



Article 10 ECHR Working Group

Media lawyers from the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), the University of Pecs, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” and the University of Belgrade set up the transnational interdisciplinary **Article 10 ECHR Working Group** in cooperation with journalists and media experts from these countries. The aim of the group, which will remain open to other partners and countries, is to ensure comprehensive safeguards for media freedom are set in place in accordance with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), particularly in the countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

The discussions during the Ninth Media Law Days in the period 24-25 November 2010 at the European University Viadrina and during the Fourth South East Europe Media Forum in the period 2-3 December 2010 in Budapest convincingly demonstrated that in many countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe the legislation laying down rules and safeguards for media freedom is still woefully deficient. This applies equally to the provisions on administrative and, where applicable, judicial enforcement and the right to defence. Indeed, the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has proven effective in ensuring general freedom of opinion and expression and media freedom in Europe in line with the provisions laid down in Article 10 ECHR. On the other hand, the proceedings brought before the ECHR are lengthy and fail to produce a tangible impact on current developments. Against the background of the jurisdiction of ECHR pursuant to Article 10 ECHR, justified public criticism from other countries is being voiced in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, particularly where it is put forward by media lawyers and media representatives. Experience and proceedings as well as examples from other European countries could make a valuable contribution to the internal debated and discussions on improving and securing the freedom of the press to a significant degree.

Founding meeting

The founding meeting of the **Article 10 ECHR Working Group**, which will take place on 29 April 2011, is organised in the framework of the cooperation between the Media Program Southeast Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The event will be held at Sofia University as part of the Symposium on Implementation and Enforcement of Media Freedom in Europe.

Next steps

In order to achieve its objective, the **Article 10 ECHR Working Group** will have two working sessions each year, which will take place at the participating universities and will provide a platform for discussions on current developments, with a priority being given to the host country and taking into account the experience of other countries. The speeches and discussions during the workshops will be published in the “Osteuropa-Recht” Magazine, and publicized in the daily press, specialist publications and online. In addition to the workshops, the **Article 10 ECHR Working Group** will initiate and provide support and backup to currently implemented, medium- and long-term projects such as statements on draft media laws, discussions and court proceedings relevant to media law, dissertations on comparative law and post-graduate research projects in the area, particularly ones with an international dimension. The working languages of the **Article 10 ECHR Working Group** are German and English.

The Working Group under Article 10 ECHR works in close cooperation with the Media Program Southeast Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V., the Open Society Institute, the OSCE Representative on Media Freedom, the Media Department of the Council of Europe as well as the German Association for East European Studies e. V. (DGO).

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