Asociacioni i Gazetarëve të Kosovës
Association of Journalists of Kosovo

EDITORIAL POLICY GUIDE

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This editorial policy guide has been developed in close cooperation with media representatives from all ethnic backgrounds in Kosovo, as well as with representatives of institutions directly related to the issue and legal advisors. While this is not a legal document and carries no legal obligations, it is advisable to follow and comply with the guidance provided. The policy is in line with local and international standards and best practices.

Editorial Policy Guide

This editorial policy guide addresses issues of ethics, data protection, and diversity representation in the media. It consists of four main aspects:

I. Ethical principles and standards, transparency, and editorial independence;
II. Data protection and privacy in the media;
III. Diversity representation and social sensitivity;
IV. Community protection and avoiding discrimination.

I. Ethical Principles and Standards, Transparency, and Editorial Independence

1. The media has an obligation to report accurately, verify information, avoid spreading disinformation, and include all parties involved in an issue to ensure balanced reporting.
2. As employers, media organizations must respect journalists' integrity by providing a safe working environment free from political or economic pressure and external influences that may compromise their professional independence.
3. The media has a responsibility to avoid using and spreading hate speech, exercising particular caution in this regard.
4. The identity of victims must be protected during reporting, especially in cases involving minors under 18, victims of sexual violence, trafficking, or other sensitive situations.
5. Special care must be taken to protect the privacy of marginalized groups and children.
6. Media outlets are required to disclose if they have used artificial intelligence in content creation.
7. Victims of violence should not be re-victimized during reporting.

II. Data Protection and Privacy in the Media

1. Purpose Limitation for Data Processing

- Media organizations must respect the principle of purpose limitation when processing personal data, using it only for the purpose for which it was collected, except in cases of public interest archiving or scientific research.

2. Data Minimization and Accuracy Principle

- In reporting, the media should use only essential data and ensure its accuracy.

3. Data Retention Limitation

- Personal data should only be retained as long as necessary and deleted or anonymized once the purpose has been fulfilled.

4. Right to Be Forgotten

- Individuals have the right to request the deletion of their data from media databases if there is no longer a public interest in their publication.

5. Consent of Individuals

- Publishing photos, videos, or statements of individuals without their consent is not allowed, except in cases of public interest where information is necessary and dignity is not compromised.

6. Processing of Sensitive Data

- The media must exercise extreme caution when publishing health-related data, photos, and videos of patients, children, and persons with disabilities, obtaining explicit consent from relevant subjects.

7. Processing Special Categories of Data

- The media must respect sensitive personal data such as ethnicity, religion, political opinions, biometric data, health, and sexual orientation, ensuring careful and ethical treatment.

III. Diversity Representation and Social Sensitivity

1. Child Protection in the Media

- Children's identities must be protected in all cases where reporting involves them and their families.

2. Warnings for Sensitive Content

- Programs addressing domestic violence, divorce, bullying, etc., must include warnings such as +12 or +14.

3. Avoiding the Glorification of Violence and Crime

- The media must not trivialize, glorify, or encourage criminal acts and violence, ensuring careful use of language and visual content.

4. Fair and Proportional Representation

- The media must provide equal space for both genders, minority communities, and vulnerable groups in their content.

5. Protection of Human Integrity

- Reporting should not compromise human dignity or use unnecessary imagery or content related to violence against women, the LGBT community, Kosovo Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities, or the social status of individuals.

IV. Community Protection and Avoiding Discrimination

1. Avoiding Stereotyping and Ethnicization of News

- The media must avoid linking crimes or illegal acts to a specific ethnic, cultural, or religious group.
- Reporting should focus on individuals and their actions, not their collective ethnic or religious identity.

2. Respect for Religious Diversity in Reporting

- The media must adopt a sensitive and neutral approach when reporting on religious communities.
- Religious practices should not be linked to extremist acts without clear evidence.
- Reports involving religious beliefs should consult credible sources and community representatives to avoid misinterpretations.

3. Representation of Minority Communities in the Media

- The media must ensure equal space for non-majority communities such as Kosovo Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians.
- Journalists and editorial teams should be encouraged to include the perspectives of non-majority communities in relevant topics, rather than portraying them solely in negative news stories.
- Media programs should encourage the inclusion of non-majority languages in informational spaces, especially in public news services.

4. Use of Appropriate and Neutral Terminology

- Terms and definitions for communities must align with international human rights standards and best journalistic practices, avoiding pejorative or outdated terms for non-majority communities such as "shk*je", "m*gjup" or "t*rko".

5. Cultural Diversity and Promotion of Tolerance in the Media

- The media should promote the recognition and representation of the traditions, culture, and languages of different communities, contributing to an inclusive society.
- Programs covering the history, culture, and traditions of communities must be based on accurate research and credible sources to avoid misinterpretations.
- Media debates on ethnic and cultural topics should include community representatives to ensure fair representation.

6. Reporting on Inter-Ethnic Conflicts and Sensitivity in Addressing Historical Issues

- The media must be cautious when addressing topics related to ethnic tensions, avoiding inflammatory or polarizing language.
- When reporting on conflict history, an objective and inclusive approach should be ensured, involving all parties and avoiding the glorification or demonization of any group.
- The media should avoid narratives that create lasting divisions and promote a reconciliatory and informative discourse.

7. Use of Community Languages in the Media

- In accordance with the Law on Language Use, media must provide content in the languages of non-majority communities in Kosovo.
- News programs, especially in public services, should include translations or content tailored for non-majority community audiences.
- Subtitles and translations of news must use standardized terms and avoid inaccurate translations that may alter the context of the information.