

CODE OF JOURNALISTS OF SERBIA

- INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES –

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CONTENTS:

Preamble	2
I Authenticity of Reporting	3
II Independence from Pressure	5
III Responsibility of Journalists	6
IV Journalists' Attention	8
V. Relationship to Sources of Information	8
VI Respect for Privacy	10
VII Use of Honourable Means	11
VIII Recognition of Authorship	12
IX Protection of Journalists	13
Examples:	
• Ethnicity of Suspected Offenders	13
• Sexual Orientation of the Person Referred to	13
• Protection of Privacy	13
• Abuse of Ignorance	14
• Violent Contents	14
• Titles	15

Preface

The media scene in Serbia, since the democratic changes to present day, has achieved significant progress. Konrad Adenauer Foundation, supporting the improvement of the media system in Serbia, through its various media projects, contributes to establishing the core values of free and independent journalism in Serbia. It is the "Code of Serbian Journalists - Instructions and Guidelines" that makes an important contribution to this process. Free media can correspond only with democracy. Democracy, on the other hand, works when citizens are free to inform and form their own opinion. These basic assumptions of democracy and free media cannot be achieved in societies in which the state and interest groups have influence on the media. Media and journalists are in the function of society. Therefore, the only institution which should have control over the media and journalists is the media self-regulation. Journalists' Associations of Serbia - the Association of Journalists of Serbia and Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia - by publication of these guidelines along with the Code of Journalists of Serbia, confirm their affirmative role in the process of professionalization of the media in Serbia. We hope these guidelines and policies along with the Code of Journalists of Serbia will be useful and will contribute to the professionalization of the media system in Serbia, based on the principles of self-regulation.

Claudia Crawford
Director
Konrad Adenauer Foundation
Belgrade, November 2008

PREAMBLE

UNS and NUNS set this code as a standard of professional conduct of journalists.

It is the duty of journalists to follow professional and ethical principles contained in this Code and to oppose pressures to violate these principles.

The Code encourages solidarity with their colleagues when the standards of professional conduct of journalists are threatened.

Exposition:

Professional and ethical standards defined in this Code are aimed at raising the reputation of journalism and promotion of advocacy for freedom of thought, speech and expression as well as media independence.

Journalists who violate the principles of this Code cannot count on the unconditional support of journalists' associations and colleagues.

The media are obliged to place the public interest for the full, timely and truthful informing above all other interests. In the context of this Code, the public interest includes disclosure of all important information useful for a reader / listener / viewer in establishing his personal judgement/opinion about phenomena and events.

Both editors and publishers are responsible for the implementation of this Code.

Exposition:

Journalists and editors are professionally responsible to the public (the readers /viewers / listeners) and not the publisher /owner (the state and interest groups), and their personal, economic, political and other interests.

The publisher /owner has the indisputable right to pursue profits and keep his focus on it in running the media business. At the same time, the reason for the existence of media is the public interest which must not be undermined by property rights. Business, political and personal interests of the publisher / owner must not be used as an excuse or justification for the violation of this Code.

The publisher /owner should not, at his discretion and without the consent of the editorial board, make any changes in media editorial policy. The publisher has the right to define editorial policy which must not be in conflict with law or with the professional code.

I

AUTHENTICITY OF REPORTING

- 1. Journalists shall accurately, objectively, completely and timely inform about events of public interest, while respecting the right of the public to know the truth and adhering to basic standards of journalism.**

Guidelines:

- Possible impact of published information on the medium or media owners must not affect the decision on its publication.
- Political or ideological background of information must not affect the decision on its publication, even if the political or ideological background is in opposition to the political views of journalists, editors or media owners.
- Statements of political parties or other interest groups must be marked as such. In the event that the statement is editorially processed, the readers / viewers / listeners must be notified about the primary source of information.
- Editorial processing of statements must not alter the facts, context in which they are used or their meaning.

