

THE PRESS COUNCIL IN BOSNIA – HERZEGOVINA

organized Round table

“Fight Against Hate Speech – Self-regulation, Regulation and Practise”

Sarajevo, November, 29th 2012

The Press Council in Bosnia – Herzegovina successfully organized Round table “Fight Against Hate Speech – Self -regulation, Regulation and Practise”. The meeting dedicated to web portals journalists and editors has been held by Council of Europe project “Promotion of professionalism and tolerance in the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina” with the aim of improving the professional standards of reporting in online media and to efficiently administer comments of visitors on web portals, in order to stop hate speech.

Head of the Council of Europe Office in BiH Ms.Mary-Ann Hennessey in her opening word reminded on the Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and

Fundamental Freedoms which guarantees the right to freedom of expression, freedom of having own opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authorities, but also stipulates that the use of these freedoms entails duties and responsibilities.

-Hate speech is always looking for an excuse in the right to freedom of expression , but hate speech is not the freedom of expression - emphasized Ms.Hennessey.

Executive Director of the Press Council in BiH Ms.Ljiljana Zurovac spoke about accountability of editors of web portals in the light of the respect of the Press Code of BiH, as well as standards of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe - AIPCE.

-Comments of anonymous visitors of web portals are not journalistic content and editors are not responsible for them, but editorial obligation is to remove comments wichcontain hate speech, discrimination and defamation. In extreme cases, the editorial obligation is to cooperate with police and prosecutors to uncover the identity of persons who abuse the freedom of speech- said Ms.Zurovac.

Ph.D. doc. Lejla Turcilo from the Faculty of Political Science at University of Sarajevo thinks that the essential question is not where to draw the line between hate speech and freedom of expression, but who draws that line.

- Government should not be doing that. Den Gilmore's optimistic thesis that the mass is smarter than the individual and that the mass will be excluded from communication ones who abuse the freedom of speech is not realistic. As a solution, therefore, remains a media self-regulation - concludes Ms.Turcilo.

About self-regulation, regulation and practise in the fight against hate speech in online media also spoke Ph.D. Miodrag Zivanovic, profesor of Faculty of Philosophy at University Banja Luka and Chairman of the Press Council's Complaints Commission, Mr. Dario Novalic, Editor in Chief of Magazine Start and Chairman of the Press Council's Board of Directors and Ms. Nada Arsenic, judge of the Commercial Court in Doboij and member of the Press Council's Complaints Commission. Ms. Asja Roksa-Zubcevic, Sector Manager for audiovisual services and international cooperation in broadcasting in Communication Regulatory Agency BiH explained the criteria of registration for "Video on demand".

Professional lecturers and detailed presentations on Round Table, followed by participants experience exchange thru discussions, strengthened cooperation between representatives from online media and the Press Council in BiH – as the only self -regulative authority for printed and online media in the country and mark the way for the continuation of fight against hate speech in public communication.

The Round table gathered 40 participants, among journalists and editors, media experts, members of the Press Council's Complaints Commission and Board of Directors, representatives of Communication Regulatory Agency BiH and Council of Europe. The Round table was held in Sarajevo, on November, 29th2012.