

International Federation of Journalists

Media and Tolerance

Background Document

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IFJ, 266 rue Royale, 1210 Brussels
Telephone: 32-2 223 2265 Telefax: 32-2 219 2976

1. Introduction

The role of media in democratic society is a constant source of debate and controversy particularly regarding journalistic performance on issues of racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

In Europe, where ethnic conflict, racial strife and terrorism linked to extreme nationalism have been a feature of political life for most of the century, opposition to racism is deeply embedded in society. There is an extensive legal framework against racial intolerance and the undemocratic and divisive politics upon which it thrives.

Against this background, the use of media for political propaganda has prompted renewed discussion about how best to prevent media becoming weapons of intolerance. The debate has largely turned upon whether it is better to rely on legal instruments or mechanisms of self-regulation to control media content.

The outbreak of war in 1992 in the Balkans and the devastating indictment of the role of media by former Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki in his report on the conflict to the United Nations, demonstrates, however, that laws, codes and good intentions of policymakers since are of little consequence in the face of ruthless political leaders bent upon waging war.

It is not unusual in war to find mass media recruited to support political objectives, often at the expense of professional credibility. Indeed, this holds true for almost all wars. The conflicts in the Gulf and the Falkland Islands, for instance, raised serious doubts among many western journalists about the professionalism of their own media. Notions of press freedom and editorial independence can become compromised anywhere when journalism is the victim of political manipulation.

However, it is not only in times of war that media face the challenge of intolerance. Racial violence in the urban communities of western Europe, often characterised by incidents of terrorism and a rise in influence of extremist right-wing political parties, have also put a focus on the quality of media coverage of day-to-day life in multicultural society.

At the same time, in many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, there has been a re-emergence of anti-Semitism and hostility to national minorities whether defined by their language, religious and social status, or ethnic origin.

In the face of these developments many observers argue strongly that the complexities of community relations are distorted by media stereotypes. Media may reinforce racist attitudes and strengthen the appeal of political extremists. For this reason, the role of media often troubles politicians and leaders of minority groups in European society and makes journalism the subject of careful scrutiny.

Europe's changing political landscape has moved many of these issues once more into the centre of discussion. New forms of political co-operation and old national rivalries provide a basis for a critical review of democratic values across the continent and an opportunity to assess how media will contribute towards the shaping of Europe's new democratic landscape.

Within media -- both printed press and broadcast -- journalists, editors and publishers continue to be subject to undue pressure. Some of this pressure comes from the tense and competitiveness conditions of the media market, some comes from political sources, either government-sponsored or from special interest groups.

Media professionals are rightly wary of outsiders interfering in journalism, but many are conscious, too, of internal weaknesses which compromise journalistic standards.

In this paper we look at some contemporary problems facing journalists in the area of tolerance. There follows a review of existing legal standards, international conventions and ethical codes of journalism. Finally, the paper outlines some suggestions for future action.

2. Challenges to Media

A) Media As Weapons of War

*"The real culprits in this long list of executions, assassinations, drownings, burnings, massacres and atrocities furnished by our report are not, we repeat, the Balkan peoples...The true culprits are those who mislead public opinion and take advantage of the people's ignorance to raise disquieting rumours and sound the alarm bell, inciting their country..."*¹

This conclusion of an inquiry into the Balkan conflict 70 years ago was echoed by United Nations envoy Tadeusz Mazowiecki in his report in 1995 on the role of media in the origins of the recent Balkan war. His finding that media were guilty of inciting community hatred and war-mongering is a chilling reminder that a combination of ruthless political leadership and a passive community of journalists makes it all too easy for media to become instruments of propaganda and conflict.

Media, we all know, can be unfair, but they become something much worse when they are conscripted by undemocratic politicians to inspire, provoke and underwrite national fears and hatreds as has happened in Serbia and Croatia in recent years. Fundamentally journalists who lend themselves to this process abandon their professional status and become propagandists.

The problem is that, as in Yugoslavia, journalists who lack a tradition of independence can be the most vulnerable to political pressure which leads them into the twilight world of political propaganda. They do so if they are unable to confront freely the sort of dilemma that is posed by the demands of political leaders who call for "committed" journalism in support of "the national interest".

This question not only calls for a deeper understanding among journalists about the nature of independent journalism, but it gets to the heart of the political commitment to democracy. In Europe, many journalists condemn the failure of

¹ Report of International Commission into Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 quoted by Mark Thompson, *Forging War*, Article 19, 1995.

political and state institutions to allow media the freedom to work without undue pressure.