- 2. It is the right of media to have different editorial concepts, whereas it is the obligation of journalists and editors to make a clear distinction between the facts they convey, comments, assumptions and speculation.**

Guidelines:

- Media that convey agency news are responsible for what they publish. If the agency is listed as a source of information, reducing or amending information must not change the basic meaning and the conclusion that the agency has stated.
 - During the publication of opinion polls, it is recommended to specify: the name of the agency that has conducted the survey, the client who has ordered the survey, the number of survey participants, time of conducting the survey, questions raised...
- If a published comment is opposed to the editorial policy or views of the editorial board, it is recommended that the readers / viewers / listeners should be informed about it.
- Open advocacy in favour of a political party or option is incompatible with the profession of journalism.
 - Journalists are not obliged to provide interview authorization to the interviewee. However, if the authorization is granted in agreement with editors, the interviewee must not change reporters' questions, the meaning and the context of his responses.
 - Changes in the content of images are unacceptable without the consent of the author.
 - The difference between a documentary photography and a photomontage must be clearly noted, i.e. the readers /viewers must not be misled.

- Drastic interventions during digital processing of documentary photographs are considered to be unacceptable. It is only allowed to make minimum adjustments (in the domain of colour, contrast, sharpness and the like) that do not affect their contents.

3. A journalist shall indicate the source of information conveyed. If the source does not want to be revealed, reporters and editors shall act with due professional care and take responsibility for the information and its accuracy by means of their professional authority.

Guidelines:

- If the source of information insists on remaining anonymous, the editorial board is obliged to respect this demand. This rule may be waived if the information does not refer to planning of a criminal act or violation of the constitutional order and national security, in case of which the editorial board is obliged to report the information to the relevant authorities. In such cases it is recommended to consult a legal advisor.
- Disclosure of information marked as confidential is exceptionally allowed if it is determined that the general public's right to be informed is a priority in relation to the reasons of confidentiality.

4. A journalist shall, when necessary, consult as many sources of information as possible and enable them to express their views.

Guidelines:

- A journalist is obliged to consult at least two independent sources of information that shall either confirm or deny the given information.
- Two mutually independent sources of information are especially desirable in the event of firm indications that the official source gives incomplete and / or incorrect information. The existence of two independent sources of information is equally recommended in case that the key information originates from an anonymous or a confidential source.

5. Journalism is incompatible with publication of unfounded accusations, slander, rumours and fabricated letters or letters from an unknown author or the one whose identity is not verifiable.

Guidelines:

- The content of letters to be published must be in accordance with the principles of professional ethics.
- Even though the sender's address should not be published, it must be known to the editor. If there is any doubt about the identity of the sender, the letter should not be published.

- Publication of fictitious letters is not allowed, as well as modifications to the letters without the author's consent.
- If the journalist estimates that publishing unconfirmed information or speculation is in the public interest, he must clearly and unambiguously point out that the information has not been confirmed.

II INDEPENDENCE FROM PRESSURE

- 1. A journalist shall resist any pressure against free performance of professional tasks, as well as any form of censorship. The journalist is assigned tasks only by the relevant editors.**

Guidelines:

- A journalist / editor should inform the public about the pressures jeopardizing the freedom of information and independence of media.
- An editor is obliged to protect journalists from all forms of censorship and pressure known to him regardless of whether they originate from the publisher /owner, state, interest groups, and the like.
- Self-censorship is considered a breach of professional and ethical standards.
- Editor's alterations must not change the facts, context and views of the journalist signing the article /report. In the event that the editor alters the facts, context and views expressed in the article /report, the journalist is obliged to distance himself from these alterations.
- The title of the article/report must not be in opposition to the essence of the article/report.
- The title of the article/report is subject to the same ethical principles as the article/report itself.
- Any modifications (made by editors, graphic editors, designers, and others), in terms of the content of photographs, are unacceptable without the author's consent.

