



Journalism education

– improvement of
the quality of education
and new technologies

11th Central Asia Media Conference
Bishkek 15-16 October 2009



Organization for Security and
Co-operation in Europe

The Representative on
Freedom of the Media

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Foreword

Ana Karlsreiter¹ and Adilia Daminova²

Dear Readers,

We are proud to present the publication on the 11th Central Asia Media Conference held in Bishkek on 15 and 16 October 2009. The two-day event, organised by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, brought together more than a hundred participants. The first day was devoted to Journalism education, while the second day focused on the general situation with respect to media freedom in all five Central Asian countries.

The first Central Asia Media Conference took place in Bishkek in October 1999. Since then, 10 more have been organised in Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Tashkent. These conferences have touched upon nearly all the main topics relating to media freedom, including “Media freedom in times of anti-terrorist conflict”, “Dealing with libel and freedom of information”, “Freedom of the media and corruption”, “Pluralism in the media and the Internet”, “Media self-regulation in Central Asia” and “The new challenges in broadcasting, including public-service broadcasting and the digital switchover”, amongst others.

Throughout the years, the Central Asia Conference has become a tradition that remains virtually the only regional initiative bringing together

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media professionals, authorities, experts and academia from Central Asia for open discussion of media freedom developments in their countries.

It is this uniqueness that has, indeed, kept this initiative alive and strong for so many years. It is the spirit of bringing together people who share the same profession, passions, problems, and aspirations, people who still feel very close to each other owing to their Soviet past and shared realities of independence and media freedom problems. That closeness is felt keenly during each of our conferences. It starts as participants scan the one another's name plates with genuine curiosity, in an effort to either reconnect with old colleagues or meet new people, and continues to the very end of the conference, when, at the farewell dinner, participants are still hungry for more communication; they bring in extra chairs and flock around one table where they can mingle with others and talk openly about the challenging but exciting and glorious life of a journalist.

The 2009 Conference was even more special in that regard. Owing to the tireless efforts of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Miklos Haraszti, it was the first time in many years that participants from all five countries were present and the Central Asian family was complete. In 2008, Uzbekistan joined us in Almaty after several years of absence and this year we were happy to welcome our colleagues from Turkmenistan, as well. As Mr. Haraszti said in his opening statement, quoting one participant, "this is the first meeting of journalists from all five Central Asian countries since Soviet times". It was, indeed, this overwhelming feeling of togetherness and camaraderie that defined the atmosphere of the following two days of the Conference.

The first day of the Conference, as always, was devoted to a special subject. This year's topic was journalism education, a very timely issue. It is generally recognised as important for journalists to have better qualifications, especially now that new technologies allow so many

of us to become so-called “citizen journalists”. The participants in the conference acknowledged that the impact of a quality education in journalism is limited in the absence of parallel development of independent media, so they urged their respective governments to refrain from over-regulating the journalistic profession.

For the first session of the conference, dealing with “International experience in the area of journalism education,” we invited well-known experts with extensive international experience in media and journalism education from Russia, Lithuania and the United States.

The first speaker, Andrei Richter, a well-known professor at the Department of Journalism at Moscow State University and Director of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute, talked about “Current problems of journalism and journalism education”. In his presentation, he drew attention to the dangers that the newly-developed Internet legislation, if applied arbitrarily, can pose to the Internet community and traditional media. He also emphasised that countries are obliged to respect international freedom of expression standards in their respective national legislation.

The US expert David Mould, Associate Dean for research and graduate studies and Professor of telecommunications at Ohio University, spoke about “Challenges and new directions for global journalism education.” He examined whether one needs a journalism degree or any university degree to be considered a journalist. Dr. Mould emphasised that licensing requirements on journalists might lead to restrictions on freedom of the press. While these licensing and professional bodies threaten pluralism, he noted that “the growth of the Internet and so-called “citizen journalism” has “further democratised journalism.” Dr. Mould noted positive developments in Central Asia’s journalism education, but he

described its current state with a quote from one of his colleagues as, “Long hours in cold classrooms.”

Manana Aslamazyan provided a different angle on the subject of journalism training and education. Manana is a big name in the Russian and international media development sphere. She is a media and television expert who, as the head of Internews Russia, has trained 11,000 Russian journalists. Currently, Manana is based in Paris, working as the Executive Director of Internews Europe. She started her presentation, entitled “No such thing as too much training,” by saying that a country’s state of democracy can be determined on the basis of the quality of its journalism. She shared with the audience some of the lessons learned during her many years training journalists in Russia, and the common message was that journalists should continuously build their skills and improve their professionalism.

The discussion was then picked up by the most animated of our speakers, Dainius Radzevicius, Chairman of the Lithuanian Union of Journalists. In his presentation, “The impact of technology and consumer habits on journalists’ qualifications,” Mr. Radzevicius pointed out that fast developing technology has led to an explosion of new media platforms, prompting society to question whether ‘real journalists’ are actually needed. As with any type of transformation, new technologies pose a threat as well as offering an opportunity. He concluded that the collapse of traditional media can shake up both media and the state, but it can also present an opportunity for development of a more open and better informed society.

Traditionally, on the second day, the media freedom situation in Central Asia is discussed. Media NGOs were presented by: Tamara Kaleeva, President of Adil Soz, Kazakhstan’s international foundation for protection of speech; her fellow citizen Adil Jalilov, from the international journalism

centre MediaNet and the media alliance of Kazakhstan; Aleksandr Kulinski, an independent journalist from the Kyrgyz Republic and Chairman of the media complaints committee; Nuriddin Karshiboev, Chairman of the National Association of Independent Media in Tajikistan. Public organisations, including the Institute for Civil Studies of Uzbekistan and the “Journalists” public association from Kyrgyzstan were represented by Shuhrat Satimov and Marat Tokoev, respectively. Atajan Annageldiyev, from the national TV channel “Turkmenistan”, was joined by scholars Abdusattor Nuraliev, the head of the TV and radio department of the Tajik-Russian University; Osman Hemzayev, a lecturer from the Institute of International Relations under the Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Parida Bostonova, dean of journalism department at Kyrgyz Technical University.

The speakers from Central Asia reported on the challenges they face in the region, including the increased violence against journalists and new media legislation making reporting on issues of public interest more and more difficult, if not impossible. All the exchanges were made in a constructive atmosphere, allowing the participants actually to respond to one another’s frustrations and collaborate in seeking ways to resolve their problems. Some people left the conference with new ideas and for some people it was an opportunity to assert their own points of view. Hopefully, no-one left with a feeling of indifference. Everyone had an opportunity to express opinions without fear of being judged, ostracised or punished. While, for the region as a whole, the situation with respect to media freedom still remains bleak, these conferences constitute an opportunity for sharing the very values and commitments that brought journalists to their profession, which should be respected and celebrated.

We are now beginning to plan for the conference in 2010. We would appreciate your ideas and suggestions regarding the topics, the format and possible experts, as well as feedback regarding the past conference.

We would like to use this opportunity to thank all donor countries that make this conference possible year after year. This year, the list of donors included Austria, Germany, Lithuania Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

Last, but not least, we would also like to thank the outgoing OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for his devotion during the six years of his term and for his crucial contribution to the success of the Central Asian Media Conferences. He not only succeeded in bringing together all five countries, but was also the leading person during the conferences as a moderator, speaker and, most importantly, supporter of the unique spirit of these Conferences.

Enjoy reading!

11th Central Asia Media Conference

Journalism education – improvement of the quality of education and new technologies

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

15-16 October 2009

DECLARATION

The Eleventh Central Asia Media Conference, organized by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media in co-operation with the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, and with the assistance of the other OSCE field operations in the region, was held this year on 15-16 October in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Media professionals and government officials from all five Central Asian states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – participated in the conference. In addition, representatives of university journalism faculties, national and international organizations and national and international experts joined the conference to discuss the latest media developments in Central Asia.

The specific focus of this year's conference was journalism education. Participants examined the role of a journalist and journalism in modern society, assessed existing education opportunities, discussed best practices in journalism education, and exchanged experiences. The two-day event provided fertile ground for new ideas on how to face the challenges that journalism education in Central Asia encounters.

The Conference:

1. Welcomes the fact that all Central Asian states sent participants, both civil activists and government representatives, acknowledging the importance of the regional cooperation in the field of media.
2. Acknowledges that journalism is a civil activity; therefore, governments should refrain from over-regulating it.
3. Emphasizes that pluralism of the media is the key value and one of the most important conditions for the existence of democratic society. Therefore, it is vital to ensure pluralism in the educational systems as well.
4. States that an academic degree in journalism should not be a prerequisite for a journalistic career. Media outlets can employ journalists who do not have a degree in journalism and this right should be respected by the authorities. Journalists should not have to meet government licensing standards in order to pursue their journalistic work.
5. Recommends, nevertheless, both basic academic and on-the-job education and training for media workers. Continuing training programs should be established for all journalists and other media professionals, including editorial staff, to further their existing knowledge and gain new skills.
6. Recommends that academic journalism education attract more practicing journalists as faculty.
7. Calls on academic and journalistic educational organizations to provide training for media professionals on entrepreneurial and

technical skills, so journalists can establish and operate independent and self-sustainable media outlets.

8. Stresses the importance of international cooperation in journalism education. Calls for greater use of international experience and best practices in journalists' training and educational institutions. Greater exchange of teaching materials, faculty and experiences among Central Asian states should be promoted.
9. Notes that in the near future all media will be hosted by the internet. The notion of the local will become inseparable from the global; therefore, media education should reflect the global character of journalism.
10. Recommends incorporating Internet and online tools, including Web 2.0 tools, such as social networking, file-sharing platforms and other user-generated resources into the curriculum. All journalism students should be trained to use modern interactive technologies.
11. Calls on the states to assist state and private educational institutions with financing for their IT equipment and Internet access.
12. Believes that professional ethics should be incorporated into curricula to promote responsible media.
13. Encourages journalism schools to acknowledge the importance of investigative journalism for democracy and as a tool in combating corruption. Investigative journalism study should be afforded a high place in the curricula. The course on safety of journalists should be incorporated into curricula.

14. Encourages governments to support reforms of journalism education with all the above goals in mind, taking into consideration the fact that education provided for journalism students not only shapes their professional skills, but defines the media as a profession in general.

Bishkek, 16 October 2009

Welcoming remarks

Andrew Tesoriere¹

Distinguished First Deputy Minister, distinguished Conference guests and participants,

In opening the OSCE annual Central Asia Media Conference, may I warmly welcome you all to Bishkek, with a special welcome to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, who will attend this annual conference for the last time in his current capacity, as after 6 years his distinguished service with the OSCE comes to an end.

The context of our annual Conference this year is an interesting one. The challenge of preserving and, indeed, improving accurate and ethical journalism standards looms large as journalism shifts increasingly, both globally and regionally, in Central Asia, from traditional media forms to attracting readers and listeners via the Internet and other forms of communication, such as blogging, facebook and twitter. This shifting pattern makes journalism education, the central topic of this year's regional conference, all the more pertinent – as much for the public and media watchdogs as for journalists themselves.

Our Conference provides an excellent opportunity to learn about media developments in the individual Central Asian countries and to pool our experience and opinions. Inevitably – and such is life – we will not always agree with all of each other's views. But the great strength of the OSCE

¹ Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, Head of OSCE Centre in Bishkek; experienced British and UN diplomat

is its capacity to debate constructively with a view to finding common ground, expressed in shared values and commitments enshrined in Ministerial Council decisions.

I therefore eagerly look forward to the discussion and findings of this year's Conference.

From my own Mission's perspective, there are 4 priorities on which we are focusing and hoping that this Conference will guide us.

First, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek seeks to support Kyrgyzstan in its compliance with its OSCE and other international commitments regarding media freedom and self-regulation responsibilities. New information technologies raise fresh questions of legislation and responsibilities, which I hope will be fully aired during this Conference. At this point, may I welcome all the national Media Commissioners present today, as well as those from the Media Complaints Committees, who play a vital role in safeguarding media freedom and upholding journalistic ethics.

Second, the Centre in Bishkek seeks to support Kyrgyzstan in providing conducive conditions for journalists to work in safety and without intimidation or unnecessary constraint. OSCE participating States have recently been consistently expressing profound concern about the growing reported incidence of attacks and intimidation against journalists within the OSCE region, including Central Asia.

Third, the Centre in Bishkek continues to support Kyrgyzstan in drafting its media-related legislation in accordance with its broader international commitments and best practice within the OSCE. Currently, Kyrgyzstan is working on a draft Media Law, which has been presented to the OSCE for an expert opinion. In the opinion of the OSCE, the existing Law on TV and

Radio also requires further review and the OSCE continues to examine how this Law can be aligned with broad OSCE standards.

Last but not least, there is the central theme of this Conference – journalism education. The OSCE Centre has, since 2004, sought to build and enrich the nation's media capacity through training and development of journalists in Kyrgyzstan. The Centre has funded and supported 4 regional Media Centres across Kyrgyzstan (in Naryn, Karakol, Talas and Batken). Yet we have reached the point where we wish to see these centres operate on a more sustainable, commercial basis, with funding from in-country, non-OSCE sources, be they national or international media outlets or business and advertising revenues. The OSCE Centre has initiated the process of making these media centres commercially-viable, but this is proving no easy challenge. We would welcome any suggestions within or on the margins of this Conference, particularly from the significant body of University professors and media NGOs here, on how Kyrgyzstan can, journalistically, capitalize on these regional media satellite hubs.

In closing, I wish the Conference great success and, once again, thank you for this opportunity and your attention.

Opening statement

Ruslan Kazakbaev¹

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues:

Allow me to cordially welcome the conference participants to the hospitable land of Kyrgyzstan, and to express my thanks to the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for organising this event and their attention to the topic of our discussion.

The importance of this conference is indisputable and well known to all whose line of work is associated with such an important aspect of international cooperation as working together in the sphere of media.

Over the past period, the conference has reaffirmed its worth as an effective mechanism for summing up and assessing the efforts of the OSCE and the countries in the region to identify the problems we now face and the outlook for and ways in which we might solve them.

