

Online workshop for the Agency for audio and audiovisual media services and Council for media ethics in Macedonia for regulation, self-regulation and monitoring of the application of the media reporting standards, covering gender-based violence cases in the media

On 4 december 2020, the EU and Council of Europe joint action on “Freedom of expression and freedom of media in North Macedonia”, organised in Skopje an online workshop for the media regulatory authority, the Agency for audio and audiovisual media services and the self-regulatory body, the Council for media ethics in Macedonia. During the meeting the participants discussed key facts and challenges related to the regulation, self-regulation and monitoring of the application of the media reporting standards, covering gender-based violence cases in the media.

The aim of the workshop was to gather relevant actors and representatives in the field to discuss on the referred topic towards improvement of the manner the media report on gender-based violence and enhance capacities accordingly. The need for this workshop stems from the fact that after ratifying the

Istanbul Convention, Macedonian authorities developed and adopted an Action Plan for its implementation (2019-2023). The new Law on Prevention and Protection against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was adopted by the Government of North Macedonia and upon public debate it shall be submitted to the Parliament of North Macedonia for voting. Thus, still there is no solution in terms of legislation and the system of protection of women and girls victims against violence, as well as a lack of actions in the field of prevention. Aiming to fill in these gaps and fulfil the Action plan in line with the Istanbul Convention, the European Union and Council of Europe joint action JUFREX in North Macedonia is supporting the media regulatory and self-regulatory body through corresponding activities.

The international expert of the Council of Europe presented on the experience from EU countries on the application of reporting standards in gender-based violence cases in the media, basic concepts on reporting, as well as points to address during monitoring. Additionally, many topics related to stereotypes, prejudice and myths were presented and discusses, revealing the societal attitude towards women and girls from one side and men and boys from the other side. The acceptance of the gender-based violence as a part of one nation's tradition and culture by playing gender roles is contributing to gender inequality and in holding back development.

Representatives of the media regulatory authority and the self-regulatory body for media ethics in North Macedonia engaged in fruitful discussion on the presented topic acquiring the specific knowledge. As a follow-up to this activity, JUFREX action in North Macedonia will support the preparation of a self-regulatory document in form of Monitoring Guide on the application of reporting standards in gender-based violence cases in the media, that as a practical tool will facilitate the work of the regulatory and self-

regulatory body.

This workshop was organised within the action on “Freedom of expression and freedom of the media in North Macedonia (JUFREX 2)” . This action is a part of the joint European Union/Council of Europe programme “Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey II”, that enables the Beneficiaries to meet their reform agendas in the fields of human rights, rule of law and democracy and to comply with the European standards, including where relevant within the framework of the EU enlargement process.