- 2. Journalism is incompatible with accepting bribes for publication, concealing or preventing the collection and publication of information. A journalist must not delay the publication of important information, except for necessary accuracy checking.**

Guidelines:

- A journalist shall not accept any privileges, compensation, and valuable presents, which may result in biased representation of the donor in the media.
- If an individual or organization has paid the travel costs of the journalist / editor, he is obliged to indicate this fact in the article/report.
- In the event of reporting on topics related to study tours, professional development or scholarships organized by political parties, organizations or companies, it must be unambiguously stated in the article/report.
- The editorial board should, whenever possible, reimburse for journalists' business trips, travel expenses of journalists on assignment, tickets for various events, and the like.

- A journalist / editor must not sell documents, audio / video records, books and other materials he had received for the purpose of media coverage.

These materials should not be shared with other media without the consent of the source of information.

- It is recommended that materials obtained from sources of information remain in possession of the editorial or documentary media centre commissioning the journalist /editor.
- If a journalist meets the other party in a restaurant, the costs should be reimbursed by the editorial board. If this is impossible, the journalist should insist on meeting at any other place not requiring costs.
- Acceptance of presents is permitted only in cases when it comes to promotional items (pens, notebooks, caps, etc.) or objects of small material value. A journalist should refuse any gifts of greater value and inform the editor about it.

3. Economic and political interests of publishers must not affect the editorial policy in a manner that would lead to inaccurate, non-objective, incomplete and untimely informing the public.

Guidelines:

- Media are encouraged to make their ownership structure public (transparent) in their publications.
- If the reports are related to individuals and companies that have equity stake in a particular medium, it is recommended that a journalist /editor state that fact.
- If the publisher of the media has an ownership stake in the organization or the company referred to in the report, a journalist /editor should specify that fact.

4. A journalist must not be forced to express opinions contrary to his conscience.

Guidelines:

- A journalist must not be punished for refusing to report in opposition to his beliefs and ethical principles.
- If a journalist is forced to report in opposition to his beliefs, he has the right to inform the public about it.

III

RESPONSIBILITY OF JOURNALISTS

- 1. A journalist is primarily responsible to his readers, listeners and viewers. This responsibility must not be subordinated to the interests of others, especially to the interests of publishers, government and other state agencies and bodies. A journalist must confront all those violating human rights or advocating any type of discrimination, hate speech and provoking violence.**

Guidelines:

- A journalist must inform the editor if his personal, economic, political and any other interests intersect with professional duties.
- The profession of journalism is incompatible with dissemination of any kind of sex, gender, ethnic, racial, social, or religious stereotypes. Journalists' personal prejudices must not be broadcast / published in any context, either openly or covertly.
- The use of colloquial, pejorative and inaccurate names for a specific group is unacceptable.
- In reports on criminal acts, ethnic, racial, religious, ideological and political affiliation, as well as sexual orientation, social and marital status of suspects or victims, are mentioned only when that particular orientation, affiliation or status is directly related to the type and nature of committed crime.

2. Forging documents and plagiarism are unacceptable and are considered serious violation of standards of professional conduct of journalists.

Guidelines:

- Using other people's information, ideas, research, photographs and graphic illustrations without adequate indication of sources is considered plagiarism, and represents one of the most serious violations of professional and ethical standards. Plagiarism jeopardizes the credibility of journalists /media, and leads to loss of readers' / viewers' / listeners' trust in the profession of journalism.

3. A journalist shall respect the rule of presumption of innocence and shall not proclaim anyone guilty before the court verdict.