With each passing year, the topics and tone of our discussions on various aspects of this field grow broader, and the content and experience of collaboration among the journalists of the region's states are being enriched.

I hope that this conference will help us determine future measures for strengthening the potential of the media in the region, establish direct

¹ Ruslan Kazakbaev, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic

contacts, and define ways for organising the training of journalists to meet the current needs and demands of the region's states.

The knowledge and experience of journalists and the very nature of their work can help in determining our states' national interests as well as measures for strengthening culture, peace, mutual understanding, tolerance, and freedom of expression.

It is well known that an independent press, an effective judicial branch, and a democratic political system are guarantees of freedom of opinion.

The Kyrgyz Republic is resolutely following the path of democratic development. Measures are being taken to improve national legislation in many different areas and to bring it into line with international standards.

Special attention is being focused on democratising society, encouraging human rights, and (of course) promoting freedom of speech. On more than one occasion, Kyrgyz Republic President Kurmanbek Bakiyev has mentioned that the Kyrgyz media have matured greatly in recent years and are an important part of civil society.

The steps being taken by the country's government testify to Kyrgyzstan's commitment to creating the necessary conditions for protecting freedom of speech and the press, for such are the demands of tolerance and liberalism without which a democratic society is impossible.

I would like to especially emphasise that Kyrgyzstan was and remains committed to the principles of freedom of speech and press. Creating the conditions for the existence of free and independent media is a major foundation of the viability of a democratic society.

We must honour and defend journalists who remain true to their ideals, and we must work together to create free, professional, and pluralistic media across our region.

Allow me to once again express my thanks for the OSCE's attention to ensuring cooperation in the matter of improving the situation surrounding the media in the Kyrgyz Republic and the other states of the region, and to thank the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media for the training courses it has held for members of the government press service, and journalists of Kyrgyzstan.

I hope that the traditionally positive and open relations between Kyrgyzstan, the friendly states of Central Asia, and the OSCE will allow us to achieve our goal of sustainable political, economic, social, and cultural development, in which the media play a central role.

I would like to wish all of the conference's participants success in their undertakings, good health, and happiness.

Thank you for your attention.

Keynote speaker

Miklos Haraszti¹

I welcome First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Tesoriere, all friends here – experts, media freedom champions and journalists representing both public and private media.

I am both happy and sad at the same time. Happy to meet with you and sad because this is the last time I will do so as the OSCE Representative on freedom of the media, since my mandate expires in the spring of 2010.

We are here together on a great occasion. As one of our participants put it yesterday, this is the first meeting of journalists from all five Central Asian countries since the times of the Soviet Union. Therefore, I would like to thank all five Central Asian governments that have sent their participants to our conference. A special welcome to the participants from Turkmenistan who are joining us this year for the first time. I hope that the participation of all five Central Asian states will become a tradition from now on. As First Deputy Minister Kazakbaev has just said, “This conference will be the basis for continuously expanding cooperation and development.”

This year, a special thank you goes to the government of the Kyrgyz Republic for being our generous host, as was the case during several conferences of ours in the past.

¹ Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (March 2004 – March 2010); human rights advocate, writer, journalist, and university professor

A very special thank you goes to the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and to all the people who helped to organise this conference, including my staff. I also would like to thank the OSCE field missions in all five countries. And last but not least, thanks to our donors: Austria, Germany, Lithuania, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

As always, our conference is two days long. The first day is devoted to a specific topic; this year, it is journalism education. We will examine the role of the journalist and journalism in modern society and assess the existing educational opportunities for journalists in the region. On the second day, we will look at the situation in media development and media freedom in all five countries.

All of the countries in the OSCE region, including the five Central Asian states, are at the stage where the concept of “local” or “national” media becomes irrelevant. If it hasn’t already, all media will be on the Internet and journalism will be global in the near future.

Therefore, when we talk about journalism education, we cannot treat it as a national industry. The goal of journalism education is to prepare for global and local media pluralism. Journalism education will serve journalism in all Central Asian countries only if it is able to prepare journalists for service. But for the service of what? Not for the service of the government or even for the service of one party, as in the past. I believe the vocation of journalism in a democratic society is to serve the openness of the political process. So that public life and politics remain able, while serving the actually elected majority, to protect the rights of minorities, be they political, national, religious, or any other.

But most importantly, the vocation of journalism is to defend freedom of speech. Those who are not in the majority need freedom of speech the most. Freedom of speech is always for those who are in need of the

freedom to speak out. This is what has moved all democracies forward, and this is what has moved the world forward.

I therefore believe that our conference, with its great variety of speakers and excellent experts from every corner of the OSCE area, will help us first of all to listen to the wisdom that has been collected for this special occasion, and second, to elaborate ideas that will bring us forward. We might even come to new conclusions.

With this in mind, I give the floor to our speakers. Thank you for your attention.

**International experience
in the area of journalism education**

Current problems of journalism and journalism education

Andrei Richter¹

1. I would first like to dwell on the understanding of the profession of journalism in today's world. The reason for this, oddly enough, is the law "On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan concerning Information and Communication Networks" adopted in the Republic of Kazakhstan, namely the amendments to the law "On the Media" that came into force in August 2009.

According to these new amendments, all of Kazakhstan's Internet resources were equated in status with the media. The country's authorities believed that the development of modern computer communications with all their interactivity, discreteness, and other such characteristics allows Internet sources to be equated with the media. It means that requirements and restrictions stipulated in the Republic of Kazakhstan law "On the Media" and other legislative acts in the Republic of Kazakhstan relating to the media will be applied to forums, blogs, chat rooms, and so on.

The Kazakhstan authorities did not consider all of the consequences stemming from this step. All critics of these amendments pointed out that forcibly assigning journalist status to the authors of blogs and remarks in chat rooms, and to other Internet users, and the status of media outlet to

¹ Andrei Richter, Professor at the Department of Journalism, Moscow State University and Director of the Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute

all Internet resources, would lead to restrictions on freedom of expression on the Internet.

The amendments, however, also affect the traditional media in the following way: Associating journalists in Kazakhstan with bloggers and chat room visitors inevitably entails denigration of professionalism, erosion of professional standards, complete rejection of self-regulation, and finally the decline of social responsibility and the role of traditional media in society. What do I mean here?

Practically, it is impossible to extend journalist rights to everyone who writes on the Internet, reproduces photos and video clips for Internet resources, and puts their own works (or the works of other people) on them. Practically, it is impossible to grant the rights guaranteed in the law “On the Media” to be accredited and to be present at the sites of natural disasters, political rallies and demonstrations, organizations of all property types, and so on, to all of these people. Introducing a filter for “new journalists” or “other journalists” will inevitably lead to arbitrariness and a narrowing of the chances for “traditional” journalists to exercise their rights.

Today, journalists are united by professional organisations, clubs, and associations, though not as much as they could be. They work as part of a professional team with its own rules and traditions. They are united by the understanding, flawed though it occasionally might be, of the essence of their profession and its purpose, journalism’s role in society, its social responsibility, and so on. Many of them are familiar with the standards of professional ethics and law. Half of all Russian journalists got a specialised higher education in this field of knowledge.

If we equate all of the authors on the Internet with journalists, what do we get? The same thing we get if we dilute a drop of ink in a glass of

water. Everything related to the profession will be eroded by hundreds of thousands of people who sometimes have no idea of what I'm talking to you about today. All that today remains of journalistic standards – and believe me, there is a lot – will evaporate and the journalism of today will tomorrow seem like an unachievable ideal. When everyone becomes a journalist, no one will be a journalist.

2. Journalism is an “open” profession. To be a part of it in the post-Soviet states, just as in the United States, Britain, and Germany, you don't need to produce a diploma attesting to majoring in journalism (or, for that matter, in any other kind of education). In this, journalism differs from the “closed” professions of physician, lawyer, accountant, or pilot. This does not, however, mean that journalism as a profession does not require special knowledge and skills.

Today in Russia, there are around 140-150 thousand journalists; approximately one-half of these have a higher professional education in journalism. It is generally recognised that the shortage of professionally trained personnel (or well-trained professional personnel) will lead both to problems in the profession itself and to problems in the different branches of the media. The following are among the problems in journalism that the RF Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications noted in 2007:

- triviality of content in a considerable number of media;
- broad distribution of customised materials;
- superficial journalism that relies on Internet resources and takes no responsibility for the reliability of reported facts;
- violations of the purity of the native (Russian) language;
- violations of the laws on media in the content of different materials, especially in matters of regulating advertising, prohibiting incitement of racial and religious intolerance, and propaganda of enmity and hate.

In most cases, these problems are associated with the shortage of qualified personnel. A lack of knowledge, for example, leads to editorial staff refusing to tackle topics that demand thorough training. It is impossible to work with an intricate plot if the journalist's vocabulary is limited and he/she does not master the linguistic resources of his native speech, of stylistics, and so on.

In this list, incidentally, we once again encounter the already mentioned threat to the profession posed by Internet resources. If journalism is reduced to copy writing, rewriting and copying other people's materials and information off the Internet, without verification and without one's own creative approach, it just isn't journalism. Once practices like these begin to dominate in the media, we'll be able to forget about journalism as a profession.

There are no speculations involved here. Such processes will have (and already have) practical ramifications, particularly in changing the public's attitude toward journalists. The public won't defend journalists, won't defer to them, won't help the media, won't listen to the voice of journalists, and won't respond to the socially important problems they raise if the idea of journalism as cheap entertainment, a way to make a quick buck, and a form of pure business prevails.

Many media heads and experts see the problems of education and the profession. A survey conducted among Russia's regional media in 2007 showed that 71% of district newspapers, 55% of regional newspapers, and 42% of municipal newspapers are experiencing a shortage of *professionally trained* journalists.

What does "professionally trained" mean? A survey of regional media conducted in 2004 revealed deficiencies in three areas:

- training in the social sciences (economics, law, sociology, and so on);
- practical professional knowledge (ways of searching for information, knowledge of genres and styles, and so on);
- mastery of computer programs.

3. We all know that having an academic diploma in journalism is no panacea; a great deal depends on the quality of such education. In Russia, at Moscow State University, where the author of this article works, we recognise the need to develop and improve the education of journalists. The MSU Faculty of Journalism recently won a national competition for the right to develop programmes of university education for the country's higher educational establishments – the new Federal State Educational Standard for Journalism. The concept of the programme² is based on the following **basic provisions**:

- using the positive experience from training journalists in Russia, especially that relating to its traditional fundamentality;
- considering the requirements of current media practice and the opinions of employers;
- considering present-day world experience and trends in media operations;
- applying the experience of journalistic education in leading countries;
- considering the opinions of instructors and education experts.

I would like to devote special attention to the **principles** at the heart of the new system of journalistic education. The most important of these are:

1. practical and technological orientation of training (media schools, on-the-job training in editorial boards, schooling in new technologies and skills);

² Innovative approaches to designing basic educational programmes for post-secondary professional journalist training. Prof. Ya.N. Zasursky, ed. Moscow, Moscow University Press, 2007, p. 126.

2. combining mandatory and optional elements of training for effective adaptation for changes in the profession;
 3. combining universal professional training with specific, specialised training;
 4. cultivating the creative elements in a journalist's work (workshops and studios);
 5. determining the degree to which students have mastered their professional knowledge;
 6. consistency and fundamentality (of which philology is the core, and through mastering of the profession on the theoretical level is the foundation).
4. Here too, I would like to digress from the topic and dwell on the problem, often mentioned in discussing journalistic education, of the need for the theoretical and philosophical, if you will, training of a journalist.

As in Kyrgyzstan and in Russia since the second half of the 1990s, we are now seeing a boom in journalistic higher education. If there were 23 higher educational establishments that had a programme for training journalists in the USSR, there are already more than a hundred in the Russian Federation today. Training centres have sprung up not only at traditional universities, but in former pedagogical institutes and even in technical post-secondary schools.

In the opinion of the author, the problem is associated with the expansion and fragmentation of training centres (some even without a skilled teaching staff); universities have these problems as well. The problem lies in *fragmentation of the understanding of the essence of a journalistic*

education. Some say the essence of education lies in teaching the methods and skills of the practical arts. Others say it lies in training that is as close as possible to actual work, in on-the-job training in editorial boards, and in master classes taught by well-known journalists. They believe that universities ought to train mass communication theoreticians and media critics. A third group rejects traditional training in favour of the new methods of Internet journalism and even mobile journalism (which, they say, is where the future lies). A fourth believes that under market conditions, a student journalist should first of all master the theory and practice of management and advertising, and perhaps even the psychology of the mass consciousness. This is fragmentation, not pluralism; there is almost no dialogue between the adherents and opponents of these views. In this respect, the 11th Central Asian Media Conference is an important, unique stage in the development of journalistic education in the region.

Such fragmentation is based primarily on different understandings of the essence of the profession of a journalist in society. Among the public, there is no consensus in regard to what journalism is. This is one thing on which consensus is vital in order to keep society healthy. Journalism is viewed as a business, a weapon of propaganda, a means of advertising, a medium for informing the population, a way to distract the masses from their problems, a way to relax, an irritant, and so on.

So long as there is no understanding of the place and role of journalism as one of the main pillars of democracy, so long as there is no understanding of the place and role of the journalist as someone performing a valuable public service, so long as journalism and journalists en masse do not come anywhere near the ideal, it is hard to speak of and rely on a common understanding of the sense and essence of a journalistic education.

When a common understanding does emerge, we will then be able to think of common standards in education as well. One lever by which it will be possible to change a great deal is government and private partnership. Today, this means that media companies are strengthening collaboration with universities and are developing through dialogue the most promising elements media theoreticians and practitioners can impart.

5. Courses in the legal basis of journalism hold an important place in a system of journalistic education. Here, it is true, we can also resort to the utilitarian/practical arts approach and just teach students how to avoid responsibility for violating copyrights, revealing sources of information, for slander and insult; how to keep from getting fired; and how to lie and not be punished.

