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REGIONAL CONFERENCE “SELF-REGULATION AND FREEDOM OF MEDIA IN COUNTRIES OF WESTERN BALKANS AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE”

Sarajevo, 23rd and 24th January 2009

The Press Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina was organiser of the Regional Conference “Self-regulation and Freedom of Media in Countries of Western Balkans and Southeast Europe”, held in Sarajevo, on Friday and Saturday, 23rd and 24th January 2009.

With support of the German Embassy in B&H and Media Program for SEE of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Press Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina has gathered around 40 representatives of Press Councils and Journalists Associations from Region and Europe, with aim to establish joint strategy for development of media self-regulation and fight for freedom of media and free journalistic reporting in the Region of Western Balkans and Southeast Europe.

The fact that past year, 2008, was marked in whole Region as year of severe increase of physical attacks on journalists and open oppression of media freedoms, invitation of the Press Council in B&H have gladly accepted journalists and leaders of regional Press Councils from Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, as well as guests from Flemish Press Council of Belgium.

Representatives of the existing Press Councils from the Region, B&H, Bulgaria, Kosovo and Monte Negro have presented their self-regulatory organisations, emphasising achieve success in development of self-regulation in their countries, but also problems they face in everyday work. In the panel discussions of the Conference was also talked about equalising ethical

standards of reporting in countries of the Region, as well as non-regulation of the Internet and huge necessity for the joint work and mutual co-operation in finding joint solutions for problems.

Also, colleagues from the journalists' associations and ethical media commissions, acting in countries of the Region, have talked about their work, and jointly explored possibilities of further development of media self-regulations in countries where it is not yet established. Especially interesting was presentation of dynamics in development of media self-regulation in Europe, as well as discussion on regulation/co-regulation of the Internet.

At the end of the Conference, the participants from the Region have signed the joint **Statement on regional co-operation**

, by which they confirmed readiness to achieve joint objectives:

- development and promotion of media self-regulation,
- exchange of experiences and support to self-regulatory bodies in establishment
- mutual support and protection from pressures and violations of media freedoms
- improvement of media legislation

The success of this Conference is also seen in the fact that, for the first time, at one place gathered so many journalists' associations from the Region.

Guests of the Press Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina were: Dr. Dirk FÖRGER, Director of Media Program for SEE of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation from Germany, Mr Flip VOETS, Secretary General and Ombudsman for Media of RvdJ – Council for Journalism, Flanders/Belgium, Mr Ognian ZLATEV, Director of Media Development Centre and member of NCJE – National Council for Journalistic Ethics of Bulgaria, as well as representatives of the Press Council Kosovo, Director Mr Nehat Islami and President Mr Willem Houwen, President of the Ethical Commission of Monte Negro Mr Mirsad Rastoder, President of the Independent Union of Serbia Journalists NUNS Ms Nadezda Gace, President of the Council of Honour of Macedonia Journalist Association Ms Tamara Causidis, President of the Croat Journalists Association Mr Zdenko Duka, President of Serbia Association of Journalists Mr Nino Brajovic, Secretary General of the Association “BH Journalists” Ms Borka Rudic and President of B&H Association of Journalists of Ms Nadja Ridzic, as well as media experts from B&H and region.

[Program of the Conference](#)

[Statement on Regional Co-operation](#)