Guidelines:

- Media must respect the presumption of innocence and protect the privacy and identity of the suspect or the perpetrator, even if he pleads guilty.
- Protection of privacy and identity includes not only the protection of names (use of initials in addressing the suspect), but also the protection of other data that might indicate his identity: photos, address, description of his appearance, marital status, social status, affiliation to a certain group, the names of neighbours, relatives and friends.
- Victims and suspects are often not aware of the power of media. A journalist is obliged to take this into account, and not to abuse the ignorance of the other party.
- If the victim of a crime agrees to an interview, a journalist must not, on the basis of that interview, reveal the identity of the victim or the potential perpetrator.
- If reporting on the committed offense, the journalist must be alert, when talking to potential witnesses, not to reveal the victim's identity i.e. the identity and the right to the presumption of innocence of the suspect.
- A journalist must take into account the possibility of abuse and manipulation to which he might be exposed by the alleged victims of certain crimes.

4. A journalist shall not use inappropriate, harassing, pornographic and other contents that could have a harmful impact on children.

5. A journalist shall respect and protect the rights and dignity of children,

crime victims, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups.

- 6. A journalist shall cherish culture and ethics of public expression, respect the right to response, an apology and correction and is obliged to duly publish any appropriate corrections.**

Guidelines:

- The media shall, without any delay, publish accurate and complete information, even if they have inadvertently placed statements that are subsequently proven unfounded allegations, rumors, libel or defamation.

- 7. Any form of commercial advertising and political propaganda, that are not clearly indicated, are considered serious violation of standards of professional conduct of journalists.**

Guidelines:

- Advertising and hidden advertising, just like any other form of commercial advertising and economic propaganda, must be clearly separated from journalistic writing.
- Covert advertising and economic propaganda articles /reports refer to advertising / promotional activities that are, on the basis of outer shell and the method of preparation, so similar to authentic journalistic writing /report that the reader / viewer cannot make distinction between them.
- Journalistic articles/reports about businesses, products and services should not exceed the limits of covert advertising. A journalist must be especially careful when using press releases, articles and other materials of PR and marketing agencies, since they are intended primarily for providing clients (either directly or indirectly), with free of charge and favourable publicity.

IV

JOURNALISTS' ATTENTION

- 1. A journalist shall approach the job with due professional care.**
- 2. A journalist shall not blindly trust the source of information. The journalist must bear in mind that information sources often pursue their own interests or interests of social groups they belong to and adapt their statements to those interests.**

Guidelines:

- In contact with sources of information it is necessary to pay special attention in order to avoid actual or apparent bias, arising from close personal relationships.
- Readers / viewers / listeners must be informed of the immediate benefit that might be achieved by the source through publication of information. If the source has a direct interest, or intends to take vengeance, the readers /viewers / listeners must be notified.

3. Suppression of facts which could substantially affect the public attitude towards an event is equal to deliberate distortion of facts or telling lies.

Guidelines:

- If the sources of information are spokespersons of political parties, individuals and companies, this information must be stated due to the potential direct or indirect impact on the objectivity of reporting.

4. A journalist must be aware of the dangers of discrimination that can be disseminated by the media and shall do his best to avoid discrimination based on, among other things, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other views, national or social origin.

Guidelines:

- Affiliation to a particular ethnic, political, ideological, or any other group as well as marital status, religious orientation and social origin is stated only when this information is necessary for full comprehension of the context of reported events.
- Journalists must avoid phrases of chauvinist, sexist, or otherwise discriminatory connotations (e.g. "the fairer sex", "member of the stronger sex", "Montenegrin laziness" and the like).

V RELATIONSHIP TO SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 1. A journalist has the right to investigate all the circumstances and facts about events that are of interest to the public.**
- 2. In the process of collecting information, a journalist shall not exert extortion, threat and persecution of sources of information.**

- In addition to prohibited use of threats against the sources of information, journalists must not promise favorable coverage in exchange for information.

3. A journalist shall comply with the request for anonymity made by the source of information. Inventing anonymous sources is considered serious violation of standards of professional conduct of journalists.

