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THE PRESS COUNCIL IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

realized

The Seminar for Law and Journalism students from BiH

Neum, June 12 - 15, 2013

The Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina successfully realized the Seminar for Law and Journalism students from BiH, in Neum, during the period from the 12th to the 15th of June, 2013. This activity, one in the array of activities dedicated to young people, gathered 21 students of law and journalism from the Universities of Mostar, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Zenica and East Sarajevo. Media legislation, media self-regulation, political culture on the internet, the implementation of the Law on Protection against Defamation, as well as the Law on prohibition of Discrimination and the Criminal Code of BiH, in the context of hate speech and the abuse of the freedom of speech, were the key issues about which the students acquired new knowledge.

The intensive and diverse program of the Seminar was opened with a lecture that provided students with the answers as to what is media self-regulation and what is the role of self-regulatory bodies; how the Press Council in BiH, as the only self-regulatory body for print and online media in the country, fosters citizens their right to professional media reporting; how the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH decides on complaints to the writings of the press and web portal; as well as why it is important to know and respect the Press Code of BiH.

This was an introduction of its kind to the topics of “Judiciary and Media in Realizing the Rights to Information” and “Protection of the Freedom of Expression and the Implementation of the Law on Protection against Defamation.” Judge of the Commercial Court in Doboje and Member of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH, Ms. Nada Arsenic, stated concrete examples of judicial practice in the processing defamation and abuse of the freedom of speech law suits. By patiently and, more importantly, professionally answering numerous questions that the students had, numerous dilemmas were solved and the knowledge about what is freedom of expression, and an act punishable by law, was acquired. The interactive approach to the education provided students with the opportunity to state their opinions and actively participate in the dialogue.

Docent PhD Enes Osmancevic, Head of the Journalism Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Tuzla and Member of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH, spoke about the dangers of hate speech in the media, the phenomenon of hyper production of information in new online media and social networks, and political culture on the internet. The extremely fast development of technology made the expansion of new media, but also abuses of the freedom of speech, possible. Technology is neither good, nor bad, nor neutral; it always acts within a certain cultural context - noted Doc. PhD Enes Osmancevic, appealing to the young people to use the technologically advanced possibilities of production and spreading information ethically contributing to communication that is beneficial for society.

Director of the Federal News Agency and Member of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH, Mr. Faruk Boric shared his experiences with students, on news agency reporting, and acquainted them with the principles of editorial responsibility. The practical component of the education included a simulation of the work of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH. The students, for a brief moment, played the role of the members of the Complaints Commission, and, through analysis of citizens' complaints to articles from the BH press and online media, gained direct insight into cases of breaches of the Press Code of BiH. Beside the educational component, an important segment of the Seminar was the socializing of young people from all parts of BiH, and the forming of new contacts and sharing of new experiences, which could be significant for the students in their future life and professional developments.Â

The Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina realized the Seminar for Law and Journalism Students with financial assistance of the National Endowment for Democracy.