

# Avviso

UNESCO World Press Freedom Day / Youth Newsroom / May 4, 2015

## Saying “no” to any pressures



Photo: Mulugeta Getu

**INGA SPRINĢE**, the founder of the Baltic Center for Investigative Journalism “Re:Baltica”, emphasized that the journalists’ courage to say “no” to their editors or media outlets’ owners is important. “Since we are not soldiers at war, we are just journalists, we should say no to someone asking us to do unethical work,” she stated.

Read more on **Page 3**



## Truth Needs Time



By Anne Leppäjärvi, Director for journalism degree program in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), anchor school for WPF Youth News Room 2016

**FACTS ARE NEVER SIMPLE.** In Finland you can win an award merely by presenting facts, in Egypt the same thing may land you in prison. This dawned on me when I had the honour to interview the Australian-Latvian journalist Peter Greste here in Riga at the World Press Freedom Day event.

Mr. Greste was arrested in Egypt while working for the television network "Al Jazeera". He was kept in prison for over a

year during the period of 2013-2015. Greste told me that he still does not know what he did "wrong" - he just reported the facts. On the other hand, the Finnish fact checking service "Faktabaari" won the award for Best Journalism Act for their work during Finland's EU parliament election 2014 in Finland last March. It corrects claims made by politicians and journalists during the elections. "Faktabaari" is operated by a staff of professional journalists volunteering at the organization.

This spring my students worked with "Faktabaari" during the Finnish Parliamentary Elections and it was a great inspiration to them. I asked Mr. Greste for tips on how to protect this inspiration, when they hear stories similar to his. "By keeping in their minds that journalists are needed now more than ever," he stated.

Greste said that the world is getting more complicated, but at the same time the media business is facing a crisis. For example, the number of journalists in Finland has decreased by 1000 in the last couple of years. This means there are a 1000 less people that could explain what is happening in the world to Finns in their native language.

Finland is known for having a high rank in the global Freedom of Press Index. The Act on the Openness of Government Activities is extremely broad, as all official documents are public. The country's constitutional law guarantees for all citizens the right to receive information and hear opinions without censorship and for the journalists the legal right to protect their sources. Thus, the legal frames are safe and sound.

In countries like ours there is still a threat to the freedom of the press. But it is not censorship or violence towards journalists that threatens this value, it is the lack of time. Do journalists have enough time to be able to fully use their legal rights? Do they have the time to check facts covering complex subjects or do the noteworthy news not receive enough attention?

The mission of journalists is to continuously test the legal rights associated with free speech and the freedom of the press. After all, there is always information that someone tries to hide.

It is important to remember that the freedom of the press is never invulnerable. ●

## Situations I never want to experience again



By Vikija Valdmane-Rozenberga, deputy editor-in-chief of UNESCO WPF Youth Newsroom

**AS I WAS REFLECTING** on my relationship with press freedom over 25 years of working in media, I found myself thinking of the times my freedom of expression as a journalist had been limited or threatened.

In the beginning of 1990, I started working for the daily *Padomju Jaunatne* ("Soviet Youth"), soon to be renamed *Latvijas Jaunatne* ("Latvian Youth"). Published by the Komsomol, this paper, along with the Communist Party's mouthpiece *Cīņa* ("The Struggle"), was printed in enormous quantities. 240,000 copy print runs seem unrealistic today, but in the Soviet Union, subsidies from the ruling power rendered printed press very cheap

- almost every family had a subscription.

I first worked as evening editor, which at the time meant maintaining communication between the editorial board on the higher floors of the House of Press, and the printing plant in the basement. My responsibilities included making final corrections, reviewing layouts and performing various other small tasks. Sometimes I had to send articles to the Glavlit for approval and wait for the reviewed articles to be sent back. Glavlit was a Soviet censorship organ - they read articles before publication, searching for antigovernment content. To be fair, the small man in charge of our newspaper was always kind and friendly - his answer was usually "everything is in order". It is, of course, possible that he had simply already had someone else make the desired changes in the day's paper before me.

Episode two. The morning of January 2, 1991. We came to the House of Press for our first day of work after New Year's. At the entrance, we were met by armed men - OMON. The employees were allowed to take their belongings and the House of Press was left empty. The media were supposed to shut down. But they did not - newspapers, including *Jaunatne*, continued being published, "in exile", albeit more rarely and in reduced format.

Episode three. Winds of change were blowing, and the media was no exception. A new paper was created on the basis of *Jaunatne*, called *Labrīt* ("Good Morning") and owned by well-known Latvian entrepreneurs. On a November day in 1993, an article was published with empty white space right in the middle. The space was originally supposed to hold information about the illegally acquired citizenship of the president of a large bank. Two other papers had published the information. The editor blamed the situation on a technical error, but it was eventually revealed that the banker had used his influence to request the removal of the inconvenient information.

Episode four. Ownership change in the daily *Diena*, where I had worked as editor of various departments for a long time. The "messengers" of the new owners - set up as editors or in other leading positions - worked to subtly change content - sometimes through persuasion, at other times with more brutal methods. You should interview this or that person, listen to this opinion, cover that event and so on. It was a painful time, the deliberate erosion of a strong, independent newspaper. I feel good for no longer working there.

