

## REGIONAL COOPERATION DAY

Sarajevo, 18-19<sup>th</sup> December 2015

### Journalists' Workshop – Reporting on the Region in the Region

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This (2015) year's EC "Country reports" emphasized that the state of freedoms and professionalism in the media field in our region is deteriorating.

Furthermore, Workshop participants concluded that the reporting in the region about the region is totally insufficient and that it has a top down approach. The reporting on regional issues also lacks a broader and deeper insight context, analysis and also reliable sourcing.

There is also a huge lack of comprehensive reporting on the EU, especially when it comes to issues which affect everyday life of citizens.

We have agreed that the most pressing issues on the regional media landscape are:

- **Political and corporate influence on the media**
- **Social and economic status of journalists**
- **Ethical issues (nationalism, corruption, etc.)**

The major story in 2015 - the refugee/migrants crisis - showed how connected our countries actually are and the importance of better cooperation and understanding of one another.

In order to cooperate in a more efficient way, we propose the **establishment of regional media exchange network**, as a sort of professional, analytical, relevant and credible content supply, which will go beyond the daily and locally/nationally focused reporting.

Therefore, we have selected a working group to elaborate and develop this idea and here are the group's conclusions and recommendations:

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION PLAN

Regional media exchange can have different formats, from a comprehensive one which will address the major challenges, to dealing with them in a step by step way:

- a) A regional news agency which would enable the exchange of professional news and information of regional or bilateral importance between national editorial teams.



Before embarking on this venture, we would need to look at and take into consideration what happened to other similar projects/agencies and define what would differ this one from others and make it feasible.

- b) A network community, with a moderator and a pro-active approach: besides giving contacts and basic information about journalists and their work, the journalists would also be a part of possible online debates, news exchanges (we could also use existing social networks and groups);
- c) A network community which will serve as sort of a "social network", where every member country would have its own profile, with a number of news, analysis, interviews, TV pieces, video debates or whatever the members find interesting and informative for regional users;
- d) A pooling system for existing news agencies to use each other's news and media content from that pool;
- e) An "address book" of regional journalists and journalistic teams who could be contacted when needed for a specific topic, specific initiative, or for giving a certain analysis;
- f) A regional exchange of op-ed and commentary pieces, mostly by distinguished and well known journalists from the region. A Southeastern Europe version of <http://www.project-syndicate.org/> (we could invite Project syndicate for cooperation);
- g) Visiting fellowships, an exchange of editors and journalists which would broaden and deepen their knowledge and experience on other national centres and also the region as a whole.
- h) The Civil Society Organizations participating in the Regional Cooperation Day, given the fact that the freedom of media is a pressing issue, encourage the process of training journalists on regional issues. These training processes would improve the quality of reporting and CSOs with relevant experience in regional cooperation can use their expertise and share it with journalists.

