

*Strengthening Media Freedom
in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia
and Serbia*

**FREE
PRESS
UNLIMITED**



“Stronger Together: Journalists and Judiciary Safeguarding Media Freedom”

Programme

18-20 September 2024,
Hotel Radika, Mavrovo, North Macedonia

Funded by:



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#MAVROVOREGIONALCONFERENCE2024



Wednesday 18 September 2024	
<p>19:30</p> <p><i>Restaurant Hotel Radika</i></p>	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Joeri Buhner Tavanier, <i>Acting Executive Director, Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC)</i> ● Ruth Kronenburg, <i>Executive Director, Free Press Unlimited (FPU)</i> ● Mladen Chadikovski, <i>President, Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM)</i> ● Ilir Iseni, LL.M, <i>Acting Director of the Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, "Pavel Shatev", North Macedonia</i> <p>Drinks and Dinner</p> <p>Live Music Performance</p>
Thursday 19 September 2024	
<p>8:30 – 09:00</p> <p><i>Entrance Hall</i></p>	<p>Registration and Distribution of Badges</p> <p>Reimbursement for Travel Costs (for those travelling by car or bus)</p>
<p>9:00 – 09:30</p>	<p>Foreword</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● H.E. Özlem Canel, <i>Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to North Macedonia</i> ● Albana Shala, <i>Senior Programme Coordinator, FPU</i> ● Lisa Tilney, <i>Programme Officer, NHC</i>
<p>9:30 – 11:00</p>	<p>Partner Presentations: Progress and Lessons to Take Forward</p> <p>After four years of dedicated efforts in the "Strengthening Media Freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia" project, partners from these three countries will showcase their work, share lessons learned, and highlight the impactful activities conducted throughout this period. Has the relationship between the judiciary and the media been strengthened? What are the points of misunderstanding or friction between these two groups that still need to be addressed?</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dragan Sekulovski, <i>Executive Director, Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM)</i> ● Tamara Filipović, <i>Secretary General, Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)</i> ● Borka Rudić, <i>Secretary General, BH Journalists Association (BH Novinari)</i>



	<p><u>Moderator:</u> FPU</p> <p><i>Followed by a Q&A session</i></p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee Break
11:30 – 13:00	Breakout Sessions (1, 2)
<i>Breakout Session 1</i>	<p>Round-table on SLAPPs</p> <p>This session will focus on Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation or SLAPPs. Panellists will discuss the threat posed by these types of cases and explore legislative initiatives designed to address the increasing use of SLAPPs in the Western Balkans. This session will provide an overview of the newly adopted EU Directive, explain the CoE recommendations in the context of the Western Balkans, clarify threats through concrete examples from recent cases, and highlight the role of civil society in advocacy efforts.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dragan Sekulovski, <i>Executive Director, Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) / Member, Committee of Experts on Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (MSI-SLP)</i> • Nebojša Đuričić, <i>Judge, Higher Court in Belgrade, Serbia</i> • Bojan Elek, <i>Project Manager, Crime and Corruption Reporting Network (KRIK), Serbia</i> • Simona Mladenovska, <i>Policy and Advocacy Officer, Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN), North Macedonia</i> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Lisa Tilney, <i>Programme Officer, NHC</i></p>
<i>Breakout Session 2</i>	<p>Disinformation and Media Independence in the Western Balkans</p> <p>This session will illuminate the challenges faced by independent journalists in the region. It will showcase positive examples from both the Western Balkans and the Netherlands on the ways in which the media can counter disinformation effectively. Additionally, the session aims to raise awareness among journalists and the judiciary about the challenges confronted by both professions and the benefits of the European Media Freedom Act. By fostering dialogue between journalists and the judiciary, the session seeks to address issues related to disinformation and transparency in media ownership.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Charles Kriel, <i>Senior AI Fellow, Sympodium Institute of Strategic Communications</i> • Filip Stojanovski, <i>Partnership and Resource Development Director, Metamorphosis Foundation, North Macedonia</i>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jelena Zorić, <i>Investigative Reporter, BIRN Serbia</i> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Rogier Sonneveldt, <i>Press Judge, Appeal Court of Arnhem-Leeuwarden / Trainer, Study Centre for the Judiciary (Studiecentrum Rechtspleging, SSR)</i></p>
13:00 – 14:00 <i>Restaurant Hotel Radika</i>	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30 <i>The training is held in two simultaneous sessions</i> <i>Session I: Conference Room 1</i> <i>Session II: Conference Room 2</i>	Interactive Training by the Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (Studiecentrum Rechtspleging, SSR) This workshop, organised by SSR for judges, prosecutors and journalists, will explore and foster mutual understanding of the roles that media and judiciary play and suggest possible ways forward. Group 1 Trainer: Anne Tahapary, <i>Senior Course Manager, SSR</i> Group 2 Trainer: Rogier Sonneveldt, <i>Press Judge, Appeal Court of Arnhem-Leeuwarden / Trainer, SSR</i>
16:00 – 18:00	Excursion to the "Sharkova Dupka" Cave in Bistra
18:00 – 19:30	Free Time
19:30 <i>Restaurant Hotel Radika</i>	Dinner
Friday 20 September 2024	
9:00 – 10:00	Panel Discussion on Tackling Impunity This session will explore the effect of impunity on journalists, civil society organisations, and society at large. It aims to raise awareness about the interactions and responsibilities of various stakeholders involved in resolving each case. Through discussion of the Slavko Churuvija and Peter de Vries murder cases and their far-reaching consequences, the session seeks to underscore the complexity of efforts required to combat impunity and to achieve consensus that proper procedures must be followed to ensure



