

The way of influencing journalists in Kosovo

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The debates on the press freedom have never disappeared throughout the history of print and electronic media. However, during different periods of this history, the restrictions on press freedom have been expressed more or less, in a harsh or soft way, depending on social, political, economic or cultural developments.

The reports of international organisations dealing with press freedom and the protection of journalists reveal a bitter reality – the press freedom has experienced a worsening trend in many parts of the world.

A lot of discussions have commenced in Kosovo about the press freedom and the influence on media. Such debates have taken place on frequent intervals and the content was primarily based on perceptions and in some cases by commenting particular cases.

My professional curiosity has pushed to conduct a research on the real shapes and dimensions of the influence on journalists and media outlets in Kosovo. Initial feedbacks from the questionnaires analysed so far show that the influence on journalist is bigger than the external perception.

Based on these outcomes, though they are at a basic phase, journalists in Kosovo face a direct and indirect form of influence. In general, tutors to journalists appear to be representatives of the state institutions or the heads/owners of media, which put their influence through managers or the editors appointed by them. But, there are not less influence and pressure from individuals or groups of interests, usually affiliated to people in power or with the owners of media. There are, of course, cases of influence by the opposition.

Through the questionnaires I've tried also to understand the ways and methods of influencing. Based on the analysed questionnaires the influence on journalists is executed in a direct or indirect way, in a strong way (by order) or in a polite way (through advices and recommendations).

My research reveals a reasonable doubt on the honesty of journalists that participated in the research by answering to the questionnaires, bearing in mind the fear of eventual consequences because of their answers, though they had the opportunity not to unveil the media they work for.

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