

## Keynote

### Journalistic Education: The students ask for changes

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Ladies and gentlemen, dear students, colleagues and friends,

Mirëdita! I'm glad to be here today in Tirana and to welcome you to this panel discussion on education of young journalists in Albania and other countries in South East Europe. My name is Christian Spahr, I'm responsible for the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, which supports media freedom and fosters professional political communication in the region.

Journalists are fulfilling an important role in the democratic society: Most citizens rely on them, when it comes to current news and information about politics, economy and science. They expect from media representatives to make an in-depth-research, consider different views and aspects and give unbiased information. Only so citizens can form their own opinion about politics and participate in public opinion-making. Of course, social media are increasingly used for information about politics, but they don't have the potential to replace professional reporters. In that sense, a quality education of young journalists is crucial for the democratic processes.

A democratic society can only live and prosper with many voices, many discussions and an open competition of concepts for the future of our countries.

This is why it is not just a "job" to be a journalist. A professional and ethical education of young reporters should be a priority of politics, media industry and universities.

We have initiated a Task Force on Journalistic Education two years ago. Its newest project is a scientific survey among students of journalism in Albania and four other countries of South East Europe – and the results are clear: Many students choose journalism because it is their dream job, and they want to be politically and societally engaged. But only half of them estimate that they will really work in journalism after their final exams. Career perspectives and working conditions don't seem to convince them. The students also ask for changes concerning learning conditions and technical equipment, and they wish to have more practical exercises.

Today, we would like to discuss how the education system, but also governments and other political actors can contribute to a modern and sustainable training of future journalists, who understand their role as a public watchdog and work in the interest of all of us.

First, my colleague Manuela Zlateva who is a communication manager in the office of the Media Program, will show you briefly a few key results of the survey which I mentioned.

Then, I am glad to start a panel discussion with three renowned experts: Sami Neza, the Vice-Chairman of the Albanian Audiovisual Media Authority, AMA. Viktorija Car, Assistant Professor from the University of Zagreb, who is a member of our Task Force and helped designing the questionnaire of our survey. And Orlin Spassov, Associate Professor from Sofia University, who is a media analyst and head of an independent media NGO in Bulgaria. In the second part of this event, you all will be invited to ask questions to the experts and discuss with them.

Now, I'm giving the floor to Manuela to present some findings of our study.

Thank you very much for your attention.