



European
Commission

 #EUWBmedia



EU – WESTERN BALKANS MEDIA DAYS

Tirana, 9-10 November 2017

RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM **WORKSHOPS**

Respect and relentless efforts to guarantee free expression in media form a part of the political EU accession criteria - a must for the countries of the Western Balkans willing to join the EU. The European Commission is comprehensively assisting them to live up to freedom of expression requirements - be they of legal, political or professional nature. Over the last years a detailed definition of the persisting issues in the regular country reports (and appropriate EU support programmes to rectify the problems) comprised denouncing violence against and intimidation of journalists and impunity in this regard, assessing court practices in the cases involving critical media and politicians, relentlessly encouraging to carry on with the stagnating reform of public broadcasters, critical assessments of the distorted and politically influenced advertisement markets along with unaccountable use of public funds "government advertisement". The support to journalist professional organisations as a key actor for the expected change as well as to media self-regulation is a firm priority for the EU.

Currently this endeavour to create enabling conditions for free expression in media takes place against the backdrop of a rapid and tectonic transformation of the media landscape and significant shifts in media consumption patterns. This opens up new opportunities for the information society and freedom of opinion, but also brings with itself risks of the decline of professional standards in mainstream media, its subsequent financial depletion and tabloidization, audiences losing interest and trust in this media and largely migrating to social media (that itself is still in an initial phase developing relationship with professional journalism). The processes are known across the world, and the Western Balkans is not an exception in this regard. All in all, **without addressing the modern risks and challenges that media is facing as a sector in industry there will be no chance for free and undisturbed expression in media.**

Commissioner Johannes Hahn initiated the first *Western Balkan Media Days* having taken place 13-14 November, 2017, in Tirana. The event was attended by more than 200 media professionals from the countries in the Western Balkans and the EU for a media development related discussion and exchange of inspiring forward-looking ideas and innovative experiences aimed at lending sustainability to professional journalism. That was a result oriented dialogue, organised in the form of workshops. The recommendations (as published below) from these workshops¹ should serve as a reference point for adjusting assistance approaches to media related issues within the European Enlargement policy, but also for other donors aspiring to support freedom of expression and media in the Western Balkans.

¹ The rapporteurs of the workshops were experienced representatives of the media communities of the countries of the Western Balkans. Whereas there were moderators and speakers from the EU on the panels, **it was for the WB representatives themselves to select** what was coming out of the discussions valuable and useful to serve as a basis to formulate these recommendations.

WORKSHOP 1 Media and market: new business models

Moderator:
David Quin

Director of
Development, Thomson
Foundation

Today's media sector is very dynamic and innovative, coming up with new products and services, developing new business models and adapting to new media consumption patterns in order to remain competitive. Audience engagement, content monetisation, viable economic models and diversification of funding, including decreased dependency on distorted advertisement markets or state funding, are some of the main challenges on the way to sustainability of the professional journalism. The discussion explored the ways to tackle these challenges and shared examples of best practices.

Rapporteur: Leila Bičakčić, Executive Director, Center for Investigative Journalism

Saska Cvetkovska, Investigative Editor, Nova TV

Dalila Ljubičić, Executive Director, Serbia Media Association

Dejan Nikolić, Founder, Content Insights

Grzegorz Piechota, Senior Research Fellow, University of Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