Guidelines:

- The use of anonymous (confidential) sources of information is generally not recommended, unless there are no other methods of obtaining information of great importance to the public.
- Often, the use of unnamed sources of information simply enables the source of information itself or journalists /media to express inaccurate, incomplete and insufficiently verified information. If hiding the source of information proves to be a camouflage for its absence, the credibility of journalists / media shall be seriously undermined.
- Anonymity / confidentiality should be granted to sources that can provide firsthand information, i.e. documents that directly prove or inherently represent information of a significant public interest.
- The editor is, together with a journalist, obliged to check justification of using anonymous (confidential) sources of information. In this regard, it is necessary that at least one editor knows and protects the identity of the anonymous source.
- If the source of information requires the journalist not to reveal his identity to an editor, such a request shall be rejected.

4. A journalist shall reveal his identity to the source of information and specify the medium that has commissioned him.

Guidelines:

- Misrepresentation and false identification of media commissioning the journalist is not allowed.
- Journalists on assignment shall not present themselves as people who have special authorizations, as business people and "ordinary citizens".
- Concealing the identity of journalists can be justified only as a last resort in obtaining information, if all other methods have failed, if the information cannot be obtained in any other way, and only if it involves information of significant public interest.
- In the event of concealing the identity of journalists, it is necessary to inform the editorial board about it and consulting legal advisors is also recommended due to potential legal consequences.

5. Upon editor's request a journalist may reveal the identity of a source that requires to remain anonymous, while the editor is obliged to protect the anonymity of the source.

Guidelines:

- If the source of information is unnamed, the editor must be informed of the identity of that source, as both journalists and editors take responsibility for the accuracy of published information.

- A journalist has the right not to disclose the identity of an anonymous (confidential)

source to the editor. In this case, the editor may decide not to publish information received from the source unknown to him, while according to the Code this procedure is not considered censorship.

6. Minors, as a rule, shall be interviewed only in the presence of or with the consent of parents or guardians.

7. A journalist shall never abuse the emotions of other people, their ignorance or lack of reasoning ability.

Guidelines:

- Sources of information interviewed by a journalist are not always aware of the power of media and the impact that their statements may have on them personally, as well as the people referred to in the interview. Intentional abuse is incompatible with the profession of journalism, as well as negligence that can potentially result in abuse of interviewees.

8. A journalist shall not create unjustified fear or offer false hope.

Guidelines:

- A journalist who intentionally, especially because of the "attractiveness" of the article / report, encourages unfounded fears and hopes of readers / viewers / listeners, violates the Code of Ethics in the most extreme way.

VI RESPECT FOR PRIVACY

1. A journalist shall respect the privacy, dignity and integrity of the people referred to in his report. The right to privacy is reduced when it comes to public figures, and in particular public officials.

Guidelines:

- In reporting on accidents and crime, it is not allowed to publish names and photographs of victims and perpetrators which clearly identify them. In addition, it is not allowed to publish any information that could indirectly reveal either the identity of the victim or the perpetrator, before the official announcement by the competent authority.
- A journalist must be aware of the power of media, i.e. of potential consequences for the victim or perpetrator if their identity is revealed. Special attention must be paid to the seriousness of possible consequences in the event of an error / wrong assumption in reporting.

- Even if the competent authorities disclose information that falls into the domain of perpetrators' or victims' privacy, the media shall not convey it. Errors made by state authorities do not imply permission for violation of ethical principles of the profession.
- Public figures are aware in advance that their right to privacy is limited to a certain extent, but that does not allow media to breach it without any reason or explanation.
- Data from the private lives of public figures shall be published only if they are of public interest i.e. if they have a direct impact on a large number of people, if they are opposed to the spirit of the function performed by that person, or ideas represented in the public by that person.
- In case of death of public figures, the media must be particularly careful regarding information subsequently associating them with some criminal acts or of discriminatory nature. Even if it comes to information of public importance, the journalist must be aware that the deceased persons are exempt by law from further prosecution.

2. Journalists and editors shall particularly avoid speculation and conveying insufficiently verifiable statements in reporting on accidents and tragedies with casualties or severely affected financial and other interests of citizens.