Independence is a concept easily understood by most media professionals and during the past decade journalists throughout Europe have come to identify a common set of principles and beliefs associated with journalistic freedom, but political turbulence continues to undermine relations between media and government.

Part of the problem is the revival of nationalism in many corners of Europe and the fragmentation of national politics. Referring to this phenomenon, the late Stephen Spender said that in an era of fragmentation censorship is likely to be local:

*"It is liable to be one of the phenomena connected with ethnic conflicts in which one group, aware of itself as a people, shuts itself off from other groups -- the Serbs from the Croats, the Croats from the Muslims."*²

This wilful exclusion of one community from another is a dangerous step along the road to censorship and conflict. In some countries current political tensions mean that journalists are discouraged from reporting negatively on their own communities, there are appeals to notions of citizenship which compromise ethical responsibilities. Journalists find themselves facing the grotesque choice of respecting their professional commitment to truth-seeking or to risk being branded a traitor. They are often subject to grandiose appeals or crude threats to put patriotism before professionalism.

Journalists never prove citizenship by succumbing to manipulation and distortion. A good journalist, one who has respect for the truth and who works according to ethical and professional standards, will always be a good citizen. A good citizen does not lie, twist the truth or deceive with bogus information and cynical propaganda.

² Stephen Spender, *Index on Censorship*, 1/2 1994

What is important for Europe is that journalists are aware of how deeply rooted are fears and apprehension of civil strife in European society. They need to know the potential impact of their words and images, whatever the mode of transmission.

The challenge to media is well put in a report from the United States following race riots in a number of cities in the 1960s:

"Those who report and disseminate news of racial trouble and threats of racial conflict must be conscious of the background of anxieties against which their stories are projected.

"This does not mean that the media should manage the news or tell less than the truth. Indeed, we believe it would be imprudent and even dangerous to play down coverage in the hope that censored reporting of inflammatory incidents somehow will diminish violence. To attempt to ignore these events or to portray them as something other than what they are can only diminish confidence in media and increase the effectiveness of those who monger rumours and the fears of those who listen...

"To live up to their own professed standards, media simply must exercise a higher degree of care and a greater level of sophistication than they have yet shown in this area, high perhaps than the level ordinarily acceptable with other stories." ³

In almost every corner of Europe there exists fear of social conflict between different groups in society. Media have a responsibility to respect these anxieties and to avoid becoming blunt instruments of propaganda.

B) The Dilemma of Hate Speech

In Europe most countries have laws which outlaw "hate-speech" -- the expression of despicable and harmful opinions which are designed to incite

³ *US Report of the Commission on Civil Disorders, 1967*

community hatred and violence. This issue touches the core of journalism and its relationship with democracy. Should we allow the enemies of democracy to attack in words specific groups of people within society? Should media be permitted to reproduce the violent language of hatred and confrontation of political extremists?

Some countries have no doubt and have already decided the issue. They have enacted edicts, laws and regulations forbidding not only acts of racism, but expression of it.

Many journalists are uneasy about the legal and regulatory framework in which European law has framed our approach to expression of unpleasant and uncomfortable opinions. Some see it as an abridgement of freedom of speech which undermines freedom of expression. In the United States the First Amendment is a bedrock principle of democracy. The federal government may not prohibit the expression of an opinion simply because society finds the opinion offensive.

However, the European tradition, which is based upon Article 10 of the European Convention on human rights, dates from 50 years ago and the devastation of a war fuelled upon theories of race hatred which were put into practice and which cost millions of lives. Embedded within the notion of European democracy is the view that society does have a legitimate interest in the suppression of opinions which incite racial hatred and community violence.

The disturbing question of how we limit free speech is simplified by Umberto Eco who argues that "*We must define the limits of tolerance and to do this we must first know what is intolerable*".⁴

The definition of what is intolerable varies widely across the continent. In many countries journalists are free to express themselves with as much liberty as that enjoyed by the journalists in the United States, in others newsrooms groan under the weight of legal actions brought by politicians and powerful individuals who are using the laws of defamation to suppress critical media comment and to curb legitimate journalistic inquiry.

⁴ Umberto Eco, *Index on Censorship*, 1996

While incitement to racial hatred and war is a criminal offence in many countries, the dilemma facing most journalists is based on ethical not legal considerations.

