EBU: Western Balkan public service media sign MOU for future cooperation

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After six months of intensive work, the new EU-funded “Technical Assistance to Public Service Media in the Western Balkans” project was launched with a two-day conference on 26 June 2018.

The project aims to strengthen the independence of public service broadcasters in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and enhance their profile as public services. It hopes to achieve this through the development of suitable measures for improved funding models, the definition and implementation of journalistic standards and guidelines, and regional exchange in the fields of investigative journalism and the development of a shared digitised archive platform. During the conference, representatives of six public service media organisations - Radio Televizioni Shqiptar (RTVSH) from Albania, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Radio Television (BHRT) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radio Televizioni i Kosovës (RTK) from Kosovo, Makedonska Radio-Televizija (MKRTV) from Macedonia, Radio Televizija Crne Gore (RTCG) from Montenegro and Radiotelevizija Srbije (RTS) from Serbia - demonstrated their support by signing a memorandum of understanding.

The conference was also attended by representatives of international organisations, high-ranking officials, political decision-makers and representatives of broadcasting regulators from the countries concerned.

With EUR 1.5 million of EU funding from the “IPA II - Civil Society Facility and Media Programme 2016-2017”, the project will run for two years. The European Commission’s programme manager, Karl Giancinti, said the European Union hoped the project would strengthen public service media and democratisation in the countries concerned. The General Director of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Noel Curran, said that this cooperation could bring about real change and have a positive impact on media and democracy throughout the region.

The project will be implemented by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), together with the EBU, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), the Austrian public broadcaster (ORF) and the Eurovision Regional News Exchange for South East Europe (ERNO).

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