These are the situations I would rather never find myself going through again. ●

## A red light shines above media quality

**THE PLETHORA OF NEWS** produced by the social media is a pressing issue in the assessment of the quality of journalism today. This and other issues regarding the quality journalism were brought up at the plenary session "Independent and Quality Media" on the World Press Freedom Day in Latvia.

Yuli Ismartono from Indonesia's Tempo English Magazine stated that only 2 from 10 countries that are in the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations have a free press. These countries are Indonesia and Philippines and they represent only 20 per cent of the free journalism in the mentioned region. This aspect is key to having quality journalism, Ismartono said.

Being the 138th in the World Press Freedom Index from 180 countries in total, Indonesia can freely stand up for the truth and cover corruption or mistakes of the government. Ismartono showed a magazine that covered the illegal trade of animals, a case where government kept the silence, because of some of them being involved. The low press freedom rank could be explained by the killings outside the country, but the situation in the field is relatively good, and the investigative journalism is getting stronger, explained Ismartono.

Moreover, she added that journalism cannot be free or good without democracy. "How can we be free and democratic if there is corruption?" the Indonesian journalist asked. While Ismartono said she could make independent journalism, Musikilu Mojeed, the managing editor for Nigeria's Premium Times, stated that the situation in his country was very bad and that the political power, corruption, as well as underpayment in journalism affected the quality of journalism a lot. This is also reflected in the numbers: Nigeria ranks the 111th in the Press Freedom Index.

Cilla Benko, the director-general of Swedish Radio, has the privilege of working in a country which is listed in the top 5 countries with best press freedom. She notes: "In Sweden we have a system where politicians stay very far from public broadcasters. As long as I've been in office, I've never had any incident with politicians." If it ever happened, she would step down or resign from the radio, she confessed. This radio also has gained the trust of the audience, being one of the top trusted companies in Sweden.

María Teresa Ronderos, the director of the Program on Independent Journalism



Photo: Muligera Getu

from the Open Society Foundation, brought up the subject of media quality and the social networks. She said that these have to be useful tools in helping the mainstream media understand its audience, but also criticize the quantity of trolls operating online.

"Social networks can be good allies with good journalism; they can help us verify the data, for example. But also they've been infiltrated by trolls that had filled them with false comments and they make them look that they're true. They also can be a means for people to express their anger, so it becomes like the wall of a bathroom. Sometimes I think it's the only place in which they can express their feelings. I hope that when this 'new thing' passes, people will start to learn. We have an enormous chance to participate now", Ronderos opined. She also gave a piece of advice to the traditional media: "They don't know how to engage with people, they don't know how to ask them to participate. They continue to preach; that produces anger. If you involve people, people will participate", Ronderos concluded.

Finally, Paul Steiger, the Founding Editor-in-Chief & CEO of USA's well known Pro Publica said that his web model cannot be replicated in other countries. Pro Publica is a web that produces investigative journalism based on the funding they receive from philanthropists. He explained that in some countries, if a group of journalism receives funding to start a new project, they would probably have

to investigate the business groups linked with the donor.

Steiger stated that the opportunity to produce quality journalism exists, since it is easier to publish online now. He also gave a formula for producing quality journalism: accuracy, fairness, integrity and transparency. ●

Sabine Kleinhofa-Prüse,  
Juan Calcena Ramirez, Nan Lwin

### Unfulfilled wishes



Mikhail Zygar,  
editor-in-chief of TV Rain

It's hard to be an independent journalist wherever you are located. Furthermore, regardless of where you are,

you have to fight to be an independent person. It is worthwhile pursuing the goal of remaining this kind of personality. Yet, in some cases, it becomes even harder. In the case of Russia - this is possible. There are many political problems in Russia, Russia's society is very much polarised, The Russian economy is confronted with a long tail of problems and the last 15 years have been very complicated for the Russian political system. Many journalists in Russia really believe in what they do, they understand that they can not fulfill their wishes a hundred percent, but they can live with that. Still, there is a radial of historical and political pressure on the Russian media and that makes the whole picture so much more complicated.



# The media in wrong hands

A free and fair press cannot exist when organised crime and the political class own most media organisations around the world

**THE RESULT** of the "Media Ownership Project", a study conducted by the Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) shows that such an unhealthy pattern of ownership is in place in many countries of the World.

Presenting the findings during the panel discussion on "Media Ownership" at the 2015 World Press Freedom Day, the Director of the OCCRP Check Centre Ms Pavla Holcová revealed that out of the 503 media establishments which have been observed, including newspapers, television, radio and online media outlets in 11 Central European countries about 50 were owned by the organised crime, 127 by politicians, 188 by unknown owners and 138 by independent owners.

Further commenting on the pattern of media ownership in Czech Republic, Ms Holcová explained that whereas one of the country's biggest entrepreneur owns his own media organ, in order to support his business ideology, no one knows the owner of a popular tabloid that most people read. On his part, the panel moderator, Mr Drew Sullivan hinted that the largest daily newspaper in Bosnia and Herzegovina was owned by a politician who is also connected to the organised crime.