In my view, the aim of such a course should be to show why a special legal regime is being established for journalists and the media, how to obtain socially important information from government sources, how to prove the material is of public interest, how to defend their professional rights, and how to explain the special responsibility of a journalist.

The course should include a presentation of the fundamental principles governing the issues of freedom of speech and the press; norms, institutions, and court cases in the area of media law in Russia and in the countries of the West. The programme covers 12 topics and includes 36 academic hours of lectures.

In Russia, the law On the Media establishes the guarantees and boundaries of freedom for journalistic activities. The main achievement of this law has been the prohibition on censorship and making it legally possible to establish and register newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations, and news agents that are independent of the political party and government machine. It defined the procedure for establishing the media

and suspending media operations, the set of rights and responsibilities of journalists, and the nature of editorial boards' relationship with the public and with organisations.

In the years that have passed since the adoption of this media "constitution," the Russian parliament, president, and government have issued a series of other legal acts that now make up the fabric of Russian legislation on the media. There are now some 30 laws and dozens of decrees and regulations related to journalistic activities. They cover the areas of copyright, the holding of election campaigns, advertising, state secrets, and so on. The process of drafting legislation in the area of the media is still incomplete. There remain holes in the legislative system, the most obvious of which is the lack of a law in the field of television and radio broadcasting.

The development of domestic legislation on the media gave rise to a number of problems associated with the lack of traditions and experience in applying it, and the narrow legal culture of both journalists and society as a whole. Knowledge of the law, the mechanism for applying it in journalism, its particulars, procedures, trends, and finally of their own rights and duties make the professional activities of media workers considerably easier and helps avoid violations of the law that can harm not only journalists, editorial boards, and the subjects of articles and reports, but thousands of readers and viewers as well.

Journalism can function effectively when a legal environment favourable to its development has been created; that is, once the rule of democratic law in the relations of media journalists and editors with state agencies, structures of civil society, and individual citizens has been established. Establishing the rule of law is, along with creating a favourable, transparent, and predictable political base and a system of nation-specific

regulations, necessary to create an information society oriented toward the interests of the people.

As a result of the democratic changes over the last 20 years, the development of the media in Russia has acquired completely new features that are characteristic not of command administration and direct government but of legal regulation that incorporates appropriate world experience. In the course, a great deal of attention is given to the legal foundations of journalism abroad. Knowledge of the foundations of international and Western legislation on the media is important for understanding the democratic trends in the regulation of the media. Knowledge of the European law and norms on freedom of expression is of great importance too in that the Russian Federation has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1996. As a result, our country is obliged to provide for the standards of this international organisation in its own domestic legislation.

A sceptical student would tell an instructor that the laws in our country are by no means universally executed. And he would be right. But we have to explain to the student that the law doesn't say how things stand in the country; it just prescribes how they should be. The legal prohibition of murder doesn't rid the population of murder, not even in the most democratic country in the world.

Russia, just like any other post-Soviet state, is striving for the relations among its citizens to be regulated not by force of arms but by contracts whose power is upheld by the courts; this is simpler, more tranquil, and safer for everyone. Courts base their decisions on the letter and spirit of the law. The legal foundations of journalistic activity in Russia have already been created. Journalists have to learn their rights and work to exercise them as much as possible; this includes promoting the rule of law in their articles and other materials. Being conscious of their role and

responsibility will give journalists the practical opportunity to work freely in the media.

Challenges and new directions for global journalism education

David Mould¹

INTRODUCTION

I'd like to thank OSCE for the opportunity to share my perspectives on journalism education. I can't offer any single recipe for success, because journalism and educational systems differ between countries and cultures. However, some issues transcend national and cultural boundaries. I want to raise some talking points and hope we can continue the discussion throughout this conference.

It's fitting that I'm discussing journalism education in Bishkek, where I lived for 18 months in the mid-1990s, teaching journalism and working as a consultant with TV and radio stations. Although I will talk about general trends in journalism education, I can't do so without relating it to my experience as a teacher and media consultant in Central Asia. I've been coming to the region on a regular basis since 1996-1997, and this is my third visit this year.

Let me offer two apologies. The first is that I am not able to speak to you in your national language. I speak some Russian, but not enough for a presentation. Fortunately, I have an excellent Russian-speaking graduate assistant, Arman Tarjimonyan, who translated this presentation and offered useful comments.

¹ David Mould, Associate Dean for research and graduate studies and Professor of telecommunications at Ohio University, USA

My second apology—maybe it's more of a confession than an apology—is that my own undergraduate degree is NOT in journalism. I am from Britain, and studied European history, French and English literature and philosophy at university. A large-circulation newspaper hired me (and a few other university graduates without journalism training or experience) as trainee reporters.

It wasn't an easy transition. Although I was ready to conduct library research on the causes of the French Revolution, I had no idea how to gather information on the phone, write a news story or do an interview. The newspaper sent the university graduates off for a two-month course in reporting, writing, shorthand, typing and newspaper law, and then had us work under the supervision of senior reporters to gain experience.

Another group of new journalists had not been to university. They completed one-year diploma programs in journalism at technical colleges. They didn't know much about 19th century revolutionary movements or literary analysis, but they could cover a meeting, report spot news and rewrite a press release.

Which route to journalism is better? After a year on the job, I felt capable of covering the routine stories. And when the story was about an author or an artist, involved library research or covered a complex public policy issue, I often got the assignment ahead of one of my non-university colleagues. After three years, I moved on to TV news as a writer. There, I had to learn how to write to pictures, and work to new deadlines.

So do you need a university degree to be a journalist? And, if so, what should the curriculum be and how should it be taught?

MODELS FOR JOURNALISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There are basically five education models for journalists:

1. The European vocational model—that's the one followed by my British colleagues who did not go to university. It's usually a six-month to one-year diploma program, with practical, skills-based courses in information-gathering, reporting, writing, editing, law and ethics.
2. A university bachelor's degree with a major in journalism. This is the model used in the U.S. and other countries, including the Central Asian republics. Recent reports indicate that student demand for university-based journalism studies is surging around the world (Hume, 2007).
3. The short skills course (like the one I had) for university graduates with degrees in other fields.
4. Two types of master's program. One provides skills-related courses for those without journalism training or experience. Another, primarily for experienced journalists, focuses on the social, political, economic and cultural dimensions of journalism, provides a theoretical understanding of media and their effects, and teaches academic research skills.
5. Short courses, workshops and on-the-job training for working journalists, offered by media organizations, media assistance organizations such as Deutsche Welle, the BBC World Service Trust and Internews, and international donors, such as UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

JOURNALISM AS A PROFESSION

Journalism is a profession, but in most countries anyone—whatever their education or professional qualifications—can work as a journalist, assuming they can find a job. This distinguishes journalism from other professions such as medicine, law or engineering, and it's probably why there's disagreement—especially between the media industry and universities—on what qualifications are needed. It's the same in business, where natural talent is sometimes enough. There are successful journalists and business leaders who are self-taught, and may not even have finished secondary school.

Medicine, law and engineering have licensing requirements that students must pass before being allowed to practice. You don't go in for surgery (or even a consultation) with someone who claims to have a natural talent for medicine but has never gone to medical school. You don't ask someone who has not studied law to draw up a legal document or defend you in court.

But anyone can write and publish a story. And the growth of the Internet and so-called "citizen journalism" have further democratized journalism. In today's multi-channel, 24-hour news cycle, it's a challenge to separate good from bad information. The lack of a common definition of professional standards—what it means to be a journalist—is a difficult issue.

I don't think the solution is to set minimum educational standards or have national professional tests, such as those taken by doctors and lawyers. The licensing of journalists—whether by government or a professional body—can lead to restrictions on press freedom. Although there is poor and irresponsible journalism in every country, the answer is not to regulate journalists, except through the normal legal remedies. Journalism should be about the marketplace of ideas, and regulating the marketplace—by

allowing only certain people to publish—can have profound and harmful effects for politics and society.

That said, I propose that we set some expectations for journalism education and training—whichever of the five educational models is used. In this effort, we need to respect national educational traditions and systems, and different expectations of the role of journalists in society. Media scholars have challenged the assumption that Western-style press systems can be universally applied. Merrill (2002) writes that the insistence on “capitalistic and pluralistic media structures” is an “arrogant and ethnocentric” view. “Critics cite the concentration of ownership, servitude to business interests, devotion to the sensational and obscure, focus on profits, pandering to political elites, reinforcement of the social and economic status quo, and other common sins of journalistic irresponsibility” (Shafer, Freedman & Rendahl, 2008). In this view, journalism education that promotes Western news values and media independence is antithetical to the value system of some societies.

However, cultures and journalism change over time. In the Soviet era, the accepted role of the journalist was to be a servant of the state, whose mission was to promote the ideals of the Communist party and Marxist-Leninist ideology. The Soviet Union has gone, but journalism in some societies is still a primarily political occupation. In some countries, including the United States, journalists are supposed to be members of the so-called Fourth Estate, vigorously watching over government and business. Yet they work under commercial pressures (from owners and advertisers) that can be as restrictive as any political control. In some developing countries, the journalist’s role is moderated by the principle of social responsibility; while remaining theoretically independent of government and business, the journalist is expected to respect and promote national history, literature and culture, write in the native language, and contribute to the positive development of society.

To summarize: while we can try to set some common expectations, all journalists operate within political, economic and cultural boundaries.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS FOR JOURNALISM EDUCATION

Several national and international journalism and media organizations have developed lists of competencies—what makes a good journalism education, the knowledge and skills all journalists need, regardless of local conditions. Let's look at the three most-widely cited:

1. European Journalism Training Association (EJTA) (2006) In June 2006, EJTA, meeting in Estonia, issued the Tartu Declaration (see <http://www.ejta.nl/>).
2. World Journalism Education Congress (2007)
3. UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education (2007) (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001512/151209E.pdf>; UNESCO, 2007²).

International standards are important to universities in Central Asia because they need their students' degrees to be accepted in other countries. Some universities follow the Russian model, some are seeking U.S. accreditation, but the most prominent trend in recent years has been to look towards Europe and the Bologna Process, under which academic degrees and credits gained in one country's educational system will be accepted in another's. Universities have begun to change the length of degree programs and adopt European credit and grading systems. What is most important, however, is what students will be able to do—their

² Similar standards are set by national journalism education and accrediting organizations. In the U.S., the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/lists> 11 competencies for journalism students

competencies. That is why the Bologna Process does not only look at credit hours or years of study, but at results and outcomes. Although journalism as a discipline has not yet been assessed—or “tuned” to use the Bologna language—most observers agree that international competency standards, such as those from EJTA and UNESCO, will be used as a model.

LIBERAL ARTS FOUNDATION FOR JOURNALISM

The last time I was in Bishkek—in mid-July this year—my university colleagues were busy giving entrance exams to prospective students from all over Kyrgyzstan. A couple of weeks later, my friend Dmitry Strovsky, Professor of International Journalism at Urals State University in Yekaterinburg, Skyped me. He had also been administering entrance exams, and was appalled by the quality of the applicants. They didn’t know Russian geography or history, did not know Lenin’s role in the revolution and confused the First and Second World Wars. They could name popular singers, entertainers and sports stars. They knew that Vladimir Putin looks macho with his shirt off, swimming, fishing, hiking and battling with nature, but were not sure if he was Russia’s prime minister, or still its president. How can I teach these students, complained Dmitry, when they know so little about their country?

How can someone work as a journalist if they do not know the history, geography, economics, literature and culture of their own country and maybe even something about other countries in the world? Journalists without this background are ill-equipped to gather information and write about contemporary issues. The newspaper magnate Joseph Pulitzer, who founded the best-known practically-oriented journalism program at Columbia University in New York, stated in 1902: “Journalism is, or ought to be, one of the great and intellectual professions” (quoted in Dickson,

2000, p. 10). Many in journalism share the view of Bill Kirtz, a former newspaper editor and publisher who is now a journalism professor:

The best journalists are the best-educated journalists, who apply research skills, academic rigor, and high ethical standards to their craft. They need the type of knowledge that is at the core of the liberal-arts tradition, to be found in courses that explore history, culture, politics and science. ... A narrowly-educated journalist—one with only technical skills or one with only theoretical knowledge—cannot define “news” intelligently or determine its significance, much less present it with clarity and grace. How can a reporter distinguish a fad from a trend without the historical and cultural context provided by a solid liberal-arts foundation? (Kirtz, 1997).

We need to dispel the myth that any journalism can be “objective,” a simple mirror of reality. The process of news is all about selection—which topics to cover, which facts to select, who to interview, how to contextualize the story, how to provide a clear and balanced account. This is not a technical issue, not even one about good writing. It is about value judgments. The better and more broadly educated the journalist, the better the value judgments.

European education systems try to build this liberal arts base into secondary education. In principle, students who take diploma (non-degree) programs should have already gained this broad knowledge. In practice, this depends on curriculum, teacher quality and national peculiarities; historically, secondary education in Britain, France and Spain has been more ethnocentric than education in the Netherlands, Germany and the Scandinavian countries.

In the United States, Russia, the Former Soviet Union and other countries, this range of knowledge is usually part of the undergraduate degree

program. Most journalism educators in the U.S. subscribe to what's called the liberal-professional model. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) requires that three-fourths of an undergraduate's coursework is outside journalism and in non-skills areas—in the humanities, social sciences, arts and science. The rationale is that a liberal arts education prepares students for lifelong learning, helping them to conduct research, think critically, analyze problems and integrate knowledge.

IS JOURNALISM A PROFESSIONAL OR ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE —OR BOTH?

In the United States, there is a long-running debate over the teaching of journalism at the university level. Is it a professional field, where students are taught the basics of information-gathering, reporting and editing, and skills in photography, radio and TV production, graphic and Web design? Or is it an academic discipline, where students need to understand theory and research methodologies, and place media in historical, political, social, economic and cultural context? Journalism programs are caught between an industry that demands more skills courses and faculty with professional experience, and universities that value research and expect faculty to hold Ph.D.s.

