

**20.03.2012.**

**59,970.00 EURO**

**for the development of free and professional journalism**

**in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**Financial support of the German Embassy in Sarajevo**

**to the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**H.E. Ulrike KNOTZ, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in BiH has signed the Agreement on Tuesday, 20th of March 2012, on financial support between the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Sarajevo and the self-regulatory body for print and on-line media – The Press Council in BiH, in amount of 59.970,00 Euros.**

For the fifth year already, the German Embassy in BiH has signed the annual agreement with the Press Council in BiH. As a result of so far professional cooperation and successful quality accomplishments, again in 2012, the German Embassy in Sarajevo will support the activities of the Press Council in BiH related to the further development of media self-regulation, as the democratic value of free media. This financial support is aimed towards the project *“Your Voice Counts - Media Self-Regulation and Journalistic Responsibility in the Pre-election times in BiH”*, which regards better informing citizens of their rights to true and timely information, the responsibility of media coverage, as well as the responsibility of political subjects towards the public, through media in the pre-election period, in the local elections year in BiH. Also, by the agreement already developed projects of the Press Council will continue to be financed, which have been ongoing for the past 5 years, such as: “The School of Media Ethics”, “Media Literacy for High School Students”, and Seminars for Students from Faculties of Law in BiH about media legislation and the application of the Law on Protection Against Defamation in BiH, in the context of understanding media freedom and freedom of media reporting.

In her speech H.E. Ulrike Knotz emphasized the significance of the Press Council's work towards the development of professional and free media, democracy, and approximation to the EU.

The official signing took place on **Tuesday, March 20th 2012 at 10 a.m. in the premises of the Press Council in BiH, Trampina 8, 71000 Sarajevo**

[German Embassy in Sarajevo](#)

Speech of H.E. Ulrike Knotz:

*"Esteemed Ms. Zurovac*

*Esteemed Journalists,*

*Esteemed ladies and gentleman,*

*The previous chancellor Gerhard Schroder touched the essence of the significance of freedom of the press for a democratic society with the following words:*

*"Democracy without free press is not possible, because freedom of the press is the foundation of democracy. It is not possible to find solutions to deeply rooted differences of opinion without freedom of the press, because issues have to be presented to the public. Freedom of the press falls within the founding elements of democracy"*

*The recently published "World Press Freedom Index" for 2011/2012 places Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 58<sup>th</sup> place out of 179 analyzed countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina thus has dropped 11 places from the 47<sup>th</sup> place it held the previous year. Only a few days ago did the responsible Parliamentary Committee conclude that the media is exposed to political pressure.*

*Thus space for improvement exists: on behalf of the media to improve professionalism - which includes efforts towards greater objectivity - and on behalf of the public to develop sensibility towards inappropriate or manipulative reporting. Considering the upcoming local election, these two goals in 2012 gain special significance.*

*The Federal Government has been supporting the Press Council for years already in its important tasks, such as the professionalization of journalists or extracurricular education of journalism students. The Federal Government also supports the Press Council in BiH, through the work of German Expert Ms. Kurkowski.*

*With the funds we have just secured by this agreement, support will continue in this year. Thus the Press Council can offer a very divers program of seminars. Besides educating journalists and political representatives, the offer also relates to students of Media and Journalism Faculties, as well as to high school students.*

*Other measures are, for example, the establishment of the internet-forum for political exchange or 20 parallel radio shows in part of the campaign „Politics, Media and You“, which will clarify the significance of media before the elections, the public interest for objective coverage and the role politics have in media.*

*With the planned measures package the work of the Press Council on informing will consecutively continue.*

*By supporting the Press Council we aim to aid the process of approximation to the EU. We want to place a visible sign on the distinguished significance of the media which work freely and professionally for the country, which will one day become a member of the European Union.*

*We wish a lot of success to you Ms. Zurovac and to your coworkers in carrying out these projects."*