3. In reporting on events involving personal pain and shock, the journalist shall adapt his questions so that they reflect the spirit of sympathy and discretion.

Guidelines:

- In taking photographs of victims of accidents and crime, photographers and cameramen shall act with respect and compassion.

4. A journalist shall ensure that children are not endangered or exposed to risk due to publication of their names, photographs or a footage showing their appearance, house, the community in which they live or recognizable environment.

Guidelines:

- Representatives of state and public institutions dealing with protection of children are sometimes not aware of the influence of media and their methods of work. Therefore, data provided by them often include disclosure of minors' identity. The journalist must not abuse their benevolence or ignorance. Information provided by doctors, social workers, tutors etc. which directly or indirectly refer to the identity of minors, shall not be published.

VII USE OF HONOURABLE MEANS

1. In collecting information, photographs, documents, audio and video recordings, a journalist shall use only honorable means.

Guidelines:

- The media shall not publish material acquired by using hidden cameras, listening devices, or unauthorized interception.
- 2. Journalists shall not continue asking questions, telephoning, photographing or recording a private person after being asked to give up.**
- 3. The pressure on a private person to give an answer to a question may be continued after the refusal, but only if it is based on the established public interest.**
- 4. In relation to government or any other institutions, a journalist has the right to continue asking questions considered to be of public interest, regardless of whether he has been asked to give up or not.**
- 5. A journalist shall not report on topics of personal interest and on issues where there is a conflict of interest.**

Guidelines:

- A journalist shall not report or express views on blood related people, a spouse, close family or friends.
- A journalist / editor shall not report on issues in which, as a member of administrative, supervisory or board of directors of a company/organization/club and the like, he has a personal, political or commercial interest.
- A journalist shall not be involved in the sector in which a member of his family (close or extended) or a close friend has the power of decision.
- A journalist shall not report on shares or companies whose business success has a direct impact on his personal interests, the interests of his family (close or extended) or of his friends. If such interest exists, the journalist is obliged to notify the editor of it.
- A journalist shall not report on the shares he has traded, or intends to trade.
- A journalist shall not use his position to obtain any information not related to his profession, or gain any material or intangible benefits.
- Active advocacy in a political, electoral and media campaign (political parties / companies, etc.) shall not be performed simultaneously with performing journalistic /editorial work.
- A journalist shall not participate in political campaigns, wear political party symbols or give statements in favour of / on behalf of a political candidate. The political activity of his family members could also cause a real or apparent conflict of interest.
- A journalist shall not perform before a group, if it can create an impression of apparent or actual conflict of interest.
- Journalists and editors shall not simultaneously work for PR, marketing and agencies for lobbying.
- Engagement in counterintelligence, intelligence and other security services is incompatible with the profession of journalism.
- If the media publish an article or a report produced by a representative of a government institution, it is necessary to state both his name and surname and the function he performs.

VIII RECOGNITION OF AUTHORSHIP

1. The media and journalists shall respect and implement applicable legislation on copyright protection. Upon obtaining the permission for reproduction from another source, it is done by respecting authors and stating the source.

Guidelines:

- If you paraphrase someone else's copyrighted work or research, it is necessary to specify the author or the source.
- Photographs must be signed by their author's or owner's name and surname.
- Copyright infringement by unauthorized reprinting, copying photos from print media and downloading images from the Internet is considered a serious violation of the Code.
- Photographs shall not be assigned to other persons, organizations, institutions and the media without the consent of the author.

2. The journalist shall not sign as his articles, drawings, illustrations, photographs, video and sound recordings made by other authors.

Guidelines:

- If the article / report is made by several journalists / associates, it is necessary to specify all persons involved in the creation of this article /report, regardless of the scope of their contributions, their status and hierarchical position in the media company (part-time assistant, freelance journalist and editor).
- Photomontages and processed images shall be clearly separated from documentary photographs. Readers / viewers shall not be deliberately misled.