From my research and experience as an educator, both in the U.S. and Central Asia, I'd like to suggest seven major issues for journalism education:

1. Journalism education needs to move away from literature
2. The merging of journalism and public relations
3. The role of language

4. The impact of media convergence
5. The role of independent work and study
6. The need for disciplinary specialization
7. The role of university-industry partnerships

#1: JOURNALISM EDUCATION NEEDS TO MOVE AWAY FROM LITERATURE

Historically, journalism in the Soviet Union was a subfield of literature so logically journalism education was conducted in faculties of philology. Although some programs in the United States grew out of departments of English literature, the emphasis has always been on fact-based journalism, not literary aspects. Although we can agree that journalists need to write clearly and concisely, with correct spelling and grammar, in their native language, there's debate over the value of literature to journalism education.

Teachers of language and literature can improve students' writing skills, but may not be able to teach journalistic style and structure. Modern journalistic writing style is less literary and descriptive, with shorter sentences, fewer subordinate clauses and minimal adjectives.

All students should study a country's literature, but as part of the liberal arts background—not as part of their professional education. We need to move journalism out of the field of literature, making it its own discipline.

#2: THE MERGING OF JOURNALISM AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In many countries, students interested in careers in public relations and marketing enroll in journalism programs. There are two main reasons: a lack of public relations degree programs and courses; and the simple fact

that there are more, and better-paying, jobs in public relations. The lines between journalism and PR, especially in societies where government or major corporations dominate media, are not nearly as clear as the journalism purists would like to think. It's not unusual for journalists to end up in PR jobs at some point in their careers; some PR professionals go the other way.

Most studies recommend separating the curricula of journalism and public relations. "It is useful for both sides to understand each other, but it is not best practice to conflate these two fundamentally different professions" (Hume, 2007). The UNESCO Model Curricula "do not include courses in communication studies (or mass communication or mass media studies) or in film studies, information studies, public relations, or advertising, all of which we feel should be offered separately" (UNESCO, 2007). With adequate resources, a university can offer separate curricula in journalism and public relations. Many institutions in this region, however, do not have the resources (especially the teachers) to offer separate curricula. In my view, both fields demand similar competencies—the ability to gather and analyze information, present it clearly and concisely, think of good visuals, tell an engaging story and maintain professional ethics. A well-trained journalism student can work in PR and vice versa. Let's provide the skills and have the students make the career choices.

#3: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE

The documentary maker and social activist Alfonso Gumucio Dagron once called the Internet "the electronic apartheid" (Dagron, 2001). What he meant is that if you don't know English, you do not have access to a lot of information. This, of course, has consequences for journalists who rely on the Internet as a source for research. Sources in other languages—including Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek—are still limited.

Some universities offer what they call “international journalism” programs, with some English-language courses. If the goal is to help students conduct research in English, that makes sense. If, however, they’re expected to become practicing English-language journalists, that’s another matter. Both the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP) in Almaty and the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) here in Bishkek, where most instruction is in English, report that their journalism graduates are at a competitive disadvantage for jobs in national or Russian-language media; that’s why KIMEP has begun offering a course in writing for Russian-language media. There just aren’t that many jobs in Central Asia for English-language journalists. And not many jobs for foreign correspondents.

#4: THE IMPACT OF MEDIA CONVERGENCE

Traditionally, journalism curricula have been divided into sequences or departments—for newspapers, magazine, TV and radio, and, most recently, online media. Although all students take common skills courses in information gathering and reporting, it’s assumed that they will follow different career paths, and need different, medium-specific skill sets. Most journalism educators attending the WJEC “seemed to still be working in the traditional categories of print and broadcast, while teaching the newer media, like online news and podcasting, only as an afterthought” (Hume, 2007).

The rapid economic and technological convergence of media has shaken this assumption. Once, newspaper companies were in the newspaper business; they might own many newspapers and share content, but everything was in print. Similarly, a company could own TV and radio stations, but it was still a broadcast operation. Today, on the global, national and local levels, many media companies own several outlets, including print, broadcast and online. From a business perspective, it’s more economic to employ one person to produce content for multiple

outlets than several people, each working for a specific outlet. However, as long as print and broadcast technologies remained distinct, journalists worked in separate media spheres.

That has changed as media technology—particularly digital media and the Internet—have broken down distinctions between media. You can read a newspaper and watch a TV news program on your computer, and download a podcast. Today’s journalists need the skills to work in all media—to shoot pictures and video, and adapt a print or TV story for online media. With a 24-hour news cycle and stories breaking on the Web, many U.S. media companies—even in smaller markets—have created converged newsrooms where journalists produce stories for several media.

At Ohio University, we are in the midst of a curricular process to eliminate traditional undergraduate journalism sequences—newspaper, magazine, broadcast and online. In basic reporting and writing classes, students shoot and edit video and learn how to structure and illustrate an online story, with links and threads. Although we will keep some advanced specialized courses, e.g. in magazine feature writing, most courses will include assignments in multiple media. Similar curricular reforms—or at least discussions of reforms—are taking place at other universities around the world. In the future, journalistic specialization may not be by medium, but by discipline (see #6 below).

We can no longer ignore (or look down upon) the Internet, mobile, Twitter and other new media as news sources. Most journalists use the Internet for information gathering. More significantly, the so-called mainstream media have lost their monopoly on information. The head of training at the BBC College of Journalism in London estimates that there are 150 to 200 “citizen journalists” for every professional journalist in the world. Because the costs of becoming a “citizen journalist” (by writing a blog or

uploading stills or video from a mobile phone) are low, this is becoming an important source of news in developing countries where traditional media struggle to be financially viable. Whether we like it or not, Internet rumors, social networking sites, amateur citizen journalism and mobile phone reporting have become part of the information world. In this increasingly cluttered information environment—where it's difficult to distinguish between good and bad information—journalists have a key role to play in analyzing and moderating the flow of information to the public, checking facts, dispelling rumors and revealing the political or social agendas of “citizen journalists,” bloggers or activist groups (Hume, 2007). To fulfill this function, they need to be able to work in multiple media.

#5: THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT WORK AND STUDY

A few months ago, I asked a colleague from Central Asia to sum up journalism education at his university. His answer was brief and revealing: “Long hours in cold classrooms.”

Several months later, administrators at another university asked me about education in the United States. How many hours a week did students spend in class? How many hours of lectures did teachers give? When I told them, they looked puzzled. Surely, students could not learn much if they were in class only four or five hours a day.

I tried to point out that the number of hours in class—whatever the temperature in the room—is not the only way to measure what a student learns or what a teacher does. We need to recognize the value of out-of-class assignments—reading, writing, individual and group research—and practical experience, and the time that teachers spend supervising and assessing this work. Ohio University journalism students go from class to work all evening at the student newspaper, which publishes a 6-8 page edition every weekday. We need to measure what is learned, not just the

information delivered. The administrators listened politely, but were not impressed.

A student at a Central Asian university typically spends twice as many hours a week in class as a full-time student in the U.S. or Europe. In the first two years of a bachelor's program, for every hour in class, a student is expected to spend two hours on homework and independent work; in the third and fourth years, that ratio is increased. The goal is for students to become self-directed learners who know how to learn, and have the research, analytical and writing skills to take on new topics and trends. Too many lectures—the “long hours in cold classrooms”—does not encourage active learning, but instead makes students dependent on the teacher for learning. That's not a good formula for people we expect to be lifelong learners.

In Central Asia, the reason I've often heard for the number of para in a typical student week is that universities do not have the resources available for independent work—the libraries and computer labs are inadequate. That's changing as Internet access and speeds improve. Many excellent research materials are now available on the Internet and more students have search skills. It's probably a better investment to improve Internet access than to buy more books.

6: *THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINARY SPECIALIZATION*

Journalists work in an increasingly complex world, with many specialized areas of knowledge—in health, business, science, the environment. One emerging trend in journalism education is to prepare students to be specialists in the fields on which they report through interdisciplinary studies, joint degrees, or minors. Major media have always had journalistic beats, where reporters specialize in politics, business, literature and the arts. But most of these journalists started as general assignment reporters, without specialized study.

The argument today is that some areas—such as science, medicine, financial markets and military strategy—require serious academic study. Studies show that many members of the public know little about the basic principles of science, such as the replication of experiments, testing of hypotheses, the meaning of statistical significance, and use of control groups. Similarly, journalists reporting on political polls need to understand how the research was conducted, including sampling methodology (sample size, margin of error, etc.), and how the results are interpreted.

A report from the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education calls for journalists who are “steeped in knowledge about the subjects they report on.” According to the president of the Carnegie Foundation, “[J]ournalists today need a keen grasp of statistics, science, politics and history” (Claussen, 2006). Some journalism programs are encouraging students to take majors, minors and joint degree programs—in such varied fields as public health, medicine, environmental studies, urban planning, business, economics, history, religion and art. As the editor of *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* put it in an editorial, “why wouldn’t managers and executives want reporters who knew more, rather than less, about what they were covering?” (Claussen, 2006).

In one way, this supports the notion of a liberal-arts education because it stresses coursework outside journalism. In another way, it runs contrary, because it requires specialization in a subject, rather than a broad mix of courses. Specialization can produce a well-prepared science or medical reporter, but will that journalist be able to report on politics or cover a demonstration or natural disaster?

#7: THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

The final challenge that all university-based programs face is building partnerships with the media industries. This does not mean allowing media managers to design the curriculum—that way, you’ll end up with a series of skills courses. But it does mean involving working journalists in several ways:

1. Journalists as part-time teachers of practical courses. Universities have to accept that a Ph.D. is NOT an essential requirement for teaching. And they need to offer competitive pay rates—currently, experienced journalists in Central Asia are unwilling to teach because the pay is so low. Another option is for a working journalist to team-teach a course with a faculty member. This can have mutual benefits: the faculty member will learn new knowledge or skills, but will also mentor the journalist who may know little about teaching.
2. Journalists and teachers as joint supervisors of student internships. Universities need to develop more structured internships for students and make sure they are worthwhile learning experiences. This requires collaboration between teachers and journalists in the selection and assessment of students, and their work assignments. Many students have to wait until the third or fourth year to do an internship. There should be opportunities from the first year.
3. Professional development for teachers. Media organizations need to offer short-term opportunities (usually in the summer) for teachers to not only observe, but work as journalists and gain new skills.
4. Curriculum development and media training programs. Experienced journalists can help journalism educators update their programs and course content. Similarly, teachers can advise media organizations

on the design of in-service professional training programs, including workshops and on-the-job training.

CONCLUSION

Since my first work in Central Asia in the mid-1990s, I've seen positive developments in both media and journalism education. Journalism remains a popular area of study for many young people, and the media industry (despite the recent economic downturn) has significantly expanded, creating more jobs. Media companies and foreign donors can contribute to journalism education, but they alone cannot provide the sustained effort that's needed; media companies are still struggling financially, and foreign donor projects come and go. Universities, by contrast, are here to stay, and need to take responsibility for educating the next generation of journalists. This means curriculum reforms and improvements in teaching, especially of practical courses. While resources--financial and human—remain a major barrier, I have reason to be hopeful because of changes in attitude among journalism educators and, in some cases, the university administrators. Change is happening, albeit in small steps, *malenkiye shagi*.

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No such thing as too much training

Manana Aslamazyan¹

Everyone who is in one way or another associated with the media in any country around the world recognises the need to constantly raise the qualifications of journalists. This is due to the need to continually master rapidly changing technologies. It is due to the wish for career growth and the need to master new, more complicated genres. It is due to people who have no specialized journalistic education joining the profession. It is due to the creative nature of the profession, which regularly demands new ideas and new takes on things.

It is of extraordinary importance that practicing journalists have the permanent opportunity to regularly take part in various programmes for raising their qualifications and improving the quality of the media in their homelands, since it is by the quality of journalism that one can determine a country's state of democracy. Without a free, professional, responsible journalistic community, it is impossible to build a strong, just, and prosperous society.

For more than 15 years, I worked as the director of Internews, Russia's largest non-profit organization. We organized and conducted dozens of the most varied projects associated with the development of Russia's electronic media. Above all, however, we were well-known as the largest centre for the retraining of media personnel. Internews trained more than 11,000 people. There were hundreds of seminars, schools, workshops,

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conferences, round tables, and internships. We had more than 500 trainers of all types: permanent and temporary, locals and foreigners, the experienced and the young, from Moscow and the regions, and so on. I'm certain there's no TV company in Russia that doesn't have at least one Internews graduate among its employees. The demand for our courses was immense: at the start of each training project, we had anywhere from three to ten times as many applicants as we had places for them. We taught all of the professions needed in a media company. Sometimes, of course, we made mistakes, but we learned from them and acquired our own experience – the experience of organizing training projects for the media in a country that was undergoing enormous change, not only in its political and economic system, but in the media as well.

At this conference, I want to share with you some of the lessons I learned during those years. Practical advice that has nothing to do with an academic journalistic education. I'm certain that all of the NGO leaders attending the conference who are involved in developing the media have their own experience of successes and failures. But perhaps my observations too will be of use to someone, especially if you face the task of creating a place in your own country where those working in the media industry can raise their qualifications, improve their working skills, and better understand the specifics of their chosen profession.

Let me say right now that I shall answer the question “If you were so successful and popular, why are there so few balanced, independent, and responsible TV and radio companies in Russia today?” at the end of my address. Here then are some simple conclusions and thoughts on media training in the newly independent states:

Lesson One. Don't bother starting if you aren't in for the long haul.

Creating a strong, responsible media sector demands much time and a flexible strategy. The retraining process is never-ending, and in no country, not even the most developed one, can you say “Everything's done, we can stop working.”

New media outlets and new media projects appear every day around the world. Old publications are reformatted. New TV and radio formats come out. Technologies are updated. Media laws are changed. In other words, the process of change and renewal is never-ending. The process of training personnel capable of dealing with these changes is just as endless. This is why, when you're setting up your own training centres, you have to set long-term strategic tasks for yourself. Cultivate experience and skills. You have to constantly evaluate and update your strategy to meet the needs of the times. Media NGOs should understand all of the processes at work in the industry (economic, political, technological) better and earlier than the media themselves. Study and plan, make forecasts and draw conclusions; this is the only way you can make yourself indispensable to your media community.