In his account the editor-in-chief of *atlaszo.hu*, Mr Tamas Bodoky noted that the "political connectedness" of the media remains the major challenge to threaten the freedom in Hungary: "Political parties are aware of the fact that if they own the media, they will be more successful in elections and this is why politicians strive to own their own media to drive their own agenda."



Discussion on media ownership issue at SSE Riga

He further revealed that presently, only few online media organisations produce critical media content in Hungary, while public television remains a tool of the government.

In the quest for a solution to the media ownership challenge around the world, the panellists ruminated on the critical question "Who should own the media? Is it the state, the politicians or the organised crime?"

The speakers in their separate comments advocated for a change in the pattern of media use among audiences from traditional to online media.

Noting that most online news content is comparatively verifiable, Ms Holcová called for a reconsideration of the general inclinations towards the traditional media: "We still think that the most important media form is the printed one; yes, but not anymore. Now if we are talking about media, we are talking about the internet first, because now the internet is more important than printed news. The current trend is that people are reading the news online first."

She further encouraged online media users to get used to paying for online news, especially through subscription for quality online news, to encourage good reporting.

On his part, Mr Bodosky advised media users to patronise only credible media organisations and also encouraged the media to establish credibility overtime: "The brand is becoming more important, therefore news organisations need to build on their credibility, even in an online form. That is what distinguishes you from other organisations that disseminates propaganda or fake news." He also emphasised that it is important to push forward the idea that people should be informed that it is not just the high and powerful that can own the media, since there is need for a truly pluralistic media environment around the world. "Non-profit or collective ownership is a good solution to the media ownership challenge, for example *The Guardian* is owned that way," he hinted. ●

**Ifeyinwa Aronu, Nayheak Khun**

## Do you think it is important to know who owns the media ?



**Vermeire, Tourist from Belgium:**

Yes, I think it is very important to know who the owner of the media is. Mostly because in that way I can be sure if the

articles are believable or not. But mostly I read independent press.



**Justine, a young mother:**

Knowledge of who owns the media gives me a wider view. I have heard that the oligarchs and the government

controls the content of the news. But I believe that both of them are related.



**Clara, an Erasmus student from the Czech Republic:**

I am not interested in who is the owner of the media. I do believe that the government plays a

big part in what is portrayed in the press. I trust only the news that comes from my country.

# The man who made bin Laden apologize



Photo: Karis Wilsons

**PAKISTANI JOURNALIST HAMID MIR** became famous when he did something that no world leader could for many years. He found the world's most wanted man – Osama bin Laden. Hamid Mir has interviewed bin Laden three times, with the last interview after 9/11.

## THE FIRST MEETING

In 1997, when the journalist went to his first interview with bin Laden he had to go through a security screening. The guards administered a strip search, to which Hamid objected, but he had to be checked anyway. When Mr. Mir was allowed to meet Osama, the leader of Al-Qaeda personally apologized for the security procedure.

"The first impression of Osama was good because he apologized. He was a generous host, too – he always tried to serve the best lunch or dinner possible. But in a few years I learned about his actions in Kenya and elsewhere, and I came to know that this man is trying to express his views through terrorist activities and that he is responsible for the deaths of many innocents. Then I started to criticize him," says Mr. Mir.

## TOUGH QUESTIONS

Hamid Mir gives all the credit for getting the last interview with the world's most wanted man to Larry King, because he criticized bin Laden on Larry King's show. "He cannot convince a person like me," said the Pakistani journalist. After the interview, people from Al-Qaeda contacted Mr. Mir and told him: "The chief wants to see you and this time he will convince you!"

Before meeting bin Laden for the third time, Hamid had to face a three-hour drive blindfolded, he was dropped at a safehouse where he spent the next two days. There he had to take medicine to lose his bodily fluids. He had to put a special kind of gel on his skin and take several hot baths. "After the pills I had to go to the bathroom every five minutes! That was when I understood they were suspecting that I had chemicals in my body, allowing the Americans to track my location. They were very suspicious," he says.

At the interview, the journalist did not shy away from tough questions and even made bin Laden admit that not every American is bad and must be killed. "Af-

“

Hamid Mir: He was a interesting person – he had two completely different sides

ter the interview, they gave me negatives of the pictures, but not the video cassette. I asked for it but they refused to give it to me, saying that it was too dangerous – that they would drop the cassette off at my office in Pakistan."

## FACING PRESSURE

Osama was the world's most wanted man for a reason – everybody wanted to find him! So it would have been odd if nobody had asked the journalist where bin Laden was. The US Secretary of State Colin Powell asked Hamid after the interview: "Do you know where he is?" The same question was asked by Tony Blair a few years later. "But they were not asking the question seriously, they were smiling, it was more like a taunt," says the journalist.