	<p>justice is served, highlighting the critical importance of political will in this process.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brechtje van de Moosdijk, <i>Spokesperson and Press Officer, Dutch Public Prosecution Service (Openbaar Ministerie, OM)</i> • Jasmijn de Zeeuw, <i>Legal adviser, A Safer World for the Truth, Free Press Unlimited</i> • Natalija Bratuljević, <i>Independent Consultant, Serbia</i> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Folkert Jensma, <i>Chair, Dutch Association of Journalists (Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten, NVJ) / Legal Editor, NRC Handelsblad</i></p>
<p>10:00 – 10:30</p>	<p>Coffee Break</p> <p>Press Briefing</p> <p>by the Regional Conference organisers</p> <p>Press contact: Biljana Nasteska-Kalanoska, <i>Communications Officer, AJM</i></p>
<p>10:30 – 11:30</p>	<p>Moving Forward: Encouraging Legal Protection for Journalists</p> <p>This roundtable will expand on the previous session to discuss the procedural, investigative and evidentiary hurdles that make it difficult to prosecute and convict perpetrators of attacks against journalists. What type of legal mechanisms encourage protection for journalists and prosecution for offenses against them? Can our judicial systems, through effective use of these mechanisms, convey the message that violence or threats of violence against journalists will not be tolerated?</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darko Kostadinovski, <i>Judge, President, Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia</i> • Muhamed Tulumović, <i>President, Municipal Court in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> • Dejan Petreski, <i>Public Prosecutor, National Focal Point for Protection and Safety of Journalists, Skopje Basic Public Prosecutor's Office, North Macedonia</i> <p><u>Moderator:</u> Rade Djurić, <i>Legal Advisor, Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)</i></p>
<p>11:30 – 12:00</p>	<p>Wrap-up of the Regional Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mladen Mladenov, <i>Programme Manager, NHC</i> • Albana Shala, <i>Senior Programme Coordinator, FPU</i>



12:00 – 12:15	Distribution of Certificates Distribution of Packed Lunches (for participants departing early and unable to attend lunch)
12:15 – 13:30 <i>Restaurant Hotel Radika</i>	Lunch
13:30 <i>Main Hall</i>	Departure of Remaining Participants