

# Women in media

## The Joint Declaration of Female Journalists from Kosovo

With the belief that the *truth is uncompromisable*;

With full ethical and professional responsibility, bearing in mind the working environment in the media in Kosovo and the position of women in those media;

Conscious of the extent to which *the unresponsiveness of institutions and political representatives* make our reporting more difficult and limits its quality;

Concerned over various aspects of *security endangerment*, whether due to open threats, blackmail and attacks by individuals or because of the sensitive inter-ethnic relations in different parts of Kosovo;

Aware of the fact that, despite the excellent representation of women in media, there is still *a perception of unequal representation of women in the leading positions in media*;

Aware that there are political representatives who differently interpret current topics, including the most sensitive ones, thus additionally antagonizing the public - most often against another ethnic community, or against facts;

Prepared for solidarity;

**We, the undersigned female journalists, will strive to:**

### Access to information and interlocutors

1. Request that institutions respect legal obligations arising from laws and by-laws pertaining to access to information of public interest;
2. Use all legal possibilities to file complaints in case of the institutional silence or failure to comply with language rights;
3. Examine the technical possibilities for establishing a common database of official data collected from various institutions;
4. Organize multimedia campaigns as a call to institutions and citizens for more open communication with the media;

5. Keep records of submitted requests and received responses and publish a list of requests and questions to which we did not receive an answer to illustrate the problem of institutional silence;
6. Report more frequently on people's lives, professions, crafts, culture, history and heritage, entertainment and positive examples of interethnic relations;
7. Learn languages of other ethnic groups;

### Security

8. Tell the stories of murdered and missing journalists and media workers from Kosovo and in Kosovo;
9. Emphasize the necessity of forming a Commission to investigate the cases of murdered and missing journalists and media workers at every opportunity;
10. Insist on full transparency in the process of forming the Commission to investigate the case of murdered and missing journalists and media workers;
11. Demand that attacks on journalists while performing journalistic tasks are investigated *ex officio* by the competent institutions;
12. Share information about threats or pressures we are experiencing and publically show solidarity with our colleagues, both male and female, who are victims of inconveniences or attacks because of their reporting;
13. Request a timely and professional response by competent institutions, associations of journalists, CSOs and international organizations in case of pressures, verbal and physical attacks on journalists;
14. Request that individual journalists and associations be held accountable for the public statements that may affect the safety of journalists and media workers;
15. Request that journalistic associations exchange information and intensify cooperation in order to improve the position of journalists and media workers in Kosovo;

### Women in media

16. Involve and affirm more female experts, analysts, commentators, and politicians in reporting;
17. Point to gender-based inappropriate comments, patterns of behavior or disrespect by interlocutors;
18. Request journalists' associations to specifically record cases of gender-based discrimination within the media with an emphasis on discrimination in employment and violation of gender rights;
19. Analyze the representation of women in leading positions in the media in Kosovo;

20. Inspire young women in the media to be leaders in their professions and contribute to the development of society by our personal example and dedication;

#### Reporting on crimes and security incidents

21. Advocate for the possibility of creating a body with the aim of monitoring and reporting on topics related to victims during the conflict and in the post-conflict period, whose members would be journalists, legal experts and human rights activists from all ethnic communities;
22. Report on crimes in a factual manner, avoiding phrases that point to the collective responsibility of a group and instead underline the individual responsibility of the perpetrator whenever it is possible and proven;
23. Point to the tendentious statements of political actors on war crimes and misuse of this information for political purposes;
24. Demand an increase in transparency in the work and proactive communication by the Department for War Crimes within the Special Prosecutor's Office, the Special Prosecutor's Office in the Hague, and the future War Crimes Council of the Basic Court in Pristina and the Special Court in the Hague;
25. Consider the possibility of developing an easily searchable calendar of crimes against civilians, as well as a database on those convicted for crimes in Kosovo – for the sake of faster and better reporting - in cooperation with organizations dealing with human rights and transitional justice, which possess the most complete data on victims of the Kosovo war;
26. Avoid underlining the ethnicity of the participants in the title or the introductory part of the text in cases where there are no reliable indicators that a security incident occurred due to the ethnicity of the participants;
27. Uphold the presumption of innocence when reporting on active trials;
28. Filter out offensive comments on social networks and websites.

In Budva,

May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

This Declaration was written as part of the activities supported by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and implemented by the NGO Centre for Communities Development, which manages the KoSSev portal.