But Pakistani security services were not smiling at all. After the interview, the government of Pakistan together with local security services put the journalist under a lot of pressure. They tried to find out where bin Laden is. The security services threatened that they would take action against the journalist, but he kept repeating: "I don't know where he is – I was blindfolded. And you cannot take any action against me, I never broke any laws – I had my passport, I had my visa. I only did my job."

Hamid points out that a good journalist is an honest journalist: "Then everyone will trust you. If you become an informer for someone or become a tool in the hands of state, then you're no longer a journalist."

## ATTACKED FROM BOTH SIDES

Pakistani media are facing a lot of pressure and heavy censorship from security agencies and extremist groups. Journal-

ists from Pakistan are caught in the crossfire – under attack from both sides.

"Over the last few years we have lost a lot of journalists in Pakistan. I faced an assassination attempt last year – I was hit by six bullets, two of which are still in my body," tells Mr. Mir. The Prime Minister of Pakistan established a high-power investigation: "They said that the inquiry would be concluded in three weeks' time." A year has passed and the inquiry is still in progress. Before the attack, Hamid was threatened by security services not to cover the human rights violations. Before that, he had had a stroke of luck as the bomb placed under his car by Taliban was defused in time. "I am facing threats not only from the extremists, but from the security agencies as well, and I'm not the only one facing them." Hamid started his career in journalism 27 years ago when Pakistan was ruled by a military dictator. Now Pakistan is a democracy, but Hamid maintains that censorship has become even worse than 27 years ago. "Despite all these pressures, journalists in Pakistan are committed to their profession. We are still there and we will not surrender".

## GENDER EQUALITY

Hamid is sure that there is no gender equality in journalism in Pakistan, because it is very difficult for females to work in conflict areas. But he is sure that the situation of female journalists will improve over the coming years.

Hamid is actually one of the first to give female journalists important roles in Pakistan. While working as the editor of a newspaper, he made an experiment by giving a crime-beat to a female reporter, because, according to him, "everyone in Pakistan is aware that journalism is very dangerous life-threatening profession. And most men are cowards, they do not want to become journalists, but the females are braver! I think that after 5 – 10 years, journalism and politics in Pakistan will be dominated by women. If you want to save Pakistan – you have to give it to the women! No gender balance!" ●

**Roberts Steinbergs**



# There is nothing better than seeing it yourself

## LATVIAN JOURNALIST ATIS KLIMOVICS

is one of the most experienced journalists in Latvia when it comes to reporting from conflicted areas and telling about war, because he has been going to the conflict zones for 20 years. Although he has had the chance to work for various media through the years, now he works independently. Atis Klimovics has already participated in the making of Latvian documentaries „Four Time Every One” and „Gauja” but this month he is returning to Ukraine for two weeks to finish the hour long documentary about 4 Latvians who are helping Ukraine. He could be called the fifth one.

### In how many countries have you been?

About 40. In many repeatedly, because these visits are not a coincidence but a well-considered choice. These are attempts to follow what is changing through years and how.

### Which are the most frequent destinations for conflict zone journalists?

It changes depending on the conflict zone itself. Some time ago we lived thinking that conflict zones are something very distant from Latvia and it was like that – Asia, Afghanistan, everlasting conflict in Iraq, the war of „Hezbollah” and Israel. Now we see that we are living in a different reality and there is no need to go so far away.

### Are there countries you would not recommend to visit even for the most skilled journalists?

I do not want to name such a country, I just think that in every visit you have to prepare properly, you must know where you are going and which safety measures need to be taken. Of course, you need to go there, collect the material and come back. Like a soldier – he has to survive the battle, get the job done and remain safe and sound, same with a journalist. There are journalists who are able to go there and they have to do it.

### How do journalists prepare, are there any specific courses?

In bigger countries – yes, there are different short trainings how to behave if you meet armed men, soldiers in their positions. These are conflict zones, soldiers are tense and you need to know how to behave to not get an accidental bullet. Ukraine has its rules, it was different while ago in Caucasus just as it is different in Africa. There is always a local



“  
Atis Klimovics:  
Years are passing and  
readers appreciate that  
the journalist isn't lying

specificity and you have to consider it.  
**What is the most dangerous situation you have been in?**

Journalists are not soldiers, I am not a soldier and have not participated in a battle, but there was something few months ago – in Schastye, a suburb of Lugansk, is a thermal power plant that provides electricity to the district of Lugansk. We had just walked in when a projec-

tile from „Grad” fell down about 200 meters away. We were told to run to the basement. When we returned after about an hour, we saw that a mine also had fallen on the road when we had been driving.