Lesson Two. Media means teams and teamwork.

Many other experts besides journalists are involved in creating a media product. Even the most talented and independent journalist will not be able to realise his/her own capabilities if:

- the head of the company has no vision, strategy, or management skills;
- the company has no adperson that can generate income to finance operations;

- there are no technical experts who can print a newspaper, shoot and cut a video, or record sound quickly and with quality;
- there are no lawyers who can assess risk and ensure legal protection for journalists.

The list is endless.

Each element, each division is important. This is why you should not forget about allied trades specialities when putting together a programme of media training; you have to raise the qualifications not just of journalists but of camera operators, directors, layout artists, production designers, advertising personnel, promoters, and even media bookkeepers. Remember that only a close-knit team with common goals, a common vision of standards and quality, and mutual understanding and established ties can achieve success.

Lesson Three. A lot real fast, or a little over a long time?

Sooner or later, every organization involved in media training asks itself “How can we distribute our budget more effectively?” What is better for the industry: a few long, extended programmes every year for a limited number of students, or a lot of short seminars for a broader audience? Each one answers the question in its own way. So, one offers a long-term practical course for ten people every year, while another offers one-day seminars. Favouring just one type of course (long-term or short-term, individual or group) cannot, in my view, effectively improve the situation in one sector or another. So, if you want to be an effective training centre, you have to develop a variety of programmes that differ in content, complexity, and length. Only then can you satisfy the constantly growing needs of the industry. The combination of different courses each year will help maintain the overall average level of journalism, while the individual extended approach will train leaders in the profession.

Lesson Four. Personnel are all-important.

No training programme can succeed without highly qualified instructors. In the first years of the new media's development, almost all of the seminars in our countries were conducted by foreign experts. This was entirely understandable. The new national media structure had only just come into being; journalists had no experience working in independent, privately-owned outlets, and there were no private outlet managers at all. Foreigners came here with a lot of enthusiasm, bringing their own practical experience, which was different from ours, and the firm belief that they would help us transform ourselves quickly. As the years went by, the situation began to change. It became clear that the process of transformation would not be fast; there are a lot of us and we are all different. Foreign instructors were more expensive for us than our own people because they needed airfares and translators. Most important, our own people began to catch on. With each passing year, there was less and less need for media development NGOs to hire foreign trainers. In my view, a combination of domestic and foreign trainers is very important in case of rare and conceptually new programmes. The most important thing for a training centre, however, is to build around it a constantly expanded and renewed group of home-grown professionals whom the centre itself helped master the methodology of teaching and create a full-fledged teaching programme. This does, of course, require investment, both financial and intellectual, but it is quickly returned. With regard to the students, most of them prefer to have domestic stars as trainers, since the language barrier disappears and the instructor better understands the conditions in which the media of one country or another exist. But to stop hiring foreign instructors completely might lead to isolation and the loss of contacts in the industry's international community. So, a combination of experienced domestic and foreign trainers and stars could be most effective for developing journalism and the media as a whole in any country.

Lesson Five. How much can a journalist know?

Seminars devoted to exploring one particular media topic or another have become extraordinarily popular among domestic non-governmental organizations and foreign donors. This is due to dissatisfaction with the quality of coverage on these topics. Very often, journalists themselves are the reason for this dissatisfaction, either because of their own low level of education, or due to laziness or personal bias. A serious mistake by a journalist can cause just as much harm as one by a doctor or a teacher. So, while recognising the importance of such programmes, I'd say that a journalist working for a general-audience publication cannot be an expert on all topics. It is the journalist's professional duty to find sources for any report. So, when putting together a programme of specialized training courses, do your best to balance the curriculum. You have to devote just as much attention to the different ways of covering a topic as you do to the topic itself. The same is true for the professional aspects of the matter, special journalistic practices, and knowing how to explain complicated topics to a general audience in the clearest way possible.

Lesson Six. Media + NGOs = ?

Real change happens only when it is supported by non-media efforts. In organizing training programmes for journalists, you have to constantly work to strengthen the ties between civil society and the media. Only by working in close contact with national and local organizations of civil society can the journalistic community better understand and appreciate its job and its role in society. NGOs can be initiators of ideas and sources of information while simultaneously being media critics. The media's main job is to help promote democratic values and create a just society, and media training programmes cannot remain on the sidelines of these tasks. Unfortunately, however, this mutual understanding between the media and NGOs does not exist in many of our countries. I would even say that

they frequently view each other with mistrust and suspicion. This is largely due to our governments, which often divide NGOs into “ours” and “theirs” and do not give various kinds of public organizations the respect they deserve. Meanwhile, the media suppressed by these same governments meekly accept the rules of the game and do not even try to deal with these issues like they should.

Therefore, I would like to add that one of the most important tasks of any training centre wishing to improve the lives of its fellow citizens is working to build mutual understanding between these two extraordinarily close sectors.

Lesson seven. Fashion in training.

Just as in every other area of human endeavour, especially if it is associated with creativity, trends and fashions also change in journalistic training. We now see on-line programmes, public journalism, blogging studies, and so on. From time to time, donors are infatuated with one topic or another and are prepared endlessly finance such programmes, believing traditional seminars for traditional journalists to be outdated. As in my previous addresses, I should call for moderation. My personal experience, after Internews elaborated and conducted thousands of hours of advanced on-line courses, shows that you cannot get carried away and limit your training formats. In training journalists, you get the greatest effect when you combine on-line courses with a regular course for one and the same people. You should not go overboard creating expensive online courses if you don't have a long-term and multi-element strategy for the development of your training centre. You shouldn't follow fashion too closely. Another example is the fashion for public journalism, which is of course extraordinarily important but would not replace professional publications anytime soon, and possibly never. Television and newspapers will continue to exist alongside Twitter and Facebook for

a long time to come. Bloggers will continue to compete with professional journalists. I therefore would like you to treat the idea of fashion in such matters as education with a grain of salt.

Lesson eight. Faculties of journalism + training centres.

The main shortcoming of the system of education in the area of media is the gap between academic knowledge and the requirements of the industry. Most experts recognise the lack of practical educational programmes that take into account the particulars of a rapidly changing industry. This gap can be filled by professional training centres where media workers can acquire practical skills and advanced specialization. To do this, however, training centres have to know the industry better than the media themselves. For their training programmes to be in demand, effective, and interesting, training centres need to follow the processes at work in the industry very closely.

At the same time, it is very important to work together with faculties of journalism and to offer them your services to raise the quality of academic programmes through contacts with media workers, since it is academic education that provides a real base of knowledge, especially in the fields of history, literature, and language arts. As a rule, however, traditional programmes do not cover the disciplines of economics, management, communication skills, sociology, or media psychology. Most important, traditional education does not provide practical skills in the use of technology.

The main conclusion I draw from my experience is that you have to build not competitive relations with educational institutions, but relations of collaboration. It seems to me that the NGOs involved in media development should take the initiative in this, since they are more mobile and independent in their operations and can respond to change

more flexibly, in contrast to educational institutions bound by long-term academic programmes that are hard to modify.

Ninth and Most Important Lesson. Where's the money?

The main problem of education in any country of our region is financial. Who should pay for education: a foreign donor, a domestic donor, the state, the media company, or the journalist himself?

It's common knowledge that in the first years after the transformation, the overwhelming majority of seminars were paid for by grants from foreign private or public donors. Every one of us today can remember the names of dozens of international organizations. But time marches on, and the natural question arises: How long should foreign donors pay for training professional workers in our region? Everyone of course has his/her own point of view in this matter, and it's impossible to give universal advice. But I would still like to give one piece of advice to those who want to stay in the field of educating journalists for a long time to come. You can believe that sooner or later, you'll have to learn to take money for your services from the end users, who are all either media companies or the professionals themselves. Donors are gradually reducing their contributions, since problems around the world continue to grow and there are other countries that need donors' attention. This has been especially noticeable during the current economic crisis. Neither is the state ready to finance such programmes, since it has enough worries over financing educational institutions. So, in thinking of the future, try hard to plan a long-term programme for gradually introducing tuition-based courses.

Begin with a few and gradually increase the number of courses you offer. To do this, you again have to know what's happening in the industry better than the industry itself. You have to sense the moment when the

first signs of being able to pay for education appear in the industry. You have to start with the proposals that might be most attractive to company management: advertising, management, sales, traffic, design, and so on, along with the narrow practical skills dictated by modern technology. These mostly have to do with the transition to digital technology, but no one is teaching them.

Gradually win a position and a reputation so that you can at some point offer journalism courses as well. At the same time, of course, it's very important that you continue the search for other possible sources, and that you try to gradually lower your own costs and minimize your expenses. The route I suggest is slow and requires knowledge and a clear understanding of strategy, but it seems to me it's the only one open to us.

The route isn't fast yet, it's promising and, in my view, it's the only one possible – unless you're ready to say “Okay, we're ready to close down, mission accomplished.”

And now, as I promised, I'll answer the question “Why are the Russian media in the position they're in today, even though a lot has been said about your successes? Where's this notorious effectiveness?”

The answer is very simple and you most likely would not like it, but I see no other explanation. In our work, scale is of decisive importance. In 15 years, we've had 11,000 students enrolled in our training courses alone – more, I'm sure, than any of you in this hall have had. But consider the size of the Russian media industry. That's only around three percent of those in the Russian media industry today. Across the aisle from us are the state-owned media, huge amounts of money, and a return to the past. I could tell you how we can be proud of our contribution and what kinds of difficulties our graduates encounter, but that's not the topic of today's conference. It seems to me your efforts could be a lot more effective,

since the contribution of foreign investors to this sector is not much less than their contribution to the Russian sector, but each of your country is much smaller. The degree of your involvement could therefore be much greater.

I've told you today some of my thoughts, based on my own personal experience. The issues of journalistic education and the overall importance of the media are of course much more complicated, and there are no universal recipes for each stage in the development of the media in a particular country.

The mediazation of politics, economics, industrial production, education, and even private life is a present-day reality. More and more, ordinary citizens, large corporations, and even entire states are encountering the need to consider the media factor in planning and organizing their lives.

Those who produce information now number in the millions; managers of information companies, in the thousands. Knowing how to survive in and navigate the communications environment, the ability to make money in one of the most profitable areas of contemporary business, and finally the chance to master the specialized language of the media – you can try to learn all of this and become an educational project offering a new type of education that combines breadth, complexity, innovation, and – most important – high ethical standards.

I wish you success along the way.

The impact of technology and consumer habits on a journalist's qualifications

Dainius Radzevicius¹

The question “What is the media’s mission and what exactly is the mission of journalism?” is heard more and more frequently these days. Politicians, businessmen, and even academics are continually asking journalists this.

But has anyone honestly answered that he/she wants only quality information and analysis, and is ready to pay for it? Everyone has become more demanding toward the quality of journalism. But everyone wants it for free. Businessmen and politicians in particular understand the role of the media business very well.

According to Lithuanian legislation, those involved in the preparation and dissemination of public information, journalists and publishers, are to be guided in their activities by the law, international agreements, and the principles of humanism, equality, tolerance, and respect for the individual. They are to respect freedom of speech, creativity, religion and conscience, and differences of opinion. They are to adhere to the norms of professional ethics and the provisions of the Journalists’ Code of Ethics, promote the development of democracy and the openness of society, encourage civil society and advancement of the state, strengthen the country’s independence, and develop the state language and national culture and morals.

¹ Dainius Radzevicius, Chairman of the Union of Journalists of the Republic of Lithuania

Let us compare two points of view on the idea of the essence of journalism – that of Vilnius University and one of Lithuania’s richest private businessmen, Ignas Staskevicius:

- Journalism, as it is understood at Vilnius University, is “...the only field of study at Vilnius University for which an entrance exam, a creative competition, is required for admittance. ...Professional training in this field has its own requirements: journalists must understand the genres of journalism and the concept of freedom of speech. They must communicate well and be able to work with the public.”
- “ The media’s primary mission is to serve as packaging for advertising; their second mission is to observe; their third mission is to be a source of information; their fourth mission is to provide entertainment; and their fifth mission is to serve as a platform for celebrities. At the end of the day, the media are just another business.” (One of Lithuania’s richest businessmen, Ignas Staskevicius, www.bernardinai.lt, September 12, 2005.)

This point of view on journalism changed when the old media became the new media.

OLD MEDIA	NEW MEDIA
<i>The media as prepackaged products for passive consumers</i>	<i>The media as reference points for consumers: the opportunity to choose from the mass of information, entertainment, and interactivity</i>
<i>Journalists as creators of content</i>	<i>Journalists as aggregators and packers of content</i>
<i>Content protected by copyright and under the control of its creator</i>	<i>Content available to all after the first sale (“dissemination of content”); copyright monitoring, referencing, BBS</i>

One might say there has been a revolution in the media. This revolution, however, means only one thing: there has been a democratisation of the media. The old, traditional media models have become new models. Journalism has changed as well.

OLD MEDIA	NEW MEDIA
Mass media	Mass fragmentation
High barriers for creating content	Low barriers on the road to creating content due to the ease of use of technology
Journalists as “gate keepers,” defining the content of and schedules for media consumption	Open and relatively free distribution, at any time and at any place
One size fits all consumers	Individual content is determined by the consumer

The role of the journalist has grown considerably. Journalists and editors continue to be creators of content, but they are now also

- content aggregators (search systems);
- moderators between and among consumers (bloggers);
- managers who put the content of commercial communications into a form acceptable to consumers.

We should also note global trends and the current economic crisis. The old deal between consumer and advertiser was the persuasion of commercial messages in return for free or cheap information and entertainment. The new deal is that commercial messages have become an integral part of information and entertainment. Transparency and trust have become a great problem.

Television and the press: what has changed in five years?

