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## **MEDIA SCHOOL OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISM STUDENTS FROM BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Sarajevo, 12-16 December 2011

Hotel Bosnia

The Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina held the sixth School of Media Ethics for journalism students from BiH. The School of Media Ethics was held in Sarajevo in Hotel Bosnia, in the period from 12 to 16 December 2011.

Participants of the school were 41 journalism students from: The Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Tuzla, The Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Mostar, The Faculty of Humanitarian Studies at the "Dzemal Bijedic" University in Mostar, The Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo and The Faculty of Political Sciences at The University of Banja Luka.

The purpose of organizing the five-day School of Media Ethics was to provide journalism students from BiH with additional knowledge about freedom of professional reporting, the principals of media self-regulation and regulation, journalism codes, the relevant laws which regard the media, the specificities of reporting for different kinds of media, as well as about the importance of promotion of human rights and public interest in the media. The program was intense and diverse; the lecturers from BiH and Europe were competent and professional, which greatly contributed to the work atmosphere and to the close attention paid by participants during the entire five days of the education. Also, this was an opportunity for young people from different parts of BiH to meet, exchange experiences, acquire new friendships and contribute to

the development of the sense that mutual coexistence is more than possible in BiH.

The School was opened by Her Excellency, the ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Ms. Ulrike Knotz. Ambassador Knotz, in her opening speech to the students, emphasized the importance that professional and free media has in the development of a democratic society.

The media landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an excellent introductory lecture for the continuation of the discussion about media ethics, was presented to students by Ph.D. Lejla Turcilo, docent from the Journalism Department of the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Sarajevo. Ms. Turcilo gave a precise overview of the current state of media in BiH, explained what all that comprises a media landscape is and how it currently looks.

The difference between media self-regulation, as protection of media freedom and freedom of speech in a democratic society, and regulation of media was explained by Ms. Ljiljana Zurovac, Executive Director of the Press Council in BiH, who was also the moderator and director of the program. The work of the Press Council in BiH was explained to students, they were also acquainted with the ethics codes of reporting, the Codes for new media, Recommendations for media reporters from courts, Recommendations for dealing with gender content in media, and the manner of submitting complaints on print and online media. The essential mission of the Press Council in BiH was also explained, and the reasons why the Press Council organizes similar educational programs for young journalists, striving to inform them about the significance of ethical and professional reporting, as the best protection in their future journalism work.

In continuation of the session about protection of journalists, Ms. Borka Rudic, secretary general of the Association "BH Journalists" acquainted students with media legislation and the mechanisms for protection of journalists in BiH. She presented the Council of Europe Recommendations on freedom of speech and media reporting, and explained the significance which these recommendations have on their future work.

An interesting introductory lecture of the second day of the School was held by Claudia Bosch, first secretary of the German Embassy in BiH, who spoke about the topic of the World Wide Web and online media: Freedom without borders – boom or bane.

Another interesting and useful lecture was about Agency journalism in the time of new media, which was presented to students by Mr. Zekerijah Smajic, journalist and director of the agency "Sens Servis". The accent of his lecture was on the specificities of agency journalism, new technologies and comprehending agency journalism. More about the ethics codes in agency journalism was presented to the participants by Mr. Zoran Ilic, journalist and editor in chief of the Federal Informative Agency "FENA".

At the end of the second day of the School, the students watched the film "The Years Eaten by Lions" by Boro Kontic, journalist and director of the Media Center in Sarajevo. The film was shown as an introduction to the lecture on the significance of Civil Rights Defenders, held by Natalija Bratuljevic, program coordinator of Civil Rights Defenders for BiH, Serbia and Monte Negro. Besides indicating the importance of the role of journalists in society, the emphasis was on promotion and protection of the rights of minorities, and generally about the importance of the citizens' fight for their rights, especially in the context of rights of minorities, women, the LGBT population etc.

The specificity of reporting on corruption and anti-corruption was presented to students by Mr. Tomislav Curic, senior advisor for the fight against corruption in the Ministry of Security of BiH. He explained how the Ministry of Security of BiH works on the prevention of and protection from corruption, which are the goals of this institution in the field of the fight against corruption, as well as about the activities being implemented so that Bosnia and Herzegovina could reach the required standards for EU accession in regards to this domain.

The remainder of the third day of the School was planned for practical work, where students, through simulation of the work of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH, based on actual complaints reviewed by the Press Council in the past period, had the opportunity to learn more about the Press Code of BiH, the way of submitting complaints, and about all elements which the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH takes into account when considering citizens' complaints. This was also the best way in which students could apply what they have learned during the previous days to actual cases, and gain work in group experience, where every individual can contribute.

The emphasis of the fourth day was on journalism and new media. Publications and emissions on the internet; news-paper pages, e-zine, Weblog, Podcast, video cast, RSS-feed and other characteristics of new media, were presented to students by our guest from Belgium, Mr. Flip Voets, Media Ombudsman and secretary general of the Flemish Press Council of Belgium. He spoke about the significance of new media, and its ever increasing influence in the world, the role Twitter had in the revolutions in the Middle East, and about the significance and challenges

of the so called civil journalism, where citizens are the ones who give the initial information to the journalist, based on which he further researches and presents the news. Mr. Voets also spoke about the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe, AIPCE, and the importance that this network of European Press Councils has for its members. Regular contact, yearly encounters and the exchange of experiences on an almost daily basis, are very important for self-regulatory bodies all across Europe and beyond, because they enable a fast flow of information and consultations linked to numerous questions which the Press Councils encounter in their work.

An exceptionally important and interesting lecture was the one on the topic of Media and gender equality. Why it is important that the media break gender stereotypes and gender based discrimination, was explained by Ms. Nada Ler Sofronic, Ph.D. director of the center "Woman and Society", vice chairwomen of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH. Through interesting examples from practice, and through the exchange of experiences amongst students, she pointed to the stereotypes which are dominant in our society, and she stressed how important it is for media, through reporting, to make people aware of these stereotypes and to contribute to changing peoples' consciousness that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable in BiH's society

During the last day of the School, students had the opportunity to learn more about editorial responsibility, reporting for print and online media and professional responsibility towards the public. The lecturer was Mr. Faruk Boric, editor in chief of the magazine "Dani", member of the Complaints Commission of the Press Council in BiH. Mr. Boric spoke about his experience of working in journalism, the challenges which he faced while working as a journalist and later as an editor, and about all the important elements which a journalist needs to have in mind while fulfilling his duty.

The students had the opportunity to present what they learned during the lectures of this five-day experience in a Quiz of Knowledge. The results which the students showed on the Quiz of Knowledge are the best indicators of their interest for the application of professional and ethical standards in their future work in the journalism profession.

The Awards Ceremony in honor of the high quality and active work during the realization of the program, again this year, was exceptional, with rock star Irina Kapetanovic as the special guest. The Sixth School of Media Ethics for Journalism Students from BiH showed how important these kinds of events are for connecting young people from different regions. Their friendship will continue, which is also evident through the Facebook group of the Press Council in BiH, but the most important thing is, that their knowledge about ethics lasts and becomes applied in the

media, what is the primary goal of this entire event.

The realization of the School was made possible by the German Embassy in Sarajevo, the organization NED – National Endowment for Democracy and Civil Rights Defenders.

[PROGRAM](#)