### Knowing that you cannot predict what is going to happen – what is the motivation for going to those places?

Actually there is a lot of motivation. First, it is a journalistic motivation, there is nothing better than seeing it yourself, and being there, to tell about it with greater responsibility here in Latvia. Second, in the case of Ukraine I have been going there for 20 years, I can compare and know enough about what is happening there. Third, this is a very global war, event and news, it is a direct incentive. Right now I am an independent journalist but that doesn't change my profession and specialization. If not Ukraine, I would be working on a similar project – Syria or something else. Right now, of course, Ukraine cancels every other direction, because it is the most important for Latvia. Fourth, it is the human factor. We must help Ukrainians at least with our presence.  
**Is it easy to report without stereotypes and to be neutral and objective? Neutrality shouldn't be exaggerated, but that doesn't mean that a journalist may write that he saw crows when he actually has seen pigeons. You can't do that even if you'd want to. Journalist is a human, but – a professional. He is not a**



**tractor driver or a road engineer who could afford not to know something about Ukraine, he must understand the basics, must be able to evaluate which country has invaded which. Can't just look at it without understanding, then you should have a different job.**

Strictly hold on to this – if you are writing a comment, then everyone knows these are your thoughts. If you are writing news, then a reader sees and relies on it, it is on your conscience. Years are passing and readers appreciate that the journalist isn't lying. So don't lie.

Photographs by Atis Klimovics, taken across hotspots in the Caucasus

### How the work of journalists is financed?

In normal circumstances in a free country it is up to the media depending on what they are doing, what are their interests, where do they send journalists and what they want to see. Of course, finances are fundamental, but it is not always the main thing. We don't actually understand what is the meaning of this all. The example of Ukraine and the hybrid war just proves that our journalists need to go there massively, give much information, news and stories about what is in Ukraine. Latvia should encourage doing that, going into the world more, specializing, knowing history and many other subjects. Nothing is unreachable. If you are interested in something and specialize, you can achieve very good results. Technical resources now allow journalists to gain pretty much.

### Are there times when media itself does not offer to go, but the journalist finances the trip himself?

Of course. Journalists use to prepare materials for various media, it is absolutely normal.

### How the working styles of big and small media companies differ?

Mostly doesn't differ. One example – Kuwait in year 2003. We arrive with the last plane, because in the next day war starts and nobody could get there anymore. We have as much money as we have, we live half hour ride further than Portuguese journalists. They live closer to the Ministry of foreign affairs where the press conferences happen, that is the only difference. From the perspective of technicians – they need to rent a car to move around, we need to rent a car. When the Internet age hadn't begun, it was problematic to send story to the Latvian television, because you needed to pay 600 or 800 lats for sending one 2-3 minutes long story. European Broadcast Corporation was present in all conflicts with their huge montage, satellite and sending but it was expensive and it was used rarely. Now the operator and journalist can edit and send from their own computer at the same day – and at the same day Latvia sees it. We work similarly. Of course, money has its value and there must be a certain amount of it, in situations when it is not safe, BBC hires very good guides and they pay for that very well. Ukraine isn't so far and not with such prices, we can work there.

### What are the minimal expenses for a trip?

To Ukraine for a few weeks thousand euros would be enough, it is not an expensive land.

### Is there something that endangers journalists except the exact conflict?

There are situations when journalists are seen as targets as well and somebody tries to kidnap them. It is not an exact conflict but you can be taken hostage, it is like that in Iraq and Afghanistan. Safety can be respected. In 2004 I lived in a small hotel in Baghdad, didn't give them my passport and told that I am from Turkey. Didn't show off needlessly. On the other hand, I was walking with a Turkish man through the crowded streets of Baghdad, armored men could come to me and then it wouldn't be good.

### Do journalistic organizations which fight for the freedom of press have any influence?

What influence can there be in Russia? How will you influence Taliban, Islamic State? There is a point in everything, but how much can you influence authoritative countries? It is good that you fight for your people, point out, shout and accent something. In Latvia there is no need for those organizations to be active yet. Of course, you can do something by making noise. ●



# Undervalued media literacy

What makes an active civic society?

**MANY JOURNALISTS** will say that being well informed is the key. Nowadays, when a question arises, most of you will turn to the Internet and Google. But the Internet is so huge and full of information that it is hard to know what is the truth and what is complete rubbish.

For the most part media and information literacy concepts are applied to children from kindergarten to the last year of school. The term itself suggests that a person is both able to use various technical devices to access and create information as well as critically assess it.

The results of a study made by Nanyang Technological University at Singapore about media literacy and youth shows that students of the age 13 and up are more using new media for entertainment and communication purposes. UNESCO have created five media literacy skills: access and selection of sources, critical reading, expression and production, appropriation and participation. Most concerns talk about the lack of critical reading of media; however, students are also informed about the online dangers and legal guidelines.

Media and information literacy concepts become even more important when looking at statistics about children and technology. For example a recent study of *Pew Research Centre* shows that 92% of children and youth spend some time at the Internet at least once a day. 24% of them said that they are constantly online.

It is important to start to educate children about media literacy to improve its quality. The principal research associate of UNESCO-UNEVOC, Tapio Varis, says that Finland already has media literacy education in schools. It isn't a separate subject, but is included in other subjects such as native language. Even local media are often taking part in educating not only children, but teachers too. "Media literacy is the outcome of media education, so media education actually leads to media literacy" Tapio Varis admits.

One of the topics discussed at the World Press Freedom Days (WPFDD) in Riga is the informational war between Russia and the Western world and how to fight it. Tapio Varis regards that for now in sessions people have acknowledged that media literacy is the best solution to informational war and propaganda, yet he remarks that this is "a military concept", but "media literacy is more than military or power". Media literacy



does deal with propaganda, but it also deals with everyday things, for example, innocent entertainment.