ISSUES DISCUSSED

- What is a media market today, and what does it mean in the Western Balkans (WB)? The traditional role of media and traditional setup of newsrooms as opposed to the new trends and contemporary models of news production and storytelling.
- Multiplying of players in the media market: big digital intermediaries, media owners having interests somewhere else but independent reporting, donors, but also politicians using public funds ("government advertisement") and exerting political influence over advertising markets.
- Journalism and business: should it remain a relationship of mistrust or could it be taken to a new dimension and to create a joint front.
- "Credible journalists are poor": is this a myth or reality? Is it possible for a journalist or a media outlet to be sustainable and profitable without compromising professional standards in the current market environment in WB?
- Why media issues are always discussed "a purist way" - only among media representatives themselves? The future of business viable media lies with a cooperation among different professions: including business people, IT sector, lawyers, etc.
- A role of media: serving public interests but also educating the public in order to create a consumer for an advanced professional product. If this is not the case, "infotainment" would be the future.
- Serving the audience and its needs: are media people aware and take due account of particular needs of different audiences? Where do young people fit in and are their needs served by professional media? Is content being shaped to appeal to differing groups or the model "one size fits all" still is the everyday production principle at media outlets?
- The role of social media: Facebook is not creating content, it only amplifies it. Monetization of "like" clicks created the trend of "fake news"; thereafter there is a need for qualitative, independent media scrutiny and research, including the measuring of the media landscape and audiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

While specific media business models were not analyzed in detail, the discussion challenged the very possibility models that could be universally applicable and successful in different environments.

- A “copy – paste” application of successful models from other countries without understanding the local environment has proven to be ineffective.
- Media outlets have to adapt to the new economic realities (advertisement revenues are not sufficient any more to subsidize journalist work, but selling the media produce directly to the consumer is in the beginning of establishing itself). Thereby a diversification of the revenues is a condition for financial sustainability of independent journalism. A step further entails adaptation of business models to consumers’ needs, which is linked to digital literacy: media literacy is not a business model, but should be an element of it.
- A redefinition of the role of a journalist in the new production models: the market is changing and media outlets need to adapt to the new trends, new requirements and to respond to needs of consumers. That could open up the revenue coming from consumers (pay for the tailor-made content; crowdfunding for specific issues, to name a few).
- “The old media business model is in trouble, not media”. New successful models are those where up-to-date approaches are carefully applied in shaping the media organizations (smaller teams, digital technology savvy). A regular monitoring of the audience and its responses, and adjusting the journalistic output accordingly is a key to success.
- However the EU could still be of help in bringing up the issues of Press Freedom in context of rule of law, market regulation and fair competition – the factors belonging to the enabling environment of media freedom and independence. It is necessary to put WB governments under pressure to address these issues in the context of democratization and the EU accession processes.
- Media outlets should start acting like businesses - testing and applying new approaches, improving business by making use of the potential offered by digital tools, working with wider community.
- The EU could set up a dedicated financial support for media/audience research and content production. Usually, EU funded projects focus on training and/or research, policy and law making advice, stopping short on funding independent media production.
- Donors’ dependency versus economic viability of outlets: media outlets are advised to use the time while benefiting from donor support to work with good business-minded people and develop a sustainable business model; that could be gradually introduced while the assistance funding is still available!
- Media representatives should continuously look for good examples. There are appropriate learning opportunities in countries that went through transition: e.g. Hungary, Slovakia, Poland; the issue will not be solved "from Brussels".

WORKSHOP 2 Media in the digital age: professionals mastering the change

Moderator:

Michelle Foster

Partner, Media
Development, Newsgain

The digital age brought major disruptions to the traditional media market but also new opportunities for the media professionals. Conventional and new media are quickly converging into a larger, predominantly-digital media environment. As technology tools continue to develop, professionals need to adapt business models and respond to users' behaviour change while maintaining qualitative and trustworthy content. That implies equipping journalists with new skills and new knowledge allowing them to get closer to audiences and offer them a product the consumers are ready to pay for. The workshop explored the potential of the digital tools at disposal to create a quality media product.

