

Report on the activities of the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia for the period January – December 2016

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY –
DECEMBER 2016
 - 2.1 Promotional activities and informing of the public about the Council of Media Ethics
 - 2.2 Regular activities of the Press Complaints Commission, mediation and adjudication process
 - 2.3 Publishing and research activities
 - 2.4 Cooperation and networking with international bodies, organizations and missions
 - 2.5 Communication and activities with the media
 - 2.6 Activities for strategic planning
 - 2.7 Capacity building of the Council of Media Ethics
3. FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF MEDIA ETHICS



1. INTRODUCTION

In the course of 2016, the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia mainly focused its activities in the following segments:

- Promotional activities and informing of the public
- Regular activities of the Press Complaints Commission, mediation and adjudication process
- Publishing and research activities
- Cooperation and networking with international organizations and missions
- Communication and activities with the media
- Activities for strategic planning
- Capacity building of the Council of Media Ethics.

The following donors supported the work of the Council and the implementation of its activities in 2016: Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands (a two-year institutional grant, whose implementation was completed in December 2016), UNESCO Paris (one-year action grant), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through the CIVICA Programme (two-year institutional grant), the Macedonian Institute for Media through a grant awarded as part of the ReformMedia Project financially supported by the European Union. Support was also provided by the OSCE Mission to Skopje in the implementation of several joint activities.



1. Overview of the activities by the Council of Media Ethics in the period January – December 2016

2.1 Promotional activities and informing of the public about the Council of Media Ethics of Macedonia

Debates with citizens were organized in the cities of Kavadarci, Gevgelija, Veles, Prilep and Gostivar, aimed at promoting the mission, process of filing press complaints to the Council, as well as the work of the Press Complaints Commission.

Several **high education institutions** were also visited, more specifically the University of Goce Delcev in Stip, the University of South East Europe in Tetovo, the International Balkan University and the Institute for Communication Studies.

The Council also produced different types of **promotional and educational materials**, such as bulletins, publications on the self-regulation process and its importance, posters, etc. Short video – materials were produced to promote the Council and the concept of self-regulation, which provide an overview of the adjudications of the Council and the most common grounds for breaches of the standards, video – clips on hate speech, etc. The Council of Media Ethics also took part in the production of the OSCE documentary for media freedom.

The CMEM initiated the process of **preparation of the Charter on Ethical Reporting** during the Elections, which resulted after the consultative process with all media and followed with a ceremony of its signing in the EU Info Centre in Skopje, in February 2016. The Charter was signed by 96 media outlets in the country.

Four TV debates were produced and broadcasted in the period from June through September 2016 at TV 24. The need of self-regulation, reforms in the media sphere, the most common breaches of the professional standards, hate speech in the media, the need for cooperation with the civil society sector were among the topics discussed at these TV debates. The TV debates are uploaded at the Facebook page of the CMEM.

2.2 Regular activities of the Press Complaints Commission, mediation and adjudication process

The Press Complaints Commission holds meetings at least two – three times a month and, if needed, more frequently, depending on the number of the press complaints received. Up to 200 press complaints have been



filed to the Council by now. In the past couple of months, members of the Press Complaints Commission worked on a publication which summarizes the work of this body and it is to be soon officially promoted. The members of the Press Complaints Commission are supported in their work through the **regular communication with the colleagues in the press councils in the region and by the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe.**

2.3 Publishing and research activities

The OSCE publication “Guide for self-regulation in the media – all questions and answers” was printed in July. A Handout on the Basic Professional Standards in Journalism, whose author is PhD Dejan Donev, was also produced.

A research on the role of the CMEM in the strengthening of media professionalism and promotion of self-regulation was conducted in the period April – May. Journalists and representatives of civil society organizations throughout the country took part in the research and its findings were presented in June.

The research was conducted with support from the Project “Building Trust in Media in South East Europe and Turkey”, financed by UNESCO and the EU.

Work on a comparative analysis started at the end of last year and continued in 2017 on the practices of the press councils in Europe, as well as on the ethical framework in Europe. The findings will be presented at a national conference in April.

2.4 Cooperation and networking with international bodies, organizations and missions

The CMEM is a member of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils in Europe - <http://www.aipce.net>. The Executive Office is in a regular communication with the other members of the Alliance. It is of significant assistance for the CMEM, given the exchange of information, knowledge, advices, etc. Representatives of the Council of Media Ethics took part at the Annual Assembly of the Alliance that was held in October, in Stockholm, as well as at the international conference on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day in May, in Helsinki, where the work of the CMEM was presented.

The CMEM, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Skopje, was a host of the regional conference “Challenges of the press councils in the region of Balkans”, in May of last year, where representatives of the



press councils in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro took part. CMEM's representatives presented the work of the Council, the Code of Journalists, relations between citizens and the media with an emphasis on the process of mediation, etc. The aim of the conference was to advance regional cooperation and exchange experiences in the area of media ethics.

The CMEM also supported the establishment of the Albanian Press Council and future activities are planned with this body for self-regulation in the media.

2.5 Communication and activities with the media

The CMEM continued with the regular organizing of events/activities for introducing media and the public with its work and the process of self-regulation. Many press – conferences were organized to react on breaches of professional standards and the unethical work of media. Alerts and press releases were sent to the media, appearances in the media organized, etc.

A workshop with editors, media owners and directors of informative programs was organized in October 2016. The future development of the CMEM was discussed, as well as the need to support the process of self-regulation in the media. Representatives of the press councils in Norway and Bosnia and Herzegovina took part at the workshop.

CMEM's representative took part in the working group to prepare the Ethical and Professional Guidelines for the public broadcaster for media coverage of elections, a process which was initiated by the British Embassy and the Macedonian Institute for Media, based on the BBC experience.

2.6 Activities for strategic planning

A workshop on strategic development for the members of the Managing Board, the Press Complaints Commission and the Supervisory Board of the Council was organized, where the Strategic Plan and all relevant documents of the CMEM were analyzed in comparison to the challenges in the work. As result of this process, changes and amendments to the documents were proposed and the basis defined for development of a new strategic plan of the CMEM.



2.7 Capacity building of the CMEM

Representatives of the Press Complaints Commission and the Managing Board took part at the training for the press councils in South East Europe and Turkey, in June, in Kojnic, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The training was focused at the legal and ethical experiences and challenges in journalism, as well as the reporting on public interest in the digital age.

2 Future activities of the Council of Media Ethics

CMEM's activities in the forthcoming period will continue to be focused at awareness raising and informing of the public about the competencies of this body.

In cooperation with the journalistic and the media community, the work will continue on advancement of the ethical framework in the country, particularly in the part related to the online media and its efficient application in the media reporting.

Activities are planned for further capacity building of the CMEM's members, cooperation with the media in education for topics related to ethics in the reporting, then publishing of relevant publications and research, organizing of coordination meetings with the donors, etc.

As result of the need to create certain mechanisms for sustainability of the organization, activities are planned for organizing of events, both in partnership with the media and the local organizations and with international experts.

The CMEM plans to actively participate in the initiatives and take activities for increasing the level of media literacy among citizens, in order to improve understanding of the media role and the contribution in the improvement of the journalistic work. In this direction, CMEM participates in the network for media literacy initiated by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

Future events are also planned with the regional press councils and the press councils in the network of the AIPCE.