"It is counteraction. I am defending media literacy as a civil way, it's not a military way. I am not preparing people to be soldiers. I am preparing them to be active, critical citizens, citizens who are able to question and see beyond propaganda," Varis says.

During the session about media literacy speakers discussed various forms of media literacy and came to a conclusion that media and information literacy isn't a thing to put in one box, because it's made of various literacies - digital, information, critical and many others.

Near the end Mihaela Banek Zorica, professor at the University of Zagreb in Croatia, refers to "The Lord of The Rings" book saying that "there is no ring to rule

## Looking forward to protect journalists' rights

**FOR CHRISTIANE AMANPOUR**, becoming the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Freedom of Expression and Journalist Safety was not the beginning of her work in advocacy for the freedom of expression. It was an opportunity to expand dec-

ades-long efforts to defend the rights of her colleagues working in journalism around the world.

"I've constantly supported and spoken out publicly about the need for press freedom. But the UNESCO goodwill ambassador job is something that has the behest of the international community in a forum that is accepted by the rest of the international community," said Amanpour.

An award-winning journalist and the host of a daily global news program on CNN, Amanpour serves on the boards of organizations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists and the International Women's Media Foundation.

them all", summing up the whole session. Since it's such a difficult concept, a thing everyone sees very differently maybe the best way isn't to make a separate subject of it, but integrate it into the whole education system.

"It is very important from a democratic perspective to learn how you can use media and to understand what propaganda is", says Ulla Carlsson, professor Chair of the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

"Journalists have to be aware of the whole spectrum of life," Tapio Varis says when asked about what journalists can do about media literacy. They have to be flexible and compassionate, never stop evolving and keep their values high. ●

Lāsma Gaile, Anna Bērziņa

# Censorship against self-regulation

"REGULATING MEDIA only by law isn't enough, there should be self-regulation in all media," claims Anda Rožukalne, Chair of the Latvian Association of Journalists and Head of the Communication Studies Department in Riga Stradins University, during the discussion about media regulation, self-regulation and professional standards. She agrees that there's no need to reinvent the wheel while discussing the role of self-regulation in the media. During the discussion, which took place in the National Library of Latvia, the main issue constituted the regulations between media and laws produced by the State.

Anda Rožukalne also posed a rhetorical question: "Who owns the media?" In her opinion it is necessary to know who owns each newspaper or magazine, as well as the television and radio channels. The question is not only about the regulations issued by the media law. She also highlighted the importance of media literacy and ethics in order to achieve society's recognition of professional journalism, which also requires the growth of society's, as well as journalism's competences, as Anda pointed out.

The role of ethics in self-regulation was highlighted not only by Anda Rožukalne, but also by Yahia Shukkeir, journalist and consultant in Jordan. "It's also a question about our mentality, how

She began her work as a Goodwill Ambassador immediately. After receiving the honor at a UNESCO ceremony in Paris, her speech called for the release of imprisoned journalists around the world – a goal, among many others, that she stressed as a priority for her ambassadorship.

"What I would like to do with this particular position is to explore a legal situation of much more rigorous consequences and accountability for all government, non-government, and non-state actors who deliberately murder, injure, jail, torture or otherwise hinder the work of journalists," she said.

According to a study released by CPJ,

“

How ready are we to change our thinking about the ethics?

ready we are to make some changes in the media, change our thinking about the ethics," said Yahia Shukkeir and also added that the new media has changed the media game rules.

Mogens Blicher Bjerregard, the President of the European Federation of Journalists and the Danish Union of Journalists, stated that the main driver that promotes self-regulation as a priority is the demanding culture itself. He continues by saying that the speed with which the news is spreading these days encourages the investigative journalism, determining, as he claims, the development of democracy.

As Mogens stressed, the media field professionals are the ones who are responsible for being controlled by someone else. As he explained "journalists need to be careful about what they reveal on the news and how they do it" and he mentions that: "If there is going to be a lack of self-

journalists are more at risk for deliberate causes of death than the rest of the population. This skew, said Amanpour, is a "bad situation" that the United Nations can play a role in rectifying.

Though she mentioned Iran, Uganda, and other nations as places of concern for press freedom and the rights of journalists, Amanpour said that all nations should be held accountable for press freedom violations – even those that have press freedom written into their constitutions.

"This isn't a target one country or target a group of countries type of job ... It's definitely a much more global, a much more universal situation. Journalists need



regulation, it is the state who will come and regulate».

At the same time, he proposed several options to actually ensure the development of the self-regulation: «It's an issue that is relevant to all the media - we must be better, cooperate, it is very, very important.» As he claims, the media itself undertook the initiative to be more visible, competent, which means the increase of responsibility and investigation: «Self-regulation is the way in which democracy and the freedom of speech work. It looks interesting, but it is the only way to regulate the media by ourselves, not through the state.»

