Media Program South East Europe.

Collaboration: Darija Fabijanić



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