3. A journalist shall refuse to sign the article, photograph, drawing, illustration, sound or video recording:
- if the editorial, proofreading, or any other intervention has changed its meaning, as well as if the alterations are opposed to the journalist's opinions and beliefs
- if a journalist has a legitimate interest to do so (personal safety, etc.).

Guidelines:

- A journalists shall not be signed if he did not participate in the preparation and creation of the article, photographs, drawings, illustrations, audio and video recordings.
- If the editor's alterations in the headline, the main title and subtitle have changed the meaning and intonation of the article, photographs, drawings, illustrations, audio and video recordings, the journalist is obliged to draw editor's attention to it and ask for corrections. If the editor does not accept the demands of a journalist, he is entitled to require the omission of his

signature, i.e. to withdraw the article, photographs, drawings, illustrations, video and audio recordings.

- 4. The editor shall allow the journalist's claim of exemption from signing the article, photographs, drawings, illustrations, audio or video recordings if a journalist believes that this would jeopardize his security.**

Guidelines:

- The use of pseudonyms should be avoided. If it comes to information of great importance to the public, or information whose disclosure might jeopardize the personal safety of a journalist, the use of pseudonyms is considered to be justified.

- 5. Archival audio and video recordings shall be indicated in an appropriate way.**

Guidelines:

- Photographs accompanying article/report not taken at the event which they illustrate, must be indicated as archival.
- It is necessary to clearly indicate each photo that was not taken at a very event which is being illustrated.

IX PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

- 1. A journalist who adheres to this Code shall enjoy support and protection from his professional associations.**
- 2. A journalist who adheres to professional and ethical standards is entitled to legal and material assistance in the protection from violence, threats, offenses and other negative consequences of working as a journalist.**
- 3. Anyone who feels that a journalist has violated any provision of this Code is entitled to apply to the Court of Honour and Media Council.**

EXAMPLES

ETHNICITY OF SUSPECTED PERPETRATORS OF CRIMINAL ACTS

Journalists sometimes inattentively mention ethnicity of suspected perpetrators of criminal acts. According to national and international ethical codes, this information is published only in cases where the ethnicity is essential for the nature of the offense. This provision is most often violated in relation to Roma people.

In the report on crime committed in Sarajevo, one newspaper wrote: "Just to remind you that the unfortunate old woman was burned alive on 20th January, around 8:30 p.m. in the doorway of the building in Azize Šaćirbegović street, where she had lived. This loathsome and cruel act was committed by three underage Roma teens, M.R. (15), H.R. (16) and O.J. (15)." The situation is similar when it comes to other crimes, "Three juvenile Roma robbed the food store "Padrino" at number 65, Kralja Milutina street yesterday about 2:00 p.m..."

Journalists must be aware of the fact that robberies and cruel murders are committed by members of all nationalities, and that the nature of these crimes is usually completely independent of the ethnicity of the perpetrator.

On the other hand, the ethnicity of victims is also mentioned only if this information is crucial to what the victim has experienced. If, for example, a member of Skinheads has killed or attacked a Roma person, the media shall publish the data on the ideological background of the suspect, as well as information on the nationality of the victim, since it is directly related to the crime.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF THE PERSON REFERRED TO IN THE REPORT

Sexual orientation falls within the domain of privacy, and freedom of sexual orientation is included in fundamental human rights. Sexual orientation of a person referred to in the report is mentioned only in the event that this information is directly connected to the topic of reporting.

On the subject of offenders, information on sexual orientation has the same status as information on ethnicity or other attributes of a suspect or a victim so that it is published only if the offense has been directly caused by sexual orientation.

The crudest violation of this provision occurred in late 2007, when the suspect already known to the public as a bisexual, allegedly killed his mother. The following headlines were recorded on that occasion: "Hot brother killed his mother", "Confession of a gay killer" "Gay monster" and the like.