Finally, Wolfgang Mayer concludes that indeed the new media acknowledges the possibilities for information distribution, but also challenges the cause for regulation. Each part of the World requires its own approach and the time for this issue's importance to increase has come. Moreover, as Wolfgang emphasizes, this issue is becoming more and more salient in the journalism Worldwide. Mogens Blicher Bjerregård also noticed that there are only two ways to go: "Self-regulation or state regulations. But the latter means censorship against the freedom of speech." ●

Krista Alksne, Kristīne Lemberga

their rights protected, and that's what I'm here to do."

That is an uphill struggle, she acknowledged, especially with the lack of accountability and action taken by countries to investigate crimes against journalists. There is no "silver bullet" to ensure the safety of journalists, she said. But she believes it to be within the realm of possibility.

"As a Goodwill Ambassador, and on this World Press Freedom Day, I strongly believe that's what we should be lobbying for and what I think of things that would flow from that. Impunity can be ended. Impunity can be ended," she said. ●

Dahlia Bazzaz



# Making media from scratch

There are two kinds of media professionals – those who work in existing media outlets and those who create new ones. We met two women who chose to be the latter

## Stories that build community

**WHAT CAN YOU DO** with an iPhone? Post a tweet, call your friends or give it to a reporter and set up a media company. That is how the Rappler was founded – starting small, combining experience with innovation and extraordinary solutions, now being a successful player in the media field.

Maria Ressa from the Philippines is the CEO and the executive editor of Rappler – a social media news site based in the Philippines, which was started with 12 people 3 years ago, but now gathers a staff of 100 people. „A camera costs 35 000 dollars, the iPhone is for free. So we built a metal case around it and gave it to one person in the team,” stated Ressa, who had previously worked at CNN for 20 years. The inexpensive innovation turned out to be very successful, allowing for the content to be uploaded right away – that way often beating the traditional companies. Later Rappler used a similar approach when building a mobile



Photo: Kariis Mifson

“  
Maria Ressa:  
Social network are  
physically your family  
and friends

media center – a van – out of scratch, spending about 100 000 dollars instead of a million.

„Social network are physically your family and friends. And what is the social media? Your family and friends on steroids,” Ressa compared, explaining that the social media takes away the boundaries of time and space. She calls the tweets and posts “the top of the iceberg”,

pointing out that emotions are the thing that is spreading in the media very fast. Based on that, Rappler has a special feature – a mood meter – where readers choose how the article has made them feel. Anger spreads the fastest, admitted the journalist.

Rappler does investigative journalism and pays a lot of attention to crowdsourcing, building a network that helps the media. Ressa has researched the activity on social media mapping the spreading of tweets about terrorism, elections and other topics, and showing how different the engagement can be and that the community is always the most powerful one in media as well: “Your stories will build community. Stories are a pebble we throw that creates the ripple that then reaches your community.” ●

Sabine Kleinhofa-Prüse

# Topography of Hate Speech

**WORDS AND IMAGES** are not acts of hatred. There is no universal right to become offended.

Still, words and images are often used as a call to action, a demand to harm. Hate speech can even be used invertedly as a reason for unreasonable, unproportioned counter measures or government censorship.

The problem with hate speech is that we do not know what hate speech is. Although we can agree that hate speech incites people to hate other people and incite violence towards them, the term is

“  
Can we stop being  
victims of hate speech?

dependent on cultural interpretations and societal situations.

There are some clear cut cases. The Ruandan genocide, Charlie Hebdo. Some twenty years between the events, mass

media used to make them happen.

The internet is the brewing ground of what could flippantly be called social hate speech: random threats in newspapers' and blogs' comment sections, expressing heated emotions. Then there is the hate speech that is a call to action, the call to bodily threaten, to rape and murder, used by government and religious authorities against journalists and citizens to suppress their freedom of expression.

Can we stop being victims of hate speech?

## News demand for busy people

**AFTER 10 YEARS** of working as a journalist for one of the leading French newspaper “Le Figaro”, covering media, technology, innovation and business, Marie-Catherine Beuth launched a mobile news service that tailors content to the user's available time and attention. It is called “News On Demand” or, in short, NOD.

The idea to make this start-up project was inspired because of the increasing amount of information that people have to deal with every day. “It felt like the information was constantly increasing and we did not feel better informed, because we do not always have the time to read all those things,” comments the founder of the app.

“For example, if you did not catch the news for 3 days, we're going to provide you with the main three events of every day in five minutes,” says Marie-Catherine Beuth. To every article there is a time stamp added, and how long it will take to read it, so the user can choose how much time he/she would like to spend on each essential story. The mobile app was launched only the last fall and since then it has become quite popular among people who highly value their time. “We've had an incredible user feedback so far. They are writing that they have got more news in one week than in the past year, and that's a very interesting behavior,” accents the founder of the app. Marie-Catherine Beuth says that it was interesting to analyze the audience and their news usage habits, because at first they thought that people would only read the headlines and move on to other stories, but the tendency is that people actually consider the time for every article and actually read it.