As early as 21 May 2005, Lithuania's Elta Press Agency wrote that Americans had begun to read newspapers less often. The annual circulation of *The Washington Post* had fallen by almost 3%, and that of *The Los Angeles Times* by 6%. Even the circulation of *The Wall Street Journal* had gone down by 1%. Only *The New York Times* could happily announce that its circulation hadn't changed. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, things may have been even worse for smaller newspapers.

Newspapers aren't the only media experiencing a decline in circulation. It is reported that people have begun to watch television news less frequently as well.

Even during the decline, however, newspapers and evening news programmes were the main news sources for millions of people. Eight out of ten Americans read at least one newspaper every week. More than

half of all adults read newspapers daily. Almost 100 million Americans watched at least one evening news programme a week, and almost 25 million Americans watched the news every evening.

The reduced circulation of newspapers and the smaller audience for television news do not mean that the demand for information has gone down. On the contrary, *The Wall Street Journal* confirms that there has been a boom in sources of information over the last decade. This means interest in the news is growing.

In fact, the news pie is not getting smaller; it is ballooning. It now, however, is being cut into increasingly smaller pieces. The main reason for this is convenience. People don't want to wait while the news gets old.

The previous generation remembers the decline in evening papers that happened because people could learn the news from television broadcasts, since this information was prepared several minutes before a broadcast began, rather than several hours, as in the newspapers.

People nowadays are striving for the opportunity to get the latest news at once, 24 hours a day. It's not important where they are and what source they're using.

In the opinion of *The Wall Street Journal*, good news is that the newspapers can make the latest technologies work for them. People are increasingly taking advantage of alternative sources, and these alternative opportunities allow newspapers to reach their readers.

Even more important is the question of where people will seek information in the future. The old periodical publications are proud of their traditions. They are proud that they publish verified (and therefore reliable) news, and that they are even now investing huge amounts of money to ensure the

quality and variety of their information. Newspapers, however, in trying to hang onto their readers, have to do more than seek new ways of getting closer to their readers.

Different media for different people

Experts tell us that happy people socialise with friends, enjoy the company of other people, and read newspapers; unhappy people watch television. John Robinson and Steven Martin, sociologists at the University of Maryland in the United States, have established that people who are unhappy spend 30% more time in front of the television than happy people do. Robinson and Martin drew these conclusions for the period 1975–2000, after analysing the behaviour of 30,000 people (my source for this is *The Telegraph*).

We cannot claim, however, that watching television makes you unhappy.

This effortless pastime does indeed reduce the motivation for seeking other, more varied and useful ways of spending time. There is, however, another side to the issue: unhappy people are far more passive, and sitting in front of a television is for them a simpler means of entertainment. It requires no effort and no need to go anywhere or to plan one's time. In addition, it doesn't cost anything.

Sociologists still note, though, that this way of spending time brings only short-term satisfaction, and has a negative impact in the long run.

Professor Martin compares the habit of watching television to the use of drugs: "It creates only short-lived, superficial satisfaction, and helps one forget his/her problems for a while; putting off solving them, however, only strengthens his/her disappointment and dissatisfaction with life."

For people who have personal and communication problems, continually watching television often becomes a habit whose effect, in Professor Martin's words, resembles that of tranquilizers.

Experts also note that the level of happiness among people who spend a lot of time on the Internet is the same as the statistical average, unlike the level for people who often watch television.

It is still a fact, however, that users the world over find information that interests them on their own, and are devoting less and less attention to the traditional media. This is confirmed by the data of IBM's 2007 Annual Survey of Consumer Digital Media and Entertainment Habits.

The IBM studies found that while 19% of the respondents stated that they relaxed and worked on the Internet for six hours every day, only 9% said they spent as much time watching television. Another 60% of the respondents were devoting as many as four hours a day to the Internet and other virtual entertainment, while 66% of those surveyed said they gave the same amount of time to television programmes daily.

In the assessment of experts, these trends reflect changes in society stimulated by the development of information technologies, or ITs. On the Internet, users find new, reliable information reflecting a variety of opinions, while personal computers, mobile telephones, and other such gadgets already allow people to take part in creating news themselves.

In addition, virtual entertainment increasingly serves the function of socialisation. The latest technologies allow people to easily become part of different communities (created on the basis of common interests, for example). More and more users therefore choose the Internet as their source of information and entertainment, rather than information produced by the traditional media that does not always meet individual

needs. This reflects the recent rapid growth (as compared to traditional advertising and other media) in the volume of virtual advertising as well.

In the study mentioned above, it is also noted that the Internet is becoming the most popular source of information among young people. The majority of those between the ages of 14 and 34 who took part in the survey said their main means of entertainment and information was their computer and mobile phone, and not television. Users from 2400 households in the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Australia participated in the survey.

Readers are the best newspaper editors? Yes!

Stephen Pritchard, President of the International Organization of News Ombudsmen and the readers' feedback editor of the British daily The Observer visited Lithuania in mid-October 2009. He stressed that even in a period of decline, while newspaper circulations are shrinking all over the world, his paper is able to retain its readers and hasn't experienced a large drop in circulation, as its competitors have. He believes that if the readers trust you, they'll buy you.

At a meeting with Lithuania's journalists (organised by the Lithuanian branch of Transparency International, an organisation for the study of corruption), Pritchard said the attitude of editors toward their audience is a vital factor characterising a good newspaper.

He also emphasised that having a column in the paper devoted to readers' letters is still no indicator of its transparency and accountability to its readers.

It is vitally important, Pritchard noted, to talk about the contribution readers make to the paper's content. Internet portals, where people can

freely comment on articles, do this. In Pritchard's words, publishing a letter from a reader whom the editors have offended, or from a displeased hero of a story, either at the paper's website or in a special column in the paper, is still no guarantee of either the newspaper's transparency or its accountability to its readers. It would be the same as if a sick man went to a doctor, told him his problem, and the doctor replied there was nothing he could do. A newspaper should allow itself to be taught.

An important question then arises: Are journalists and editors inclined to be taught? In Lithuania, unfortunately, neither rank-and-file journalists nor (even more so) editors are ready for this.

Pritchard says that a newspaper should take steps to find ways to help the offended reader, do its best to compensate him/her for the harm inflicted, and act according to the higher principles of journalism. According to Pritchard, newspaper ombudsman is a general term applied to those who do the kind of work he does. Most often, such people are called readers' feedback editors or readers' advocates. In the United States, another term is popular: public editors.

Pritchard says his paper strives to be absolutely honest and open to its readers. This allows it to retain many of the readers who identify their newspaper, for example, with a publication concerned about environmental protection. It in fact turns out that this is a constructive way of criticising journalists and a way to retain the readers at the same time.

As is well known, the readers of any newspaper are its lifeblood. Journalists and editors have to work more responsibly and with better quality in order to retain their readers. Earlier, it was possible to ignore the interests of the readers, since they had no choice: in order to get information, they had to buy a newspaper. Then came television and

radio, which took many readers away. Now it is the Internet, which makes newspapers free and easily accessible.

So, the “newspapers and readers” interrelation has changed substantially. Readers are more powerful than they were earlier, and had therefore be more listened to. If you want them to read you, look out for their interests.

In Pritchard’s words, then, introducing an ombudsman position helps to track the readers’ sentiments. In the United States and Great Britain, newspaper circulations are rapidly shrinking; some of them, however, are hanging on quite well – *The Observer* for one, and the similar paper *The Guardian* as well.

We believe the work of an ombudsman helps find the key to readers and preserve their loyalty. Ombudsmen should worry about the quality and accuracy of information. They should work openly with their readers. If they trust you, they’ll buy you. This is why much has been said about public journalism.

At present, an intensive dialogue is under way between the consumers and producers of news; one might even say that the boundaries between the two groups are disappearing.

It is interesting to compare the media markets in countries where media traditions are completely different. A Lithuanian journalist from the daily *Atgimimas* who talked with Pritchard stated openly that it would be almost impossible to institute the position of readers’ feedback editor (in other words, an intermediary between audience and content creator) in Lithuania. It is obvious that Lithuanians often believe that excessively painstaking efforts to correct one’s own mistakes can be perceived as an admission of weakness and the inability to do one’s job. It is also believed, by the way, that there are no strong institutions for the self-

regulation of journalists in Lithuania: no one is interested in their decisions which are often contradictory. It sometimes seems as though no one is worried about readers' reactions.

Stephen Pritchard admits that what is normal for the editors of The Observer might well be impossible in Lithuania. He reminded the audience, though, that this at one time seemed impossible in Britain as well. A bold and respectable press does not appear overnight, all at once. As it was in Britain, so is it now in Lithuania. The more Lithuania's journalists work with their readers, however, and develop them so that they become critical toward what they read, the greater the hope that strong, mature, and daring media will be created.

Penetration of new information technologies into Lithuania's media

Both global (international politics, net ethics) and local factors (Lithuanian laws regulating the Internet, for example) directly affect the media in Lithuania. Rapidly developing information and communication technologies are penetrating ever more deeply into all spheres of public life, creating an information society. Educated members of a knowledge-based society who are receptive toward innovation give the media an incentive to work better, since they can connect with sources of information, thanks to the new technologies, and challenge the media as intermediaries in the process of transmitting information.

The introduction of new information technologies in Lithuania's media has entered its second stage, characterised by wider application of new technologies. New versions are being created and the search is on for new models. Mass use of the new information technologies to gather, publish, and disseminate information has begun.

The global net has given the public new opportunities that allow everyone to freely write and publish texts. Experts point out fundamental technological characteristics of the Internet that directly influence its informational media: interactivity, hypertext, and multimedia. These features have changed the essence of the traditional perception of journalism.

Interactivity has led to two-way information traffic that has replaced the classical model of communication. Hypertext has substantially changed the linear style of writing and the sequential reading of text, while multimedia has provided the opportunity to freely select the information format.

As a result of the spread of information technologies, however, there is a growing surplus of information. The role of the media as an information filter is therefore getting stronger.

It is entirely obvious that the consequences of using the new technologies can especially be expected in areas directly associated with the production, dissemination, and use of information content, which are in fact the media.

The technological opportunities offered by the Internet – the means to gather, transmit, and publish information – are much more varied than any other information technologies. On mobile telephones, for example, it is still possible only to transmit/send text or audio information, and the possibility of directly putting a video on the Internet has recently become a reality. On the Internet, however, it is very easy to combine images, sound, and text; to find additional sources of information through hyperlinks; and to take part in discussion forums, chat rooms and the like.

Interactivity is one of the Internet's most important characteristics directly impacting on journalism. It makes for updating information, two-way communication, and a uniquely multiple model of communication (many to many).

The new information technologies are changing the content of the media, the profession of journalist and the processes of work, the structure of media organisations, and the relationship with target audiences. Lithuania's media increasingly recognise the advantages of the new information technologies and are beginning to use them on a much wider scale.

Lithuania's electronic media sites have become more interactive in recent years. Since 2000, most media sites have acquired more interactive capabilities, from the point of view of two-way communication. In terms of two-way communication, the interactivity of Lithuania's main media organisations' sites have already reached the level of the electronic portals of foreign media organisations.

It can be said that the content of Lithuania's media sites is changing in favour of the reader/user. This is confirmed by the new media services (such as WAP, e-mail news services, SMS messages, and so on) that have appeared in the last two years.

We can say that Lithuania's journalists are happily taking advantage of the new technologies in their work, realising that the Internet has made their work easier and improved its quality. Another trend has been noted: the structure of media organisations is changing. Traditional media publications and Internet-format publications supplement one another with more complete information. They are literally being combined into a common organised system.

One other item should be noted: so far, it has been possible to do things on the Internet that cannot be done in traditional media, even though they all still fall under one and the same category. In Lithuania, there is no agency that would control this area.

The active application by today's media of information and communication technologies in a journalist's work has a social and cultural effect on how well society is informed. The implications of the great changes in recent years are just beginning to be felt. Studies have been conducted in this field to find answers to the following questions: How do Internet technologies affect media operations in the broad sense, and How are the everyday work of a journalist, the genres and content of information, and the demands of the audience changing?

The rapid deployment of new technologies in other spheres of public life (politics, business, social ties, art, and so on) is leading to a great many questions. Projects that combine interdisciplinary studies (political science, sociology, anthropology, and the media) will provide answers on how this affects the processes of democratisation and the degree to which citizens participate in them.

Journalism and professional training: what is changing?

In contemporary society, the demand for both journalism and integrated communications is growing. In the context of different global changes, all organisations realise the importance of publicising their operations, of effective communication and dialogue with the public, and of ensuring that they function well in the long term. The rapidly changing information market and the deployment of new technologies also demand professionals of a completely different order who are not limited to the boundaries of one particular country but are capable of critical thought

and analysing events in today's world, and can work not only in traditional media communities but in the Internet's new media communities as well.

This calls for good theoretical and practical training of international standard. One can get such training in a master's degree programme.

This is why, for example, Vilnius University's Faculty of Journalism in Lithuania is organising a course for a master's degree in integrated communications, along with continuing studies in integrated communications.

What is the course oriented to in the context of changing technologies and user skills? The university's experts say that the aim of their new master's programme in journalism is to train competent and responsible professionals who are capable of informing the public and of analysing political, economic, and socio-cultural processes, using the latest methods of transmitting information, and who are guided by the standards of journalism ethics.

What are they teaching the new generation of journalists? First of all, the theory of mass communication; types and genres of discourse; the practices of the press, radio, and television; media law and ethics; and media organisation management. A course on Internet creativity is highly relevant. Journalists also acquire a good deal of knowledge on public relations. Courses on video communications, communications culture, and political communications are mandatory. Special attention is given to analysing propaganda and, of course, to media innovations.

What prospects await someone who has gotten such training? University graduates are now working in Lithuanian and international media organisations, in public relations agencies, in commercial companies, and in governmental and non-governmental organisations. They are

also continuing their education in doctoral programmes in the social sciences. Masters who have finished other courses besides journalism are qualified to work not only in media organisations (the press, radio, television, and the Internet) but in centres for media research and studies, and in media monitoring organisations as well. They can also work in research organisations dealing with media issues in the social sciences, and independently set up new media organisations in the commercial and non-governmental sectors.