Codes of ethics, which are dealt with later in this paper, normally place three duties upon journalists -- to seek after truth; to be independent; to minimise harm. The issue of hate-speech forces journalists to balance the first of these duties against the third. Journalists must always seek the truth, but it is a finely-judged decision about whether to pursue that objective if the consequences may be unduly harmful.

To confront the hate-speech dilemma with confidence, journalists need to be as free as possible from pressure to follow a particular line. The line journalists should follow is that dictated by their own conscience.

C) Stereotypes in the Newsroom

Open forms of prejudice and discrimination against ethnic and racial groups which constitute incitement to racial hatred are not a feature of mainstream media coverage in most parts of Europe. Overt expressions of prejudice are punishable by law in most European countries and where they are found they tend to be within the limited horizons of the extremist political press.

However, mainstream media do provide many examples of subtle and indirect prejudice which may reinforce intolerance.

The popular or mass circulation tabloid press are often guilty of negative portrayal of ethnic, religious or cultural minorities. Former President of the British National Union of Journalists Jim Boumelha has summarised the problem in a UK context:

*Since the arrival of the first sizeable wave of immigration of black people to the UK 30 years ago, Britain's black community has tended to be depicted in terms of stereotypes and within a negative context involving conflict, drama, deviancy and controversy.*⁵

The stereotyping of the black community, he argues, follows a different pattern as conditions change but reflects two themes: the media stereotype of black as a "problem" within society or as a "victim". In each case the image is negative. There is a tendency, he argues, for media to underplay the reality of people from black or ethnic backgrounds who often live with routine and systematic prejudice around them. This is particularly true when there are periods of extreme racial tension. He gives the following example:

"According to the British Home Office there were more than 140,000 racist attacks in Britain during 1993 with eight racially-motivated deaths. The response of the tabloid press has been extremely cautious if not mute."

This reluctance to report is in sharp contrast, he says, to the sensational and contentious coverage of a knife attack on a young white boy, allegedly the victim of violence by a gang of Asians.

His views are shared by Teun A. van Dijk, from the Netherlands, who says that attacks on immigrants have become so widespread and common that they are often not even routinely covered by media. Subtle discrimination and everyday racism in housing, employment, health care, legislation and police activity have become general practice and that media tend to reinforce this through "foreigner-bashing" and shallow journalism.⁶

Stereotyping may have little impact on the consciousness of multicultural communities, where people's own experiences are a counterweight to simplistic and often ill-informed media coverage, it can be important in shaping the prejudices of people who do not have daily contact with minority communities.

⁵ IFJ Conference Report, Ethnic Conflict and Political, 1994

⁶ van Dijk, A proposal for Multicultural Media Monitoring in Europe, *Electronic Journal of Communication*, 1995

While media are not the originators of ethnocentric prejudices, a failure to balance discourse which treats immigrant, racial or minority groups as a problem means that media can be implicated in a process of discrimination, particularly at a time when racist ideology is becoming part of mainstream political debate.

Stereotyping is not necessarily the product of ethical failings, but often arises due to neglect of the conditions in which journalists work and the way media are managed.

Most media organizations, for instance, do not have recruitment policies which encourage journalists from ethnic or minority communities to enter journalism. As a result most newsrooms rarely reflect the ethnic and cultural balance of society at large.

Additionally, journalism training often fails to tackle issues of discrimination and intolerance. There is too often a profound lack of awareness and ignorance among news gatherers and production staff about the societies which they serve.

This lack of awareness is reinforced by a failure to use representative and authoritative sources of information from minority communities when dealing with news items about community relations. It is a common criticism that media too often rely alone on "official" and establishment sources of information without seeking out the opinions of other expert sources.

Broadcasters and publishers who work to tight budgets may have difficulty in providing resources to ensure adequate training and time for journalistic inquiry, but failure to invest in quality journalism in this area may further undermine confidence in the media mission to provide balance and fairness.

D) The Challenge of Diversity in Media

Many of the problems outlined in this section can be resolved effectively if media recognise that diversity is an issue within journalism as well as a potential news item. Media management and journalists have a responsibility to examine their

own recruitment, training and reporting techniques, to set targets for improvement and to monitor the results.⁷

Positive results are possible without becoming embroiled in heated and controversial arguments about "quota" and affirmative action policies which some say may undermine quality journalism.

The first step is recognition. A staff profile which is ethnically balanced, a training regime which talks about the ethical dilemmas involved in dealing with intolerance, and a willingness to examine and to monitor the editorial performance of media will inevitably raise awareness, broaden the horizons of news gatherers and reduce the incidence of error and prejudice arising from ignorance and incompetence.