Rapporteur: Besa Luci, Editor in Chief, Kosovo 2.0

Slobodan Georgiev, Editor, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Borjan Jovanovski, Editor in Chief, Nova TV

Agon Maliqi, Creator and Co-founding Editor, Sbunker

Ardian Vehbiu, Founder and Editor, Peizazhe të fjalës

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

- Put the audience first, put it at the center of any of outlet's activities and reporting
- Understand how audiences use (social) media and ensure that your media outlet responds by offering information on those platforms as well
- Build relationships with the audience. Create events for your audience and other forms generating a direct personal engagement between the outlet and its audience. Those then can evolve into crowdfunding and subscription.
- Actively manage social media as a source of referrals that can be converted into deeper relationships with your outlet's brand.
- Own your relationship with your audience; therefore do NOT rely on social media to provide a primary distribution channel. Create strategies around the organization's own website. Building a business on Facebook or other social media platforms puts the audience and the organization's relationship with the audience, at risk. (It also inherently limits opportunities for monetization. Although Facebook announces, periodically, it will offer publishers a path to revenue, those are capricious and can disappear as quickly as they develop.)
- Invest more in the technology and techniques that support digital audience expansion. (An important question for small independent media outlets in WB deserves a further consideration: could some technology/infrastructure be centralized or otherwise shared? Does all full-scale digital expertise need to be resident within smaller-scale organizations or could they access centralized resources?)
- Strengthen the ability of editors, journalists and media managers to use Google Analytics and other metrics (Facebook Insights, etc.) and incorporate their use into editorial decision-making to create an audience-relevant content.
- Diversify business operations so that other revenue-streams are created that can cross-subsidize hard and investigative news reporting. Look at the models of independent news media that are making this work. Use alternative platforms/brands to attract advertising to be used for subsidizing the outlet's core products.

- For your audience, offer event marketing, email newsletter, provide SMS services and other products that could create additional revenue, but also establish even closer relationships with your audiences.
- Work on developing crowd-funding and membership/subscription models as new sources of revenue.
- Bring the best non-legacy media content creators onto news platforms and give them space to operate. Bring their audiences and leading-edge reporting techniques into your own platforms.
- Increase brand-building skills in your organizations so that the brands can be surfaced and recognized.
- With the help of the EU Commission, set up a pool of investment capital for media outlets that are often cut off from access to loans with affordable rates, direct investment and guarantees. Support forward-looking media with a capacity-building support (e.g. elaborating individual business plans).

CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF GENERAL CHARACTER

- Against the backdrop of the above concrete recommendations, there was a discussion around the role of the EU Commission (and other donors) in supporting media in WB.
- By a tradition there are limits to what sort of media activities is covered by EU financial assistance. However, it was felt by the majority of the speakers and participants at the workshop that there is a need for EU to directly support media in their journalistic work and production. Appropriate support models should be identified.
- It was suggested that the EC should consider ways of increasing the speed and responsiveness of its media assistance.
- Most of participants opposed the panelists who suggested that donor support was the only path forward to provide for survival of quality independent journalism. It was stressed that the digital environment offers new opportunities, new solutions for ensuring independence of the professional journalism from corrupt sources of financing.
- In this regard, the need for EU funded trainings and capacity-building activities were emphasized, with a particular focus on increasing skills and capacities of journalists and media professionals to use digital tools and incorporate them in their day-to-day operations and work.

WORKSHOP 3 Quality standards in journalism: new media training needs

Moderator:
Adelheid Wölfl
Correspondent, Standard

The media landscape is changing rapidly and brings significant shifts in media consumption patterns towards digital and social media. This opens new opportunities, but also poses challenges such as the decline of professional standards in traditional mainstream media and their subsequent tabloidisation. In social media, the norms of professional reporting are often a foreign concept. Such developments contaminate the communication space and provide for a fertile soil for fake news and manipulated information. Consequently, the journalist education and continuing training come to the fore as an instrument to cope with change. The workshop provided a forum to exchange views on the root causes for the deterioration of journalist professional standards, and brought up ideas on how to enhance critical thinking in the media environment and develop professional skills necessary for quality news and story production in the modern times.

