

## ***International expert conference***

### **15 years of transition in the Southeast Europe: the responsibility and impact of the media**

**from 27th to 29th April 2005 in Zagreb**

#### **Final declaration by conference participants**

1. Conference participants shall henceforth strive for promoting their responsibility with regard to ethics and the self-regulation of journalist scene as well as stimulate internal dialogue between the journalists and editors. The journalists must provide for generating the new rules of the game in their relations with the editors.
2. It is indispensable for journalists to pledge that they will abide to standards of ethics in reporting. The editors should also pledge that they will observe the standards of ethics in journalism, that is their responsibility in relation to general public with regard to contents must be reinforced.
3. Foreign media companies should in their activities in Southeast Europe take on themselves the obligation to observe the professional and ethical standards also applicable in countries they come from and put those into practice.
4. There is a necessity to amend the criminal law provisions in connection with libel. The journalists expressly demand not only that the relationship towards the libel undergoes change, but also that it finally turns decriminalised.
5. With the view of safeguarding the social and material position of journalists it is necessary to bargain collective agreements. Those should also lay down the commitments that the owners of media companies should take upon themselves in connection with education and professional training of journalists.
6. Fundamental right of a journalist to join unions must be honoured.
7. By introducing industrial and trade union social funds, the journalists should be provided with self-assistance.

8. Establishing of binding rules and standards in the training of journalists shall be in the interest of all those operating in the media.
9. The graduate school journalist studies should be modernized and adapted, while didactic materials in the language of a relevant country should urgently be produced.
10. International and national non-governmental organisations should forthwith cooperate more closely in the field of media. The objective in all that should be better use of the existing local institutions, instead of setting up the ad-hoc institutions that wither away upon suspension of donation entries.
11. In course of transition process the social component, which comes into play through the media, has a much greater and broader significance than in the countries with evolved democracies. Therefore it is essential to point to the responsibility of all participants who have an influence on editorial policy – from journalists to editors – with regard to the mentioned component.

Done at Zagreb, 28th April 2005