There are a number of arguments for diversity in media which may be useful to both management and unions in tackling this issue:

- Ethnic diversity in editorial staffing and performance attracts a broader range of readers, listeners and viewers. When target groups sense the familiarity of media coverage with their own lives, circulation and ratings will increase.
- Journalism strives for objectivity and diverse ethnic representation in newsrooms should ensure better access to diverse sources of information from minority communities. Standards can only improve.
- The economic arguments are as valid as the professional. Advertisers are increasingly targeting minority groups. They call it "niche marketing". Higher minority representation in the workforce and more balanced coverage attracts consumers from different backgrounds. Advertisers targeting people from different cultural backgrounds will prefer outlets where minorities are more visible.

⁷ See *Handbook to Counter Racism in Media*, IFJ 1996

The answers are not only found in bringing new faces into journalism. Old hands can learn new tricks. Training and retraining of existing editorial staff to raise awareness is equally important.

One of Europe's strengths is the diversity of its cultures and many countries have newspapers and broadcast stations which cater for religious and language minorities. Journalists and media from different groups should be encouraged to work together, to exchange information and to learn from each other. Dialogue within and between different media is as important as dialogue between media and society at large.

Changing political and social conditions and the lessons of media failure -- whether in the Balkans and Central Africa or in coverage of local race-related news -- provide evidence that more care and attention on the part of journalists can avoid the passivity and negligence which make media prey to manipulation.

3. Racism and International Regulation

In almost all European countries open forms of racial prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities are punishable by law. National laws regulating the content of media in this area are drawn from international standards and conventions.

While the well established right to freedom of opinion and expression is set out in Article 19 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, Article 29 (2) of the same declaration adds.

"In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements or morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society."

Additionally, while Article 19 of the **International Convention on Civil and Political Rights** holds that everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference, it adds, in Article 19 (3), that the right to free expression may be subject to restrictions by law in order to respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or of public order or of public health or morals.

Article 20 states:

- "1) Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
- 2) Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law."

The **International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination** of 1965 Article 4 says:

"State parties condemn all propaganda and all organisations which are based on ideas or theories of superiority of one race or group of persons on one colour or ethnic origin, or which attempt to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form, and undertake to adopt immediate and positive measures designed to eradicate all incitement to, or acts of, such discrimination and, to this end....

- (a) *Shall declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof;*
- (b) *Shall declare illegal and prohibit organisations, and all organised and all other propaganda activities, which promote and incite racial discrimination, and shall recognise participation in such organisations or activities as punishable by law;*

- c) *Shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination. "*

The **European Convention For the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** guarantees freedom of expression and opinion in Article 10:

- 1) *"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers...*
- 2) *The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities may be subject to such formalities , conditions, restrictions or penalties prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary."*

In addition to these there is the 1978 UNESCO **Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice**, which urges mass media to promote understanding and tolerance and to contribute to the eradication of racial prejudice in society.

The **Organization on Security and Co-operation in Europe** has paid particular attention to media and tolerance in the past few years, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina where, as part of the peace process it has established a Media Experts Commission to monitor the performance of media.

The **Council of Europe** has also been in the forefront of promoting cultural co-operation at a European level, noting in its **Vienna Declaration** of 1993 that the media can play an essential role in creating a *"cohesive yet diverse Europe"*. The Declaration contains a plan of action for combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

The 4th Council of Europe **Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy** held in Prague in 1994 adopted a **Declaration on Media in a Democratic Society** which encourages media professionals to strengthen their own methods of self-regulation and suggested ministers consult with media professionals on:

"possible guidelines which could assist media professionals in addressing intolerance in all its forms."

These texts are valuable, not just when talking about the performance of media, but as useful points of reference in the daily work of journalists. However, they need to be accessible to journalists and should be made available, with examples and case studies, to show how they are relevant to contemporary journalism in Europe.

4. Self-Regulation and Ethical Codes

It should be said from the outset that ethical codes will not solve all the problems of intolerance in media, but they may help journalists focus on their own responsibility and resolve dilemmas. By setting out the ideals and beliefs which underpin independent journalism they encourage journalists to do what is essential in all areas of their work – to act according to their conscience.

Codes of ethics begin with sweeping generalities but tend finally to require particular attention to local context and particular facts. That is how, in the end, ethical dilemmas are resolved. In matters of tolerance, journalists must place the broad sweep of aspirations and values set out in ethical codes firmly in the context of their day-to-day work.