Journalists must be aware of the fact that heterosexuals also murder their loved ones, as well as homosexuals, bisexuals and transsexuals do. The fact that in this case the suspect is a homosexual or bisexual is not essential for the committed criminal act and is used only for the purpose of "attractiveness" of the report and stereotipization of a particular group.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Even if the data that might reveal the identity of juveniles or victims of crime are not explicitly stated, the media can do this (inadvertently or deliberately) by publishing indirect data that may indicate the person referred to. On the subject of a person unknown to the general public, this does not play a significant role at the national level, but the consequences for the person concerned are far-reaching, especially if it refers to a member of a smaller community.

In a report on family sexual violence, a daily newspaper published initials of the minor girl together with the surname and occupation of her father: "Dr. V. Suljic, a respectable physician from Bor, was arrested yesterday for sexual abuse of his eight-year-old only daughter A.S. during a nine-month period ". Just a few days later, the same newspaper published the full identity of the suspect, in the form of his confession: "Vladimir Suljic, who is suspected of having committed fornication against his nine-year-old daughter, claims that he is not a maniac

and that he loves his daughter." Bearing in mind that this is a small town, that the suspect is a physician (therefore known to his fellow citizens) the right to privacy of the abused girl is completely breached, which will certainly have an impact on her future.

Journalists must be aware of the power of media and the consequences of their methods of reporting, both to the general public and persons referred to in their reports.

ABUSE OF IGNORANCE

Information on persons whose privacy must remain protected are often provided by government bodies, social, medical or other institutions. For example, at its press conferences, in the statements and on the web site, the Ministry of Internal Affairs publishes the names and photographs of suspects, as well as details of committed crimes. In interviews with journalists, doctors, social workers and tutors occasionally disclose information that might, if misused, cause harm to minors and other people. Such "openness", ignorance or benevolence must not be abused, since this can have a direct impact on lives of people referred to in the report.

In 2004, the front pages of several daily newspapers published a photograph of four pedagogically and physically neglected children from a small place in Banat.

Doctors from Zrenjanin hospital, wishing to explain what the children looked like and what they had experienced, used the photos from the hospital archives and gave them to the media. Some media used "black stripes" to hide the eyes of the children (allegedly to protect identity), but it was a very distinctive look of the minors that made their identity absolutely clear to their fellow citizens. On that occasion, violation of code of ethics continued through the publication of other data that should have remained inaccessible to the general public.

VIOLENT CONTENTS

In reporting on the committed violence, the reporter shall take into account the need for public information as well as interests and feelings of victims and directly affected persons. It is not allowed, for the purpose of sensationalism or "attractiveness" of the report, to publish information that is not necessary for understanding the essence of the event, since this can lead to anxiety in victims and their loved ones, as well as in the general public.

The report on a family murder, full of details regarding the committed criminal act, was published by a daily newspaper with the following headline: "A woman cut open and her intestines pulled out." The text about the murder of a minor, stated that the suspect "stepped on the girl's back and tore her liver." Particularly striking is the manner of reporting on the man who was, in 2007, suspected of aggravated murder, and during the investigation informally associated with various sects. Besides breaching the right to the presumption of innocence, and open discrimination against members of smaller religious communities, it involved publishing details of the investigation, unconfirmed information and very unpleasant speculation: "Daniel Jakupsek Žak (26), who killed and then mutilated Luka Opačić (5) and his uncle Vasilije Trbović (26), according to the findings of the police, ate the body parts of his victims and drank their blood!!!"

TITLES

Titles of texts must be in accordance with their contents, regardless of whether the editor / journalist personally agrees with the expressed views of the interviewee and the source or the content of the article itself.

A daily newspaper in Novi Sad published an article on family violence against women, even though research has shown that there are also male victims of violence. Regardless of the fact that it was explicitly stated that women are victims in more than 90 percent of reported cases, the headline said "Ladies slap with poisonous tongue" and the subtitle "Balkan macho men strike and so do women." Neither the headline nor the subtitle matched the content of the text and both of them were discriminating against women, which is against the code of ethics.