

Press Code for Kosovo

Preamble

- This Code, drawn from existing international standards of journalistic practice, is intended as the foundation of system of self-regulation that shall be considered morally and professionally binding on reporters, editors and the owners and publishers of newspapers and periodicals.
- Journalists and editors shall respect the following ethical principles and protect the professional integrity of journalism.
- Editors and publishers shall ensure that all relevant staff is informed about this Code. They shall further ensure that the provisions of this Code are fully observed.

I. General Provisions

1. It is the duty of journalists and publishers to respect the needs of citizens for timely and relevant information. Journalists and publishers shall defend the principles of freedom of information, the right of fair comment and critical journalism.
2. The press in Kosovo shall observe international standards of civility and respect for the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity.
3. Journalists and editors shall not, deliberately or by inadvertence, encourage discrimination and intolerance.
4. Journalists shall not act as representative of public opinion. Media cannot replace the specific functions of the public authorities or institutions.
5. The critical observation of the implementation of political and economic power shall be among the main obligation of the press.
6. News organizations shall demonstrate transparency in matters of media ownership and management, enabling citizens to ascertain clearly the identity of proprietors and the extent of their economic interest in the media.

II. Reporting the Truth

1. Journalists and editors shall ensure in all their work a respect for factual truth and the right of the public to know the truth.
2. Journalists and editors shall rely, as a general rule on, identified sources of information.

3. Newspapers and their publications have an obligation to protect the identity of those who provide information in confidence, whether or not they explicitly request confidentiality.
4. A clear distinction must be drawn between news and opinions. News is information about facts and data, while opinions convey thoughts, ideas, beliefs or value judgments on the part of publishers, journalists and editors.
5. Journalists and their publications have a professional obligation to promptly correct any published information that is found to be inaccurate.
6. Pictures and documents must not be falsified or used in a misleading fashion.
7. Journalist shall never plagiarize and always give credit to the source of information that has been published elsewhere.

III. Incitement and Hate Speech

1. The press shall under no circumstances incite criminal acts or violence.
2. The press shall do its utmost not to incite or inflame hatred or encourage discrimination by engaging in the following:
 - a. Treat with contempt an individual or a group on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sex, race, color, marital status, age or handicap;
 - b. Employ derogatory terms likely to hurt and intimidate an individual or a group on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sex, race, color, marital status, age or handicap.
3. References to a person's ethnic group, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or physical or mental illness or disability shall be made only when directly relevant to the event being reported.

IV. Right of Reply

1. It is the obligation of journalists, editors and newspapers to publish reactions and/or rebuttal when media present inaccurate information about an individual or organization.
2. The right of reply shall be extended to relevant persons if the publication concerned determines that fairness and impartiality merit such a step. There shall be an opportunity for immediate response with the same newspaper.

3. In reporting and commenting on a controversy, newspapers and periodicals shall make an effort to hear and represent all sides to the argument. If one side in a controversy refuses to make itself available to the journalist, the publication may legitimately note this refusal in its reporting.

V. Persons Charged with Criminal Offences

1. Newspapers and periodicals shall not treat any individual as a guilty of a crime prior to a court decision to that effect.
2. Journalists and editors have a duty not to prejudge the guilt of an accused person.

VI. Protection of Children and Minors

1. Journalists should not interview or photograph children under the age of 15 on matters involving the child's family without the consent of a parent or other adult responsible for the child.
2. Newspapers and periodicals shall not, under any circumstances, identify children under the age of 15 who are involved in criminal cases as victims, witnesses or defendants.

VII. Privacy

1. The press shall avoid intrusions and enquiries into an individual's private life, unless such intrusions or enquiries are necessary due to the public interest.
2. Treatment of stories involving personal tragedy shall be handled sensitively, and the affected individuals shall be approached with sympathy and discretion.

VIII. Corruption and Bribes

1. Journalists shall not accept posts, bribes or other inducements which cause a conflict of interest with their profession, and which compromise their professional and moral credibility.
2. Journalists and editors shall not accept specific acts of benevolence that affect their independence.

IX. Copyright and Author's Rights

1. Publishers, editors and journalists shall not consider that they own the news.
2. Publications can make reasonable use, with limited quotations, of material from another publication or holder of copyright without express permission to do so. Nevertheless, publishing of complete material concerned shall be possible only through the prior consent by the copyright holder.

X. Advertising and Sponsorship

1. Commercial and political advertisements and sponsored material, including articles and supplements, must be distinguished from editorial content and clearly identified as such.
2. Sponsored material shall indicate prominently and clearly the source of sponsorship.

We the undersigned Chief Editors and Publishers support the creation of a system of self-regulation of print media in Kosovo, in accordance with best European practice.

We hereby declare that we accept and agree with this Press Code and will apply it in our publications to the best of our ability.

We further declare our support for and cooperation with the organization of a Press Council to implement this Press Code and to adjudicate complaints based on the Code.

Prishtine/Pristina 18 March, 2005

Media	Name and Last Name	Signature
Bota Sot	Orin Meluhaj	Orin
Express	Dejvis Gjermani	Dejvis
Epoka e Re	Arben Matoshi	Arben
Glas Juga	Xhiber Bajrami	Xhiber
Java	Elidris Haliti	Elidris
Jedinstvo		
Koha Ditore	AGRON BASHIRI	Agron
Kosova Sot	Pejo Margarita Kodrin	Pejo Margarita Kodrin
Lajm	Holli Matoshi	Holli
Pavarësia	Gani Tereshaj	Gani
Yeni Donem	MEHMET BËTÛÇ	Mehmet Bëtuç
Zëri	Zemir Celaj	Zemir
Zëri Javor	Behar Haliti	Behar
ALEM	Uro Vllori	Uro