Rapporteur: Gordana Igrić, Regional Network Director, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Vukosava Crnjanski Šabović, Director, CRTA - Centre for Research, Transparency and Accountability
Biljana Petkovska, Director, Media Institute, SEE Network for Media Professionalisation

Paula Petričević, Ombudswoman, Vijesti, Monitor

Blendi Salaj, Vice Chairman, Media Council

Erisa Zykaj, Member of the Council, International Press Association / Vice-President, Brussels Press Club

SCENE SETTING

Having high level of expertise and skills among journalists and managers, although inevitable for achieving quality standards in journalist production, are not enough. A benign political environment, a better financial situation of media outlets and cooperation among stakeholders in the field are equally important for strengthening overall quality of the profession.

Media today is not a profitable business; so media owners make compromises with political elites, in order to survive. They rarely promote quality journalism. At the same time on the other side, the speed at which the real-time web operates allows fake news and manipulated information to spread quickly.

Left without resources, time and money, as well as legal protection journalists are vulnerable. Self-censorship is widely spread. Under the pressure of media owners to produce fast and clickable news, journalists are overproducing low quality content without fact checking. The role of the editor as a trainer and tutor has considerably diminished.

At the same time, Universities teaching journalism are too academic, foreign to modern media production needs and often under a political influence. There is no wide practice of establishing cooperation between universities and other media training organizations. The available training is therefore outdated and not responding to new media needs. The needs of a modern newsroom in the digital age should be a yardstick for designing new media development policies, assistance programmes as well as for journalist training and education.

To the European Commission

- The Commission should take seriously threats to media freedom in WB. Neglecting them for the sake of entertaining smooth relations with governments in (infamous 'stabilocracy') will send a wrong signal to ruling politicians in these countries.
- Address the direct decision makers in media field – media owners by exchange programmes and study visits to the European Union in order to promote awareness of the role of media in pursuing public interest.
- Continuously monitor the implementation of the laws of the access to public information, so that the state institutions become more open and accountable to the journalists and the public.

To the national administrations

- Facilitate the access to public data, so that journalist can find, use and present them to the benefit of all citizens.
- Put in place fiscal incentives (e.g. tax exemptions or reductions) for those media organizations that use a part of their revenues for training of the journalists.
- Include media literacy in the high school curriculum to enable the new generation to discern between fake news and quality journalism.
- Take care (allocate the budget) that there are training programmes for public broadcasters addressing low levels of professional skills of employees in these organisations and the absence of continued mid-career training.
- Commission reliable surveys which will give programme-makers a better insight into different needs of audiences.

To the media outlets managers and editors

- Embark on the in-house training, especially in the new technologies and fact checking methods; as well as educate employees in benefits of social media and their use for improving quality and outreach of outlet's production. This training is particularly relevant for mid-career journalists.
- Engage into cross-border cooperation between journalists and newsrooms - to share quality content, in order to increase the outreach of the media organisations.
- Get "back to basics": strengthen the role of the editor as a mentor who can guide and ensure that the professional standards are followed and implemented in the everyday work of the outlet.
- Provide for in-house training sessions in investigative journalism and in-depth reporting.

To the associations of journalists, media professionals and media training/educational institutions

- Provide the instruction for journalists how to deal with the pressure by media owners and editors in order to continue fulfilling the role of the watch dog in the interest of the public.
- Provide training in and raise awareness of ethical code of conduct and professional standards for newly established and often professionally understaffed online outlets.

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- Aspire establishing a cooperation between training centers and universities of journalism.
 - Produce curriculum for fact checking tools and methods, and implement training for journalists accordingly.
 - Provide training in new media technologies, like choosing the best digital platforms for telling a story; etc. It goes for educational establishments and newsrooms alike.
 - Provide for internships in media houses as a part of curricula of journalism studies.
 - Educate young journalists and students on the importance of media self-regulation.
 - Organise regional trainings for young journalists.

