Independent media for free citizens

Dear readers,

Only the well informed can form a profound political opinion. Citizens living in a democracy need independent and clear news to help them shape policy and social life. This belief motivates our work at the Media Program of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS).

In the past 25 years, South East Europe has experienced a tremendous development: More than ten countries freed themselves from communism. Three of them are already members of the EU – Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania.

In the same time, media freed themselves from state influence, and freedom of expression is guaranteed by all constitutions. But in practice, journalists still lack the freedom to report independently: power in the state and the media ownership are often not equally balanced. Oligarchs and politicians alike still put pressure on reporters.

In the past 12 years, the KAS Media Program South East Europe has been supporting media, but also governments and political parties, on their way to a free information society. KAS trains investigative reporters, because they create more transparency in politics and business. We provide journalists with facts about Europe. The Media Program encourages public debates about press laws, self-regulation and a modern journalism education. With the association SEECOM, which we co-founded, we also promote a professional understanding of political communication.

The Media Program’s team works closely together with the KAS offices in all the countries in the region – from Croatia to Bulgaria, from Albania to Moldova. Positive German experiences cannot be imposed, but may well serve as valuable suggestions. It is equally important for journalists and other experts from South East Europe to discuss best practices with each other. For this exchange of know-how the Media Program South East Europe has been a platform since 2005. This is the KAS Media Program’s contribution to European integration in the media sector.

I wish you enjoyable reading.

Christian Spahr
Head of the Media Program South East Europe, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Mission:
DEMOCRACY

The German political foundation Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) runs nearly 90 offices worldwide and more than 200 projects in over 120 countries.

KAS has been active in the field of international cooperation for more than 50 years – committed to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and free media as well as European integration.

Our mission is based on the principles of the first German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer for peace, freedom and justice through political education.

Mission:
FREE MEDIA

"The defence of press freedom, where it exists, and the demand for press freedom, where it is suppressed, is a task which cannot be undertaken and brought to a successful conclusion by the press alone. The parliaments and governments of free countries must also take on this task."

KONRAD ADENAUER, May 1953

THE KAS MEDIA PROGRAMS IN SOFIA, SINGAPORE AND JOHANNESBURG

- support independent, high-quality and value-based reporting
- help journalists to improve their professional skills
- analyse the quality of reporting in countries in transition
- help in improving the general conditions for independent media
- promote ethical standards in the media
- establish and develop national and regional professional networks
- advocate modern communication by governments and political parties
- facilitate exchange of experience between media professionals and political actors
Highlights 2005 – 2017
TEN COUNTRIES, ONE PROGRAM

Free media are a pillar of democracy. They are essential for expressing different points of view and establishing public debate. Founded in 2005, the KAS Media Program South East Europe actively supports free and independent media through our work with journalists, media owners, editors, politicians, non-governmental organisations and communication experts. Our cross-country approach is based on close regional cooperation with partner organisations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

Our activities:

- CONFERENCES
- PUBLIC DEBATES
- PANEL DISCUSSIONS
- SEMINARS
- WORKSHOPS
- TRAINING COURSES
- STUDY VISITS
- ANALYSES
- CASE STUDIES
- MEDIA MONITORING

Our three main areas of action are:

Advanced training of journalists
KAS gives journalists in-depth knowledge about democratic institutions, European integration, foreign and security policy, social market economy, rule of law and ethical standards in media. We provide media representatives with technical skills and insights to fulfill their role as a public watchdog and unbiased informer of the citizens.

Media freedom and diversity
Through active exchanges with key stakeholders and media experts on an international level, in-depth analysis and discussion of possible solutions, the KAS Media Program South East Europe and its partners work on improving the framework of operation for an independent media landscape.

Political Communication
A modern, professional and responsible political communication lies at the heart of a vital and functioning democracy. Government and public affairs have to foster dialogue with the citizens and inform them about important political decisions. KAS actively supports the professional exchange of experience among public sector communicators in the Balkans in order to establish high, professional and ethical standards of political communication.
Media Program South East Europe

2005
The KAS Media Program South East Europe is founded in Zagreb in cooperation with KAS Croatia.
First conferences, seminars and educational projects take place in the region.