Does anyone need real journalists?

The European Federation of Journalists is worried over this question. The EFJ issued a declaration in Bulgaria on 16 May 2009, the essence of which was contained in its first sentence: “the dramatic restructuring of the media economy across the world and particularly in Europe poses serious questions for all in journalism and the media industry.”

We should listen to the journalists’ words: “dramatic” and “particularly in Europe.” We all point the finger at the persecution of journalists in Belarus or Russia. Likewise, we are worried that members of the press are actually being hounded out of the country in Iran. We don’t even notice that there is plenty of drama right here in our home, in Europe.

But perhaps journalists are worried over nothing?

For example, is it really worth seriously discussing whether the technology that allows people to create and share content is changing the media? It’s a fact. But it deprives the media that serve their communities of financing. The blogs and social networks opening up new parts of the world are displacing traditional media, especially newspapers.

Media markets are collapsing. The flight of advertising to the Internet and a new generation of users who have less time for newspapers and traditional television have caused panic in an industry which is cutting jobs and slashing editorial costs at the expense of quality journalism and weakening democratic pluralism.

The decline of journalism and media in Europe caused by employers desperate to squeeze even more profits out of the sector is getting even worse as a result of today's economic downturn.

The crisis is having a dramatic effect on media coverage of the political, social, and democratic life of Europe. There is no longer a balance between private sector media and publicly-funded outlets, especially in broadcasting, which has traditionally provided the citizens of Europe with pluralist and diverse information.

There are no guarantees that media pluralism can be assured. The private sector is no longer able to guarantee the provision of information services that have been central to preserving and enhancing standards of democracy in Europe.

At the same time, public broadcasters are experiencing their own crisis as well, and are coming under enormous political pressure (see the latest report from the Open Society Institute, *Television across Europe: More Channels, Less Independence*, which reveals the extent of the crisis in Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia). In Europe's main media, both public and private media are under equal pressure.

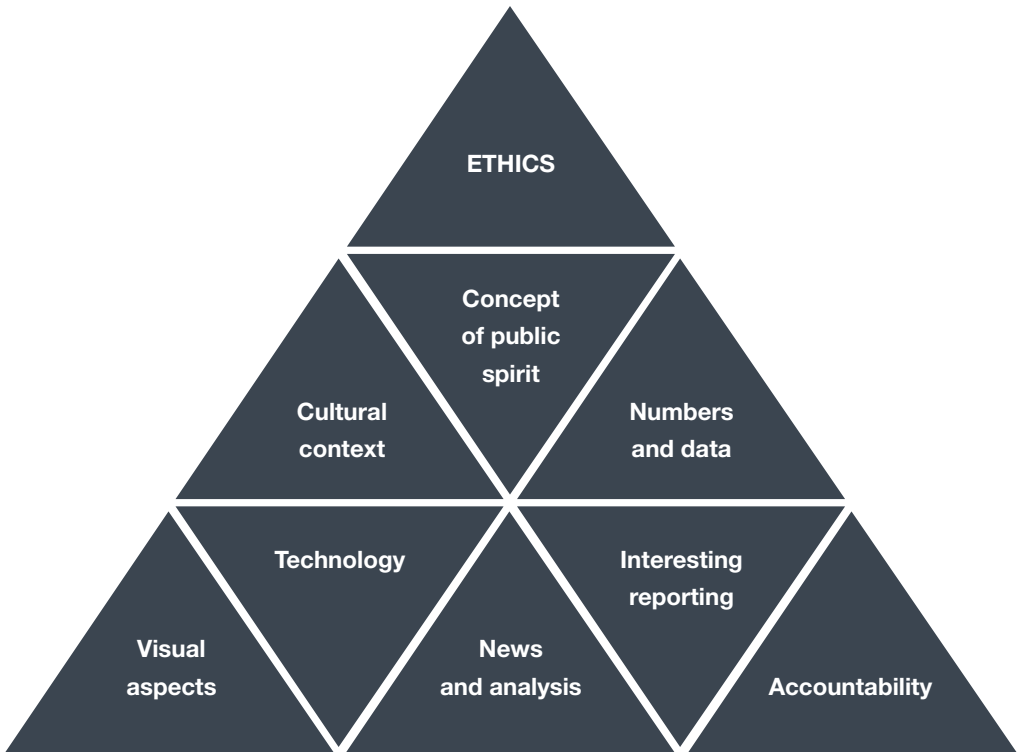
Today's crisis is not short-term. The extent of the collapse of traditional media in the United States has caused enormous shock both to media

practitioners and public bodies. There is little doubt, sooner than later, that Europe, too, will face the consequences of market restructuring.

This change is inexorable and offers potential for the creation of more open, more engaged, and more informed communities. This will only happen if there is protection for the professional, public purposes of journalism – to stimulate, educate, and inform public debate, and to call to account those who exercise power in society. Journalism provides the mechanism for scrutiny and a check on corruption, and it keeps societies open.

How has the current economic crisis affected the media? We can see major cutbacks in print advertising, for example, in the United States, Germany, Great Britain, and Lithuania, sometimes by as much as 50%. In some countries, television advertising has been cut back. The future obviously belongs to the Internet.

Learning ethics is generally a lifetime job. Frequently, it is only at the end of your career that you can say whether or not you've performed ethically. How then can we teach young persons to work ethically in just one year? How can we cope with pressure from the public, the government, or business? How can we teach them not to betray their profession? The temptation to exchange a dangerous and low-paying profession for one that is safe and pays well is great. Many do not last. Politics, business, advertising, and public relations beckon, and at best, such people go back to universities.



In choosing the profession of journalism, one therefore ought to carefully answer one question: Does he/she know that the most important thing, the thing that makes his/her mission clear, is recognising what he/she is and is not prepared to answer for? Don't hope for your reports to be believed blindly. Such levels of trust are possible only after many years of an irreproachable reputation. The more reasoned your reports and presentations, the more trust and interest they will evoke.

What should a journalist remember and do?

- Truth is the most important thing in journalism.
- “Verify your information!” is the golden rule.
- A journalist’s conscience is his/her permanent censor.
- Be true to the public.
- Be independent from your sources of information.
- A journalist is an impartial observer.
- Provide the public with the chance to take part in debates and seek compromises.
- Focus only on main topics.
- Provide comprehensive news coverage and ensure it is balanced.

What should state agencies and non-governmental organisations do?
Simply do not interfere with journalists’ work. Help them survive in their profession. Because good journalists might soon be an endangered species.

Journalism education in Central Asia

Media education in Kazakhstan: problems and prospects

Adil Jalilov¹

A Brief Description of the Industry

Journalism (though now it would be more correct to say media) education cannot be viewed separately from the area in which it operates, the media market. First, because media education is essentially a service component of the market, a system that trains personnel for it. It is the market that determines the structure of the demand for the product of media education – the high-skill professionals. What sort of professionals and how many of them are needed depends entirely on the market.

We must therefore first determine the main indicators of the media market in Kazakhstan. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, these data are contradictory.

Thus, according to the official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK), “8,248 media outlets are registered in Kazakhstan (2,513 outlets are actively operating); there are 212 electronic media outlets, 2,392 foreign media are distributed in the country, and more than 9,000 domain names are registered in the KZ domain. Eighty-five percent of the media are non-governmental.”

In the words of RK presidential advisor Ermukhamet Ertysbayev, 2,973 media are registered in Kazakhstan (he apparently meant those that are

¹ Adil Jalilov, Director for Development at the MediaNet International Centre for Journalism, Media-school Director, IWPR Regional Editor, Chairman of the Kazakhstan Media Alliance

actively operating; this data was released just a few days ago in Warsaw at the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting).

Along with the slight difference in the figures offered (a difference of about 500 media; the number is quite substantial), there is one other item. According to the law on Internet regulation that has just entered into force in Kazakhstan, all Internet resources are now also viewed as media. True, they still have not acquired registered status, but most of them are active. The media in Kazakhstan thus officially include not only some 3,000 traditional outlets, but also 9,000 Kazakhstan websites, hundreds of millions of sites from around the world, millions of blogs and social network pages, the pages in Wikipedia, and much more (all of these fall under the heading “Internet Resource”).

Yet another correction to the official data: 85% of the media are private, but only formally. In reality, if we measure not their number but the size of their audience, circulation, geographical, and other parameters, it is quite probable that the situation would turn out to be exactly the opposite: an absolute majority of the media in Kazakhstan are either state-owned or affiliated with the government.

In recent years, the Kazakhstan media have become Internetized: the web services of many outlets are becoming increasingly popular, due basically to the opportunity to comment on texts. The Internetization of the population continues as well. According to the latest data, this is true for 15% of the population, and the number is growing. To assess this dynamic, it is enough to compare the less than 3% of the population involved in 2006 and the plans of the government to connect 27% of the population to the Internet in 2011. According to some estimates, the 30-percent mark has already been reached in 2009, telling us that the Internet will play an increasingly larger role in the information industry.

One of the main problems of Kazakhstan's media market is its dissociation, its lack of solidarity, integrational mechanisms, and structures: there is no real trade union or any other kind of organization uniting journalists or editors.

The reasons for this? A huge territory disproportionate to the size of the population, language-based segregation (the Russian- and Kazakh-language press live in parallel worlds and rarely communicate), and a generally complicated theatre of operations.

This is the kind of market that determines the demand for personnel in Kazakhstan, and, supposedly, should shape the market for media education.

The System of Media Education

In Soviet journalism, there was no market or competition at all, but there was conservatism and ideology. Against this backdrop, the art of literary expression that provided the sole opportunity for self-expression always triumphed.

Nowadays, the conditions in Kazakhstan are completely different. There is a market, and there is cutthroat competition in the information field (a wide variety of cable and satellite TV channels compete with domestic stations, and the Internet is an entirely competitive medium). The art of literary expression has faded into the background; the ability to deliver on time, analytic ability, knowledge of technology, punctuality, innovation, fitting the format and the audience, and so on, are all more important.

As a result, Kazakhstan's media are making new demands on the educational system, and these can change very rapidly. It is therefore not surprising that the country's system for training personnel has

consistently failed to keep up with the development of the market or its new demands. Meanwhile, journalistic education is essentially a service component fated to provide the market with new workers.

So, for example, such concepts as the Internet and especially the new media and the so-called Web 2.0 projects (blogs, forums, social networks), infographics, PR, media relations, media art direction and camerawork, multimedia journalism, media management, media advertising, and so on, have to be included in the programme of media education.

Some of these concepts have become part of the programme, but journalism is frequently taught by theoreticians who have never published an article, never been on the air, and never produced a show – or, if they did, it was a very long time ago. The content of even the most progressive-sounding academic courses is often transformed either into theory or into nothing.

Higher media education in Kazakhstan is essentially just this kind of journalism – the classic style that was shaped in Soviet times. In all of the countries of Central Asia, and in all the countries of the former USSR for that matter, the situation most likely resembles the one in Kazakhstan.

While recognizing certain achievements and success in the system of journalistic education (for example, its partial reorientation toward practitioners), it is unfortunately worth noting that in the majority of cases, the people who teach journalism are focused not on what corresponds to today's media market but on their own ideas of what was basically yesterday's journalism. All too often, programmes and their content are excessively ideologised and adjusted to fit the government's perspective, and (once again) not the market.

It is especially worth noting that journalism is taught in Russian and Kazakh, and the latter is substantially behind the times. Even though twice as much money is spent on training personnel in the Kazakh language, the system for teaching in Kazakh lags considerably behind the Russian-language system of education in terms of quality.

It is enough to say that even today, there are very few in the Kazakh-language press who can provide pertinent information on economic processes, there are practically no Kazakh-language economic media, there are no web services in the Kazakh-language media, and so on.

So, in most cases, academic journalistic education in Kazakhstan is a system that is extraordinarily ideologised, conservative, and dependent on the state, and lags almost hopelessly behind the pace of the media market's development.

This system, even though it still has great technical capabilities (videostudios, printing plants) thanks to its being subsidised by the state, has changed little, due once again to the lack of qualified practitioners.

The Market for Media Education

In Kazakhstan today, there are two forms of journalistic education: the one found in higher educational institutions and the one found in professional training sessions or courses. As a rule, the higher educational institutions depend on the Ministry of Education and Science, which issues licenses and approves their academic programmes.

Journalism courses and training sessions are largely conducted by non-governmental organizations, and taught by instructors who are mostly practitioners. This, along with the courses being short-term, is due to the rather high demand for training programmes for journalists.

According to the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Education and Science, the overall number of students majoring in journalism during the 2008/2009 academic year was 2,903. Those who graduated at the end of the 2008/2009 academic year numbered 637.

As the Ministry of Education reported while I was preparing this speech, "24 institutions of higher learning were training personnel in this area in 2008." (For a list of these institutions, see the Appendix.) These institutions covered virtually the entire country, from the western regions to the eastern regions. Most of the institutions training are located in Almaty.

Kazakhstan's sole faculty of journalism is found at the al-Farabi Kazakh National University, the country's largest post-secondary institution. It is this faculty that is developing the state standard for academic programmes; that is, it actually creates the standards of media education. The other institutions training journalists have only departments, chairs, and divisions of journalism.

The official figures for journalism majors financed by the state in 2009 sound rather modest: just 84 in the entire country. According to information from the Ministry of Education's website, there were 70 journalism majors funded by the state: 45 in the Kazakh division and 25 in the Russian.

Outside of academic institutions – that is, universities – one can get a journalistic education only at several NGOs. The most important of these are Internews and the MediaNet International Centre for Journalism (1).

Internews mainly trains working journalists (that is, they help raise professional qualifications through a variety of training sessions), while MediaNet largely starts at the most basic level of training (that is, they

also work to get new people involved in the profession) through the media school established in 2005.

Training sessions are more closely linked with the market than academic institutions, since their instructors are practicing journalists. They teach students the realities of today, are not dependent on state programmes, and can immediately pick out new colleagues and personnel for themselves; that is, a kind of casting, a selecting of future journalists, goes on during the training sessions and courses.

