

## Keynote

### Can we have the bill, please?

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Mr President,  
Your excellencies,  
respected partners of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung,  
ladies and gentlemen,

In the end, the bill always arrives. Everything that is ordered must be paid for. In journalism, particularly in the Balkans, this is not as easy as it sounds. A lot of questions arise. Who has ordered the journalism? Who are the real customers of the media? And is anyone at all able to pay the bill? However you shake the kaleidoscope, the pattern is complicated.

But public debates are sometimes very one-dimensional. Demands are made for freedom of the press, diversity in the media and transparency – and rightly so. But often without taking into account the foundations for these objectives: Market-oriented business models, which distinguish themselves from journalism as an instrument of power for the elites. Clear media law, that guarantees a minimum of freedom and competition and is also enforced. And, certainly, an interested civil society that appreciates quality journalism.

These are the themes to be covered today and tomorrow. Together we can contribute to making this debate more meaningful as we have gathered here nearly all recognized experts from the region, and many from Western and Central Europe. Politicians, ambassadors, media managers, academics, investigative reporters and experts from the relevant associations.

The situation for starting a debate about media, business and democracy in South East Europe could hardly be more challenging than it is today. Just a couple of keywords: 90 percent of the print media of individual countries can be traced back to one group of owners. There are hidden subsidies for particular media, financed in part from EU sources. Brussels and many member states are more and more sensitive about this. Plus: there are too many titles for too few readers – and too few fresh business ideas for a market which is rapidly changing. In short: talking to many insiders there is a feeling of confronting the end of the world.

Therefore the questions that you see in your conference programme: How much transparency can be achieved? Which kinds of media can be profitable at all? What contribution does the Internet really make to diversity? And what prospects are there in future for quality journalism?

We, SEEMO, CEI and KAS, have designed the programme this time to concentrate even more on theses and debates. You can see this from the keynote addresses in the panels and the experienced discussion moderators, who will actively involve all of you and not be afraid of controversies. We do not want only to complain of problems, but, as far as possible, to discuss solutions. Perhaps at the end we will know a little more, what we want to order, and who pays the bill.

I wish us all a stimulating and successful conference.  
Thank you very much for your attention.