It is worth recalling that the landmark Sean McBride Report for UNESCO in 1980 laid emphasis on 'professional integrity and standards' in its recommendations for better international communications. The McBride Commission concluded that:

*For the journalist, freedom and responsibility are indivisible. Freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom there can be no exercise of responsibility...The adoption of codes of ethics at national and, in some cases, at the regional level is desirable, provided that such codes are prepared and adopted by the profession itself - without governmental interference."*⁸

Journalists must constantly remind themselves that regulating ethics is the collective business of journalists, not principally of the corporations which commission and carry their journalism, and especially not of governments.

Governments have a legitimate role in regulating media structures to try to ensure the diversity necessary for freedom of expression to flourish and for local culture to flower. But journalists' ethics are a content issue, and governments have no proper role in media content.

Ethics, then, require active support. Journalists have to act ethically, not merely memorise and parrot ethical codes. The standards or rules of such codes are useful and they work most of the time. But sometimes genuine conflicts arise between values and ethical decision-making is required.

This difficult skill is like all the other skills of journalism: it takes training, time and effort to become good at them. Individual journalists, employers, local journalists' associations and international organisations of media professionals have a specific responsibility to encourage good practice. The ethical dilemmas facing journalists referred to earlier in this paper -- the conflict between the need to seek the truth and to minimise harm -- cannot be satisfactorily addressed unless journalists unions, publishers, broadcasters and industry regulators do much more to raise awareness among journalists of the potential impact of their work.

There are many different models, but all ethical codes and codes of practice focus on the fundamental aims of the journalistic mission. They can be used like a

⁸ McBride Commission, Recommendations, Part III, introduction and para 43

checklist, even when journalists are working close to a deadline. They direct thinking and permit conscious decision-making which can be explained later if and when controversy arises about decisions.

One model, by Joann Byrd⁵, *Washington Post* Ombudsman, suggests that media must ask some simple, yet essential, questions before going public:

- 1 Have we done good reporting?
- 2 What do we know, and how do we know it?
- 3 Who are the sources, and what is their stake in it?
- 4 Have we verified the information?
- 5 Is it reasonable to conclude the truth based on what we know, or do we still know nothing more than some facts?
- 6 Will the story have impact? What kind?

The final question in this list is particularly helpful in dealing with issues of intolerance by helping to clarify the harm which might be caused, and which must be weighed against the benefits of publication.

Recent research indicates that among journalists, awareness of issues of racial discrimination and intolerance is growing. The prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race or nationality is one of the most general features of professional codes of ethics. It can be found in 26 out of 31 codes currently in force in Europe.⁹

The Code of Principles of the International Federation of Journalists was revised in 1986 to include the following article:

"7. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins. "

⁹ *Report on Media Ethics in Europe*, University of Tampere 1995

In addition a number of organisations -- the journalists unions of Belgium, Great Britain and the Netherlands and a number of public broadcasting organisations, for example -- have established specialist working groups and published statements and guidelines for journalists revealing a commitment going beyond the good intentions of ethical declarations.

In particular, journalists and others are confronting the problem of stereotyping through initiatives to raise awareness and by circulating guidelines to counter the use of thoughtless cliché and intemperate language.

At the same time a number of Press Councils in Europe have adopted codes which identify the issue of intolerance and have taken up complaints from members of the public about poor media reporting of race relations issues. In Great Britain, the Press Complaints Commission, for example, has within its Code of Practice an anti-discrimination clause, but there are doubts among researchers about its willingness to deal with discrimination issues.¹⁰

In Germany the Press Council considers as its task to sensitise journalists and to promote broader discussion of the situation of minorities. The Council considered 57 complaints in a two-year period and found four cases of discrimination proved.

The value of a self regulating process can be seen in a recent case from the Netherlands where broadcasters were taken to court following complaints of discrimination over a television programme broadcast by RTL4, a commercial channel, concerning the district of Lombok in Utrecht where many immigrants live. The courts did not find that the programme was unlawful and cleared the broadcasters, but the case was then taken up by the Dutch Press Council which found that there had been a breach of standards of journalism. The professional verdict that the programme was unacceptable was highly publicised in the Dutch media.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Press Councils -- and their equivalent in the field of broadcasting -- have an important role to play in raising media standards and promoting awareness, but in order to inspire public confidence, particularly within minority communities, they must encourage more open discussion about the role of media.