To the donors

- A number of activities listed above may entail a considerable cost therefore EU's (and other donors') support is required, particularly if the goal is to achieve sustainable results in real newsrooms. For example, training in investigative journalism in big media companies should be linked to the obligation of those companies that they will host dedicated investigative teams for a specific period of time (preferably several years), and that they will deliver an agreed number of quality investigations.
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WORKSHOP 4 Media freedom in societies in transition

Moderator:
Mogens Bjerregård
President, European
Federation of
Journalism

Media freedom is an essential pillar of a functioning democratic society and belongs to the political criteria for the EU accession. Media both in the EU and in the enlargement region face major challenges influencing their ability to operate professionally. In the Western Balkans these hardships are often amplified by political pressure, misuse of economic and financial leverage to influence media reporting, attacks against journalists, restrictive legislation and courts ruling not in full compliance with the European Human Rights Convention. Obscure media ownership often undermines the credibility of information necessary for a vibrant democracy - limiting the space for independent journalism and fostering self-censorship. The workshop highlighted currently most pressing issues requiring immediate political attention by the EU and the partner countries.

Rapporteur: Mihailo Jovović, Editor-in-Chief, Vijesti

Flutura Kusari, Media Lawyer

Borka Rudić, Secretary General, Journalist Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Tamara Skrozza, Journalist, Member of Press Complaints Commission, Vreme weekly and Press Council

Christian Spahr, Director of Media Program South East Europe, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Media freedom should not be pictured as a luxury, as some officials in WB present it by ranking other pressing problems ahead of the independent journalism. Free and independent media is a pivotal foundation of any democracy; moreover, without it, all other challenges related to democracy, rule of law, reconciliation, etc., would be impossible to solve.
- Attacks on journalists show no sign of abating in some countries. There is no sufficient political motivation on the side of the governments in at least four WB countries to promptly proceed with proper investigation, prosecution and indictment of the perpetrators of these attacks.
- The abuse tax payers' money in the form of the so called "government advertising" is wide spread in WB. Governments use their announcements and publicity campaigns in media to stifle independent outlets that work in the public interest, while at the same time reward those bowing to political control.
- It is not exceptional that media owners do not keep the distance from the newsroom; and journalists are faced with self-censorship because of lack of transparent editorial rules there. Moreover, many owners possess and operate their media outlets primarily for the sake of influencing public opinion in order to obtain an advantageous public, political and business position for themselves or their political masters.
- Self-regulation in media is still weak. This is partially because of little or no solidarity among journalists. They work often without a contract, for low wages exposing them to media owners and managers. The salaries are sometimes paid fully or partly in cash, resulting in the absence of social protection of media workers.
- The media freedom situation in the Western Balkans is deteriorating over the last few years, according to the Reporters without Borders and the Freedom House ratings. The trust in most of traditional, mainstream media is getting lower.

- There is a widely spread perception that by relativizing media freedom deficiencies in WB countries, EU officials give undeserved public credits to those local officials who are often main enemies of independent media in those countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

Generally

- Journalists, EU institutions and member states, and NGOs should consistently raise all the issues of the media freedom with politicians in the WB countries.

To the governments in WB countries

- Parliaments should assume more responsibility for freedom of expression and undertake regular assessments the laws affecting media and their implementation.
- While ruling on the cases of defamation against journalists, the judiciary should consistently follow the provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.
- The law enforcement institutions should effectively investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate crimes against journalists committed because of their professional activity.
- The Governments are directly responsible for putting in place comprehensive and transparent rules governing the state advertising; establishing a credible track record of implementing those rules is essential.