NOD is not making their own stories, but providing people with articles that are made by on-line newspapers, so their role is to transfer people to the article on a news platform on the Internet, if the person finds it relevant. Every news piece has a teaser, so the app user can choose to “swipe” in to the right – that means that he or she find it interesting and important – or to the left – that means that the information is not very relevant to the user. After a period of time, the application “learns” what the user likes and provides him or her with that kind of information, so it becomes



“  
Marie-Catherine  
Beuth:  
We've had an  
incredible user  
feedback so far

the best individual news provider.

The app is meant for people who are very busy and have other priorities, but still want to be informed about what is happening around the world. “For example, there are young working mothers, or smart professionals, that need to know what is going on around the world because they work and talk about things with their friends, but they also have to take care of their family, so they do not have the time to read a newspaper for an hour every morning and so on,” states the M. C. Beuth. She is confident that the audience, who is busy, but also wants to be up to date with the important news, will not always find all the relevant information on Facebook for example, so they will want to find a short, but relevant background information, and NOD is the provider of it in this case. ●

Anna Üdre

As journalists, we have responsibility to the facts, the truth. At the same time, it is a paramount ethical guideline of journalism not to harm the people whose interests we seek to protect. This is not a dilemma that it easily solved, but one which constantly brews conflict that sometimes incites hate speech.

Some of the solutions offered have focused on the real caused damage. It is hate speech if the consequences are dire. Intentions cannot be measured, the effects of defamation can be.

Some of the solutions offered have fo-

cused on education. By training journalists, media organizations, officials and the police as well as the public, it is possible to recognize and counter hate speech and its effects.

Some of the solutions have focused on the hate speakers. By not giving a platform or publicity to hatemongers, hate speech and its effects may be diminished. There is a line between giving the audience enough information and reveling on the emotional, shocking stories.

Then there is dialogue, communication. Hate can only brew from ignorance,

the fear of the unknown, the fear for the status quo. To meet in a safe environment, to empathize, the share your stories is the first step towards an understanding.

Perhaps there is not only one solution to end hate speech. Were the complex topography of the problem explored, efficient methods could be found to target each individual type of hate. Some of these analyses as well as eradication methods are already in use in Africa, Asia, Europe, America and Australia. ●

Taika Dahlbom

## Twitterisms



**Edgars Rinkēvičs** @edgarsrink-evics

Journalist safety, freedom of expression online and offline, women in media = main themes of #WPF2015 in #Latvia



**Mark Nelson** @MarkNelsonCIMA

Info war on neighbors obscures cost for few remaining independent Russian media--6 Novaya Gazeta reporters killed since 2001 #WPF2015



**Sanita Jemberga** @jemberga

Galina Timchenko from @meduzaproject in WPF2015: Soviet Union is here, with one change--now we have Orthodox Church instead of Communist Party



**Peter Greste** @PeterGreste

World Press Freedom lowest since records began. Freedom House says only 1 in 7 people world wide live with truly free press. #WPF2015



**Lekan Otufodunrin** @lotufodunrin

There is need for better reporting based on the principles of truth, fairness, objectivity #WPF2015 @Youth\_Newsroom @davidblawal



**José Peralta** @Jose3v3

Amazing panel at #WPF2015 conference. The best place to be today as a journalist. @Youth\_Newsroom



**Maria Ressa** @maria\_ressa

"You cannot be a good journalist if you're frightened, economically, politically, or for your life." @WPF2015



**Nellija Ločmele** @NellijaL

Journalism can thrive by telling great stories that make one feel more at home in this changing world. Be relevant! #WPF2015 #KeepSpeechFree

# Photo glimpses



Photo - Kārlis Miksons, Mulugeta Getu



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



World Press Freedom Day



Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

EU2015.LV



Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia



LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE ANNO 1919 UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA



UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



NET MED YOUTH NETWORKS OF MEDITERRANEAN YOUTH



STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS SSE RIGA



EUROPEAN UNION



SWEDEN

### Participants of UNESCO World Press Freedom Day Youth Newsroom

Afef Grimil  
Akram Abdel Rahman  
Aku Häyrynen  
Anna Bērziņa  
Anna Üdre  
Angela Reyes  
Carla Abi Chahla

David Lawal  
Eemeli Martti  
Emil Johansson  
Francisca Aronu  
Janne Puumalainen  
Juan Calcena Ramirez  
Juuso Parviainen  
Kārlis Miksons  
Krista Alksne  
Kristīne Lemberga  
Lāsma Gaile

Luca Lönnfors  
Madara Joņina  
Mulugeta Getu  
Nan Lwin  
Nauris Lukševics  
Nayheak Khun  
Ofir Gateno  
Reem Katami  
Riikka Kajander  
Roberts Šteinbergs  
Sabīne Kleinhofa-Prüse

Tommi Kolehmainen  
Zane Zamberga

### Editors

Vita Dreijere – Editor-in-chief  
Vikija Valdmane-Rozenberga – Deputy Editor-in-chief  
Roberts Viksne – Multimedia Editor  
Laura Ardava – Latvian Editor  
Dace Eglīte – Layout editor