# [AT] Agreement to Revive Press Council

**IRIS 2008-8:1/7**

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For four decades, the non-governmental *Presserat* (Press Council) monitored compliance with journalistic standards in Austrian newspapers. In 2002, the *Verband Österreichischer Zeitungen* (Association of Austrian Newspapers - VÖZ) withdrew because it felt the Press Council had too much influence. Since then, the Press Council, although legally still in existence, has been inactive.

In July 2008, the *Gewerkschaft der Privatangestellten Druck, Journalismus, Papier* (Journalists' Union), the VÖZ and the *Verein der Chefredakteure* (Editors' Association) reached a fundamental agreement. The *Österreichische Zeitschriften- und Fachmedienverband* (Austrian Association of Newspapers and Specialist Media), the Presseclub Concordia and the *Verband der Regionalmedien Österreichs* (Association of Austrian Regional Media) are to be invited to become members of the Press Council's support body from the outset. It is hoped that the Press Council’s decisions will be accepted by all newspapers, including free ones.

The plan is to set up two decision-making bodies, each with six members and each chaired by a lawyer. The legal significance of the Press Council’s decisions will be increased.

The system for checking editorial content through a self-monitoring process operated by the Press Council will be supplemented by ombudspersons responsible for dealing with simple complaints from readers.

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