2006
The Media Program South East Europe opens its office in Sofia.
The Media Program is co-host of the 4th European Environmental Festival for Film and TV Production in Bulgaria.

2007
First seminars with media law experts and radio journalists, an information seminar on European and German foreign policy for political journalists is organised for the first time.

2008
KAS Media Program South East Europe publishes the book “Political Communication Management” in cooperation with the Universities of Leipzig and Belgrade.
Beginning of a monitoring project on political reporting in Bulgaria.

2009
The first South East Europe Government Communication Conference takes place in Budva.
KAS Media Program South East Europe is co-founder of the first European professional association for government spokespersons, SEECom.

2010
KAS Media Program South East Europe starts the online portal www.balkanmedia.org on current media developments in the region.
Publication of a handbook “Entrepreneurial Journalism” for online freelance journalists.

2011
New Summer School of Media Ethics, a conference on conflict reporting and training for political communicators. The KAS Media Program South East Europe celebrates its 10th anniversary.

2012
For the first time the workshop “Entrepreneurial Journalism” is organised in Chitina. New Summer School of Political Communication and publication of a book on trends in this field.

2013
KAS workshop "Entrepreneurial Journalism" Chitina.

2014
KAS workshop "Entrepreneurial Journalism" Chitina.

2015
KAS workshop "Entrepreneurial Journalism" Chitina.

2016
KAS workshop "Entrepreneurial Journalism" Chitina.

2017
KAS workshop "Entrepreneurial Journalism" Chitina.
Quotes from partners

Vuk Vujnović
Secretary General, SEECOM, Podgorica

"The KAS Media Program has played a pivotal role in bringing together senior government communication officials for South East Europe’s first-ever Government Communication Conference (SEECOM). In the meantime, with the support of the KAS, SEECOM has grown into a professional association, which involves top public sector communicators from 13 countries of South East Europe. The dedicated partnership and support of KAS, over the past years, has been invaluable in enabling government communicators in South East Europe to exchange best practices and work together to promote the highest ethical and professional standards."

Oliver Vujnović
Secretary General, South East Europe Media Organisation, Vienna

"In a time when most international foundations have left South East Europe, the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) actively continues to support the media in the region. I can only say a big thank you to KAS for understanding the needs of the media. There is a lot of work to be done and I am sure that KAS will continue to play a leading role in coming years in supporting the media in this part of Europe."

Gordana Igrić
Regional Network Director, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network, Belgrade

"Every aspect of work with KAS on the BIRN Summer School of Investigative Reporting was professional and with great results. BIRN is looking forward to future cooperation with the KAS Media Program in the years to come."

Orlin Spassov
Executive Director, Foundation Media Democracy, Sofia

"For several years now, together with the KAS Media Program South East Europe, we have been running a significant monitoring of the media in Bulgaria. We observe the relationship between media and politics and the ways in which media present politicians, parties and key institutions in the country. The reputation of KAS in Bulgaria is very high. Our joint projects are successful and have a great resonance in the media."
"Our cooperation with KAS goes back over ten years. We have always appreciated the added value the KAS Media Program has brought to our activities and are looking forward to the next ten years and beyond to consolidate this cooperation, bridging the - hopefully closing - gap between the media standards in Romania and Germany."

Ognian Zlatev
Head of the European Commission Representation in Bulgaria, Sofia

"The KAS Media Program South East Europe is instrumental in assisting media communities in the countries of the region to enhance their capacity and professional standards in their aspirations to democracy, transparency and respect for human rights. It is one of the very few existing instruments in the region that provide hope and support for a speedy democratisation and reforms of the media and communication sector."
The team

Christian Spahr
Director

Darija Fabjanić
Research Associate

Dobrina Trifonova
Project Coordinator

Manuela Zlateva
Online Communications Manager

Sneshinka Blagoeva
Accountant

Dr. Vladimir Zlatarsky
Office Manager, Project Organisation

Publications

Recommendations for Journalism Education in South East Europe
Entrepreneurial Journalism Handbook
From Secrecy to Common Knowledge: The Right to Information in Serbia and Bulgaria
Requirements for Modern Journalism Education

Conflict Reporting in the Smartphone Era
Recommendations for Press Councils in South East Europe
Silence or Outrage: How South East Europe’s Media Deal with the Past
Study on Influences on Bulgarian Media