[BG] Media Complaints Council Established

IRIS 2005-5:1/7

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On 1April 2005 the major Bulgarian newspapers, public and private broadcasters, as well as private and public news agencies gathered to establish a joint Media Complaints Council to oversee the implementation of the Code of Ethics (see IRIS 2005-1: 9). The legal form of this new organisation will be a foundation with a board of seven persons: four of them representing the employers' organizations (ABBRO and UPB), and the other three representing journalists' organizations. To ensure that decisions are not taken with respect to unilateral interests, the voting majority required will be a qualified majority, and for some cases unanimous agreements will be sought.

Two commissions will be formed immediately: a press commission and an electronic media commission, each consisting of 12 members. The composition of the commissions will be as follows: members will be 4 representatives of employers, nominated by the UPB and ABBRO respectively for each of the commissions, 4 representatives of the journalists, nominated by special national assemblies of journalists from print and electronic media respectively, and 4 persons, involved in human rights, media and other issues of public interest selected in a complex procedure. Two of them will be proposed by the employers' organisations and approved by the journalists, and the other two vice-versa.

The start-up costs of the Council will be covered by the PHARE programme of the European Union. The Council should be fully operational by September 2005.

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