

Lot number: 1.3

Reference number: IPA/2020/420-934

Title of project: “**Supporting Freedom of Expression in the Media in North Macedonia**”

Financed from: European Union

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Position:** Project Affiliate

**Reports to:** Project Manager

### **BACKGROUND**

Professional standards and media ethics are declining with the extensive spreading of tabloid journalism and inefficiently handled hate speech and disinformation on Internet portals and in social media. In recent years social media have become the fastest way in reaching the public and as a result the effect of the content presented in these media have a strong impact on the public. Hate speech, calls for violence and lynch are spread in different ways and are often treated as news on certain internet news sites. Around 23% of the 68 adjudications made by the CMEM in 2018 concerned discriminatory and hate speech. In 2019, the CMEM’s Complaints Commission received 83 complaints, 83% of which referred to the electronic media (Internet portals). 20% (or 12 complaints) were related to hate speech and promoting discrimination on any grounds. According to the findings of the Monitoring report of the 'EU Guidelines for Media Freedom and Media Integrity 2014-2020' for 2017 in all countries of the Western Balkans, journalists’ associations or informal groups of journalists are promoting Code of Ethics, but they do not have efficient remedies to enforce changes for the better. This is the area where more efficient measures against hate speech and other type of unethical media behaviour need to be introduced.

The action takes a holistic approach to media literacy, based on the belief that different stakeholder groups in society with various roles and responsibilities (editors, journalists and other media workers, government institutions, CSOs, citizens) in the sphere of media production and consumption need continuous support in building their capacities to develop a critical stance toward informing, to prevent and refrain from production and dissemination of narratives that are false, offensive, biased, harmful to individuals and groups in society.

The project is fully consistent with the programmatic objectives of CMEM and its efforts to support professionalism in journalism and the media in North Macedonia. The project supports and further expands the activities in addressing issues that have been identified as challenges to objective and unbiased reporting and informing, such as adopting and abiding to the professional and ethical standards in the media, partnership with AJM and the Union of Journalists in monitoring and reporting on pressures and threats made against journalists, and further development of professional standards in media work through cooperation, networking, and regular identification and taking responsibility for breaches of the Code of Ethics.

The **target groups** of the project are: at least 50 media outlets in North Macedonia, editors and journalists, CSOs active in the fields of media freedom, freedom of expression, and professional media and journalists' work (some of these include the AJM, SSNM, the Macedonian Institute for Media), the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the public broadcaster the National Radio-Television, the 5 biggest commercial TV-stations, as well as the citizens of North Macedonia.

Several groups are the final beneficiaries of the project: media outlets in North Macedonia, editors and journalists, CSOs active in the fields of media freedom, freedom of expression, and professional media and journalists' work, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the public broadcaster the National Radio-Television, as well as the citizens of North Macedonia.

The project has the following objectives:

**Project objectives:**

The **overall objective** of the project is: Strengthened press freedom and freedom of expression in the media in North Macedonia.

The **specific objective** of the project is: Enhanced self-regulation in the media in North Macedonia.

The primary issue addressed by the action is the problem of support for freedom of expression through development of ethical and professional standards in the media in the country. The emergence of new media, and particularly the raising influence of social media have exacerbated the problem. The history of political influence in the field of media and the work of journalists is a problem that seriously jeopardizes the objective of ethical reporting of the media in the country. Political influences are effected in many ways - through the ownership structure of the country's media, through more or less direct pressure on the media and journalists, but also on the importance that political elites have for the financial sustainability of the country's media.

CMEM will continue to promote the press complaints tool as a mechanism for identification and a tool for processing of media cases involving violation of the Code of Ethics. Accumulated knowledge and information about specific cases will be presented in case study reports and widely disseminated to various stakeholder groups (journalists and media workers, the authorities, the citizens and CSOs). The wide application of the tool will not only promote greater accountability and self-regulation among the media, but will also contribute to the development of a compendium of knowledge regarding identification and treatment of incidents involving unprofessional and unethical reporting and strengthen the media literacy objectives of the action.

### **Subject of procurement**

Contracting of a Project Affiliate as an external associate who helps with various aspects of day-to-day operations

### **Duties**

- In cooperation with the Project Manager and Executive office of CMEM, contact media and journalists to discuss and advocate about support to the concept of media self-regulation
- Facilitation of communication with relevant stakeholders regarding the advancement of media self-regulation in the country, such as representatives of relevant public institutions, judiciary regulatory bodies, members of civil society, etc.
- Contribution in networking between the relevant bodies in the professional media organizations to identify views, suggestions and requirements for improvement of the ethical framework in different areas (to draft a questionnaire, research methods to collect data)
- Contribution in compiling of suggestions and recommendations regarding the improvement of the ethical framework to be shared with media on national level
- Support in identification for new and innovative practices for increasing the transparency and visibility of the outputs from the Project
- Support in planning of the process of creation of business plan development.

### **Competences and previous experience**

- University degree in Journalism, Communications, Law, or another similar field of education.
- Thorough understanding of the media landscape of the North Macedonia as well as relevant national legislation, self-regulation practices and ethical standards in journalism.
- More than 5 years of experience in Media Policy Research and/or Journalism Studies.
- Published academic and/or expert publications relevant to the task.
- Excellent analytical, writing and reporting skills.
- Advanced English language proficiency.

### **Financial compensation:**

Envisaged amount has been calculated on the basis of average market price and approximate number of days of engagement for this kind of service.

- The global price includes **all expenses** that may occur (travel, communication, and alike).

Details and methods of payment will be defined in the contract included if requested by another for the service and the selected bidder.

Payment will be provided according to the following dynamics:

- The amounts will be calculated without VAT.
- Payment will be made to you on a monthly basis.

### **Time frame:**

From 01.04.2021 to 03.01.2023.

- The planned date for starting the translation services is the day of signing the contract with the selected bidder. The contract will be concluded for the period of the duration of the project.
- The total of working months is 3 months in 2021 and 3 months in 2022.
- If the conditions stated in the contract are not respected by the selected bidder, CMEM has the right to terminate the contract before the expiration of the agreed deadline, after prior written notification within 3 working days before the termination.

### **Annex I – ToR (Terms of Reference)**