For self-regulation to work, whether through professional organisations or more formal press council and broadcasting complaints bodies, there must be greater internal co-operation between media professionals. There is common ground, at least in theory, between managements, editors and journalists on ethical values and standards of journalism, but different everyday working objectives often establish obstacles to dialogue. These problems need to be overcome.

5. Media Action to Combat Intolerance

Following the war in former Yugoslavia, many journalists organisations have made renewed efforts to put tolerance on the ethical agenda.

At the International Federation of Journalists Congress in Santander in 1995, unions from Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agreed to prepare a report on the role of journalists in the war. The interim report of that inquiry was presented at a world congress of journalists from 60 countries which was held two years later in Bilbao, Spain, on the theme *Prime Time for Tolerance: Journalism and the Challenge of Racism*.

The IFJ argument at the 1995 Congress centred on whether or not journalists should be identified by the Federation for the purpose of prosecution under international law for acts of propaganda. The consensus reached was that organisations of journalists have a responsibility to monitor media performance, to report on incidents of unprofessionalism and to promote high standards, but it is not their role to act as the agents of other authorities with responsibility for law enforcement.

Taking advantage of the European Union designation of 1997 as the European Year Against Racism, publishers broadcaster and journalists in Europe

are starting to work together on questions of tolerance. At a conference in Brussels in 1997 the IFJ, the European Newspaper Publishers Association and the European Broadcasting Union discussed a joint approach to questions of portrayal, recruitment and training and their role in raising awareness on issues of tolerance.

Earlier, in 1995, media professionals also set up the International Media Working Group Against Racism and Xenophobia and launched a campaign of activities - including the organization of four regional conferences, the publication of a handbook for journalists, and the establishment of a European Journalism Prize.¹¹

At the same time numerous projects and activities have been initiated in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to improve professional standards and to raise awareness. Amongst the hundreds of seminars, training programmes and activities which have been organised in the new democracies, a number has been directed at reinforcing ethical conduct among journalists.

In Macedonia, for instance, a project bringing together journalists from the Macedonian, Turkish and Albanian-language media to form multi-ethnic reporting teams has helped to broaden the views available in each of the communities.

Five round-table meetings of journalists from the Balkan region organised by the IFJ and the World Association of Newspapers (FIEJ) have over the past four years put tolerance and co-operation among independent media firmly on the professional agenda in the region.

A Reporting Diversity programme¹² has produced a handbook for journalists giving examples of good practice and a list of minority groups across the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

To promote diversity in the newsroom minority groups have set up press centres and have negotiated internships to work alongside leading professionals in established media.

¹¹ IMRAX, c/o 266 Rue Royale, 1210 Brussels, Belgium.

¹² A project of the Center of War, Peace and the News Media, the IFJ, the Russian-American International Press Center and the Center for Independent Journalism

6. Summary of Recommendations

Diversity Within Media

Media professionals have a responsibility to address internal weaknesses which compromise journalistic standards and to apply principles of diversity and pluralism at all levels within the industry. In particular,

- Media should implement recruitment policies which encourage journalists from ethnic or minority communities to enter journalism.
- journalism training should address issues of discrimination and intolerance in society. There is often a profound lack of awareness and ignorance among news gathers and production staff about the societies which they serve.
- journalists and media organisations should use representative and authoritative sources of information from minority communities when dealing with news items about community relations.

Industry Co-operation and Solidarity

Increased dialogue and co-operation between journalists, broadcasters and publishers is needed to better understand the role of media in confronting intolerance. In particular, dialogue should be encouraged between media outlets serving minority communities and mainstream media.

International Standards

International and European conventions, texts and declarations which are relevant to journalists facing ethical dilemmas in the area of tolerance should be promoted through the provision of handbooks and materials which provide useful examples and case studies at the European level.

Role of Governments

Governments have a legitimate role in regulating media structures to try to ensure the diversity necessary for freedom of expression but journalists' ethics are a content issue, and governments have no proper role in the regulation of media content.

Support of Self-Regulation and Ethical Conduct

In the promotion of self-regulation, media professionals must encourage professional solidarity to promote high ethical standards and the right of media professionals to act according to their conscience without undue interference or pressure. In particular,

- media professionals should promote conferences, seminars and workshops to exchange information and promote awareness within the industry,
 - journalists should be made aware of national and international ethical codes and their usefulness in resolving day-to-day journalistic dilemmas,
 - media professionals and their organisations should monitor and report on media performance in the area of intolerance and should engage in dialogue with community and governmental authorities where this is appropriate.
-