To the European Commission and EU member states

- Any progress in negotiations with WB countries should be made conditional on solving attacks on journalists.
- Provided a considerable detrimental effect on sustainability of independents media, the same principle applies to finding a fair and effective solution of the problem with the state advertising.
- The European Commission should use EU funds more effectively to achieve the necessary progress in the media field, if necessary – applying the principle of conditionality for the governments. More of a direct support to the media sector diminishing governments' influence over these funds should be considered.
- Generally, a financial pressure on the officials who do not respect freedom of the media. (???)
- The EU should make funds available for sustaining investigative journalism in the Western Balkans as well as for debunking fake news, continued support to self-regulation and media literacy programmes.
- The European Commission should publish reports on implementation of "The Guidelines for EU support to media freedom and media integrity in enlargement countries".
- It is essential to continue supporting building capacity of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers to act on the basis of and implement the Article 10 of ECHR standards.

To media professionals

- The wall between the owners and newsrooms should be thick; self-regulation and internal codes of ethics once in place at the media outlets might help in this regard.
- Media owners and managers should respect the labor rights of journalists and introduce the social dialogue.

WORKSHOP 5 Words that hurt: media and its contribution to reconciliation

Moderator and
Rapporteur:
Aidan White
Director, Ethical
Journalism Network

The Western Balkans is the region where many journalists tend to adopt partisan positions. The contradictions and polarisation within and among the countries in the region are exacerbated by low quality journalism using cheap but striking sensationalism and ethnic nationalism to attract the attention of the audience. Quality reporting and storytelling are instrumental in dismissing grounds for animosity, which often exist only in newswires. Media professionals have a key role to play in the process of reconciliation within the region and their respective countries and can significantly contribute to shaping a non-polarised society by promoting objective reporting and opposing inflammatory rhetoric and sensationalism, which perpetuate stereotypes and old sentiments.

Agron Bajrami, Editor in Chief, KOHA Ditore Newspaper

Fatjona Mejdini, Journalist, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Vasil Popetreski, Editor, Alsat M TV

Nedim Sejdinović, President, Independent Association of Vojvodina Journalists

ISSUES DISCUSSED

The issues faced by media and journalists that weaken their independence and professionalism, and contribute to a poor quality of media produce are a general ground for the contamination of the communication space with divisive rhetoric and hate speech.

However, there are also particular factors rooted in the old-fashioned political and media culture fostering this phenomenon.

- The reconciliation is made more difficult given that some media still work with an editorial mind-set that is divisive and continues to reinforce division, conflict and intolerance between communities.
- Many political leaders adopt a dual approach regarding their rhetoric: while abroad they have a distinct, pro-EU voice when abroad; this contrasts with populist, nationalist and intemperate discourse when they return home. (When they use divisive and nationalist rhetoric, they often take advantage of their influence over "state-controlled" media.)

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

"Homework"

- For their part, media could assist the process of reconciliation by a focus on journalism and story telling that resonates across borders and addresses issues that are of interest to people in the region, for instance business or tourism. There could also be more reporting on regional successes such as the Berlin Process.
- Media should be encouraged to work together to address common challenges the people in the region face – such as corruption, organised crime, high unemployment, social issues as well as media freedom and civil rights. In short, there should be more editorial focus on topics

that connect the people in the region and not only the ones that divide them.

- At the same time, the lack of professional solidarity is an obstacle to reconciliation. More co-operation between journalists, editors and media owners across all platforms of journalism would be useful in creating the climate for a regional debate about reconciliation. The same is valid in the case of journalist professional organisations and press councils defending and promoting codes of ethics and professional standards across dividing lines.
- In order to improve the quality of public discourse and eliminating hate speech media literacy needs to be fully integrated into school curricula. But there also needs to be campaigns directed at state institutions and political centres of power to improve the tone of public communications and to limit the space for sensationalist media/tabloids (which are spreading hateful messages, nationalist rhetoric and disinformation since much of it emerges from political sources).
- Media that are combating this process and striving to be ethical and in favour of transparency and good governance in their management and ownership should be particularly supported.

Recommendations to the EU

- Continue supporting regional co-operation within the media sector including among press councils, self-regulators and media professionals.
- Reinforce efforts to create a genuinely independent public broadcasting and media sector that is editorially independent and free from undue political influence.
- Strengthen the actions to help media combat hate-speech with editorial tools and glossaries to promote tolerance in the wider public information sphere.
- Launch new and dynamic campaigns for media and information literacy to target all levels of civil and political society in favour of an ethical and responsible public information sphere.
- Build public trust in media by supporting investment in media and journalists who are innovating and committed to value-based communications.
- Create more opportunities for media and journalists from across the region to meet, share and exchange information and build sustainable networks of co-operation.

WORKSHOP 6 Media policy: implementation of reforms

Moderator:
Golli Marboe

Chairman, Association
for a Self-determined
Use of Media

Media legislation in the Western Balkans is fairly up-to-date and aligned with the European standards. Yet, poor implementation of existing rules leads to a media environment which is not conducive to exercising media freedom in full extent. All in all, there is a need for a new policy approach truly aiming to achieve the expected change. In this context, the actions and the independence of the regulatory bodies deserve close attention. More effort is still needed to accelerate the stagnating reforms of public broadcasters and to ensure their independence and efficiency in news and story production. The transparency and accountability of media organisations is a must for regaining trust in media in general. At the same time, a proactive role of professional organisations is critical for a continued and productive media policy dialogue with public authorities. These elements are vital to the improvement of the media climate in the long term.

Rapporteur: Žaneta Trajkovska, Director, School of Journalism and Public Relations

Mirko Bošković, Editor, RTCG (PSB)

Thoma Gëllçi, General Director, RTSH

Remzi Lani, Executive Director, Albanian Media Institute

Zoran Sekulić, Director, FoNet

Jadranka Vojvodić, Deputy Director, Agency for Electronic Media

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

- A broad awareness in the society and its support is a principal precondition for an effective implementation of media reforms. In order to achieve this, politicians and particularly the governments should set up a transparent process with all the stakeholders on board.
- Media sector inquiries addressing the problematic areas (market competition, independence and professionalism of regulatory bodies, media ownership and market transparency, etc.) should serve as a basis for an improved policy making. To this end, they should be carried out in the all Western Balkan countries and with full support and cooperation from the relevant authorities.
- The action plans to implement the above policies should be accorded with adequate financing, when necessary – attracting donors' support. The monitoring of the implementation should be entrusted to non-government organisations comprising media sector stakeholders.
- It is difficult (if not impossible) to identify a single focal point within the national administrations directly responsible for the media development. To this end there is a need for a debate how to set up a systemic and inclusive approach, rooted in a public institution, to the challenges within the media field. The creation or identification of a body with sufficient powers would indicate Governments' understanding of the public importance of a media policy.
- A reform of the media market is a fundamental for a healthy media development, because most of the problems result from malfunctioning of the market. The WB countries need media development strategies to introduce new business solutions and market-based models.
- The situation in Serbia requires some particular recommendations. The country had a media strategy. The laws as provided for in the strategy need to be implemented in full, so that it is

clear what works and what – needs a revision. It could be then reflected in the new strategy. The process of elaboration and adoption of the new strategy should be inclusive with a proper representation of all segments of the media industry of Serbia.

- A Public Broadcaster is much more than news, especially for smaller countries as in WB. PSB should operate as the backbone for the diversity, culture, tradition and inclusiveness in a society, the topics which go beyond a classical news production. This comprehensiveness should be reflected in PSB reform designs and in the assistance to its implementation.
 - Bringing back trust in public media is a complicated and difficult task, which requires deployment of modern production methods helping to engage with the audience. More of independent production, including from investigative journalists might be of help.
 - The debate on most effective ways to ensure the financial independence of PSB is not over and needs to be continued.
 - There is a need to start a discussion about online media regulation (including registration issues) with a particular focus on how to protect the public.
 - Media policy reform needs to reflect on the media literacy as well. Without an educated and discerning media consumer there is no future for the professional journalism!
-