NGOs, however, cannot train many journalists, since they have limited funds and technical resources.

Post-secondary institutions have recently also begun to engage working journalists as guest speakers through a system of master classes, which is nothing short of encouraging. Unfortunately, however, state-run institutions rarely engage the services of independent journalists or media outlets independent of the state.

There are, incidentally, examples of positive collaboration between educational institutions and NGOs. MediaNet, in association with Kazakh National University, Karaganda State University, and a number of other institutions, held a number of training sessions on a variety of topics. We can especially note its special course on media, copyright, electoral, and labour law – for both students and instructors. Financial support for the course was provided by the OSCE centre in Astana and the Soros–Kazakhstan Foundation

Also promising is a project for developing special courses in news analysis, journalistic education, human rights journalism, and so on, for post-secondary institutions – a joint effort of the Pavlodar organization Dissent, MediaNet and Karaganda’s Ecomuseum.

Judging from the experience gained in implementing these projects, constructive collaboration between educational institutions and NGOs could be very effective if the contributions of both sides are proportional and sufficient, and the visible (or invisible) influence of the state is minimal.

How Will the System of Journalistic Education Develop?

There are traditionally three ways in which events can develop.

The pessimistic scenario is that everything will proceed on the basis of inertia, and the chasm between Russian- and Kazakh-speaking journalists will widen. Against the backdrop of the current financial crisis, the media will not develop, and the market will need a system of media education less and less.

Against the backdrop of political events in Kazakhstan, regulation of the media will become tighter, and almost all educational institutions will become completely pro-government and have no influence whatsoever on the market.

The optimistic (but hardly likely) scenario is that the system will grow and catch up with the market, become increasingly independent, and finally begin to turn out a competitive product.

The realistic scenario looks more like the first, pessimistic scenario, but with the condition of a trend toward a merging of practitioners and theoreticians. In other words, post-secondary institutions will begin to rely on practical workers from the market more often. On the whole, however, most universities and colleges will continue to remain conservative, slow-moving, and dependent institutions.

Meanwhile, the need to reform media law and education, and the relationship between academia, sponsors, and NGOs is apparent right now.

Liberalization of the market, along with a whole number of changes in the law (for example, defamation, slander, and so on) could play just as important a role in the development of journalism.

The proportion of foreign involvement in Kazakhstan's media market is just 20%, a figure that in reality is illogical, makes little sense – and, most important, does not shield the market. In addition, there are restrictions in effect for foreign editors as well.

This serves to scare law-abiding investors away from Kazakhstan's media market and does absolutely nothing to solve the problem of informational security which the authorities use as an argument in favour of restrictions, since the Internet erases the borders between countries with regard to information. In addition, cable and satellite TV channels enable Kazakhstan's people to enjoy foreign media products legally and without fuss.

Kazakhstan's uncompetitive media product is a much greater threat to the country's informational security than the hypothetical participation of foreigners in the capital of media companies.

As is well known, Lithuania, Estonia, and Georgia (ex-USSR republics) have completely liberalized their markets, and it is the markets of these countries that are gaining in quality despite their small size.

Foreign media investment could not only ensure greater freedom of speech but also bring new technologies and know-how to the market, including those for personnel training.

Besides conducting legislative reform, Kazakhstan could not only liberalize its media market but also considerably strengthen its system of journalistic education by enhancing partnership between the media, NGOs, and higher educational institutions. For example, independent journalism courses could be set up at institutes and universities.

The media and media NGOs could also become a kind of indicator for the quality of education by evaluating educational programs and post-secondary instructors, becoming part of teaching staff, reviewing the state standards for academic programs, and so on.

Appendix

List of Post-Secondary Institutions in Kazakhstan Majoring Personnel with a Higher Education in Journalism

L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University
 Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
 Abylai Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages
 E. Buketov Karaganda State University
 Kh. Dosmukhamedov Atyrau State University
 S. Amanzholov East Kazakhstan State University
 M. Utemisov West Kazakhstan State University
 Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University
 A. Baitursynov Kostanai State University
 Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda State University
 H.A. Yassawi International Kazakh–Turkish University
 S. Toraigyrov Pavlodar State University
 Innovative Eurasian University
 Kozybayev North Kazakhstan State University
 Shakarim Semipalatinsk State University
 Dulati Taraz State University

Syrdaria University

University of International Business

Turan University

Central Asian Univesrity

Kazakh University of Economics, Finance, and International Trade

Suleyman Demirel University

International Educational Corporation

University of Foreign Languages and Business Careers

Problems and prospects for journalism education in Tajikistan in light of the new standard of higher professional education

Abdusattor Nuraliev¹

Dear conference participants,

First of all, allow me to thank the organizers of this important conference for their invitation and for offering me the opportunity to speak to you today.

We all know just how great the role of the media is in modern society nowadays. History has shown that the media acquire special importance the moment the paradigm of a society's development changes and there is a change of ideology and the shaping of a new public opinion. On this road today, Tajikistan has overcome one of the most dramatic periods in its history. Objectively, the establishing of an independent state brings with it an urgent need to solve a wide range of problems. Tajikistan's experience has shown that the media, being one of the main means of influencing public consciousness, can either help in this process or complicate it. Both of these have happened in the experience of our media.

At the present stage of Tajikistan's development into a pluralistic civil society, responsibility for the future of reform lies also on the media. The media's active participation in creating a new type of communications

¹ Abdusattor Nuraliev, Head of the Journalism Department, Russian-Tajik University

zone is therefore of great importance for the country today. This is largely due to the problem of qualified personnel – for the country’s media, and for other fields.

Tajikistan began training journalists in 1966, after the opening of the Department of Journalism within the National University’s (TNU) Faculty of Philology. The training of qualified journalistic personnel with a higher professional education for the Russian-language media began in 1996 at the Russian–Tajik (Slavic) University (RTSU). Both educational institutions train journalists in the areas of print and electronic media, international journalism, and literary work. Another five institutions around the country follow the system of training students who major in philology to be journalists.

The second generation of the Russian Federation’s 2000 Standard for Higher Professional Education (HPE) gave us the opportunity to introduce dedicated training for journalists. Huge changes in the world of journalism have taken place in the nine years of the standard’s existence. Tajikistan, like many other countries, is now moving in its civilized development toward laying the foundations for an information society. A great many problems are arising along the way that demand their academic conceptualization. All of this is considered in the draft of the third generation of the Standard for Higher Professional Education being prepared by the Educational Methodology Association (EMA) for Journalism Majors at Moscow State University’s Department of Journalism. The new government standard for HPE in journalism for 2010–2015 clearly defines the procedures for training journalistic personnel. The procedure for training journalists follows the basic HPE educational program, the mastering of which allows the student who passes his or her final exams to receive a baccalaureate degree.

The draft of the new standard for HPE, part of which was described in the report by Mr. Richter, one of the draft's writers, was largely oriented toward the professional training for journalists. According to the standard, an institute's baccalaureate program must include a laboratory practicum or practical work in the fundamental disciplines, or modules, that shape the student's knowledge and skills in the area of journalistic working technologies, learning languages, content analysis, computer technologies, and applied disciplines (photography, computer design, and so on). And also in the disciplines, or modules, of the elective portion, whose programs call for shaping the appropriate knowledge and skills among students.

It is gratifying that the block of special disciplines is strengthened by subjects and processes that incorporate new technologies for preparing journalistic text. In contrast to the second generation, the new standard of HPE is completely oriented toward the credit rating system; that is, it meets the European standard for higher professional education, the so-called Bologna Process.

I'm speaking of this in detail because this new standard most likely lies at the heart of the state standards of a number of CIS countries, plus those of universities in the nations of Central Asia through the Association of CIS Universities. In addition, our countries' desire for a uniform informational environment assumes the creation of a uniform educational environment, with consideration given to each country's national characteristics, of course. It is therefore thought that the integrated new approach to journalistic education is the key to quality training for journalists that meets the demands of world standards, which Mr. Mould nicely described in his report.

We believe it necessary to proceed from the premise that providing objective information to the public is journalism's most important

task, especially for countries like Tajikistan, whose founding was also associated with the founding of its informational independence. We know that in today's world, information is of enormous importance in the operations of all governmental and non-governmental structures of society.

It is only natural that the media today are trying to provide their audiences with timely information on events happening around the world and inside the country.

One of the most important factors in strengthening and developing the media is therefore ensuring that they have qualified young journalists. We recognize that we do have problems in training new journalists. Nevertheless, the media's need for journalists with a professional education is growing. The problems of getting a professional journalist's education in the country are gradually being solved as the department and faculty of journalism at RTSU and TNU grow stronger.

We should also note that preparing and disseminating mostly current information is not yet the norm or even the main task for many our press, radio, and television outlets. Furthermore, in our opinion, we still do not have a press corps capable of throwing light on the problems Tajikistan faces at home and abroad. This is why the informational content of newspaper articles and radio programs is so weak, and why sensational so-called hot topics and promotional materials predominate. This does not always satisfy the demands of readers, listeners, and viewers. We therefore still have much to do to improve the training of journalistic personnel in the country. We must first of all seriously improve the way in which students learn the skills of professional prowess. This is the main task of the RTSU Department of Journalism and the TNU Faculty of Journalism, since only these two universities seriously train qualified journalists today. We can understand the criticism of newspaper and radio

publishers and editors who have pointed out our graduates' poor level of training, but improving the practical training of our students requires joint efforts between the media and higher educational institutions. Media heads must work with us to improve the work of our students, their future employees.

Teachers who are well grounded in the theoretical problems of journalism work in our journalistic faculties. Our students therefore have a good theoretical base. Unfortunately, however, some of the instructors are not terribly well informed as to the practical work of a journalist. Only some instructors do parallel theoretical and practical work in the media. This is of course reflected in the quality of our graduates' training. Some of our colleagues have gotten the false impression that the task of a higher educational institution is the theoretical training of students, and that they learn practical skills on the job. Supposedly, graduates can work at the level of average editorial personnel if they acquire enough practical skills during their on-the-job training in the media's editorial boards. Our faculties are doing a great deal in this direction. It is, however, still difficult for a educational institution to make a positive shift on its own. What is needed is joint work between our faculties of journalism and media editorial boards, but our dear colleagues, the editors (that is, our future employers) still contribute absolutely nothing to the training of journalistic personnel. I do not mean any enormous amounts of cash but the paltry moral and material support needed, expressed in the joint establishing of master classes, organizing of on-site editorial board training seminars, and offering as much technical assistance to the university as they can. It is good world practice when second- or third-year students are selected for future work at a newspaper or in radio and television, and the outlet works together with the educational institution to train them for practical work and giving them financial support, if need be. This simple and straightforward program is entirely acceptable under our conditions. An

approach like this is especially needed for the Russian-language media, whose need for such workers seems to be growing.

It is natural that technical resources are needed to train qualified journalists; that is, we need a variety of student studios, since it is hard to achieve the desired results with auditorium instruction only. It is also difficult to set up student radio and television studios with an educational institution's limited budget. We can and must solicit grant funds.

Media workers' professional growth and professional skills upgrading is also accomplished through general educational communicative teaching. In addition, we must establish a network of special seminars for working journalists directly under our journalism faculties. We believe that some of our instructors who lack professional skills can thereby complete a month-long extension course in the media. Unfortunately, we as yet have no programs for actively collaborating with the media; this mutually beneficial interest should unite our efforts to strengthen the country's media corps and improve the level of training for journalists at our institutions.

There are also certain disadvantages in that teaching subjects from the block of GPDs, or general professional disciplines such as Tajik Literature, Foreign Literature, Russian Language Studies, and Logic are not always associated with journalism. Their programs are basically the same both for philology and for journalism. I would like to wish the instructors of the first and second blocks of the institutional curriculum for training journalists to take the particulars of the journalistic profession into account in their teaching.

Under today's conditions of the development of journalistic methods and technology, it is impossible to train qualified journalists without technological means of study.

The international organizations that support the media, including the OSCE, can of course be of enormous help here. We believe that it is more important under our conditions to contribute to the technical infrastructure of journalists' studies. Our friends from international organizations supporting the media in Central Asia therefore have an opportunity to help our educational institutions by providing up-to-date teaching equipment. It is now difficult to achieve our target goals in training highly-qualified journalistic personnel without student TV and radio studios and typographic laboratories, and the quality of the media is always associated with the level of those with a higher basic education who work in them. It is therefore in our common interest to improve the quality of education.

We also think it necessary to note that journalism science ought to serve the development of the media and the dedicated training of journalistic personnel. The level of teaching journalism subjects depends largely on the training of the instructor who can explain to the future journalist all the fine points of his/her chosen profession clearly and on a sound academic basis. Requiring high qualifications on the part of the instructor therefore plays an important role in teaching. Our faculties thus need to make joint efforts to coordinate solutions to academic and methodological problems, aimed at improving the academic process. We need to make better use of the opportunities afforded by dissertation councils when doctoral and candidate dissertations in journalism are defended. The Higher Attestation Commission of the RF Ministry of Education and Science is now working with our universities. The council can accept any dissertations in journalism that are oriented toward the philological sciences. Two instructors from the Kyrgyz–Russian Slavic University's Faculty of International Journalism defended their candidate dissertations before our council, and it will hear the candidate dissertation defence of an instructor from the Kyrgyz National University Faculty of Journalism.

Taking advantage of such opportunities will strengthen the academic potential of the university faculties training workers for the media.

I take this opportunity to call on all of our colleagues from the Central Asian states to coordinate their efforts to jointly solve the problems of quality training for journalistic personnel. I therefore consider it necessary and important to hold such conferences to improve journalistic education and develop the media.

Finally, I'd like to mention that an educated and highly qualified journalist always knows how to join in to solve his/her country's problems, be they advancing toward democracy, toward creating a civil society and an information society, or the problem of being free to express one's thoughts and ideas for the benefit of the country and the entire region.

Thank you for your attention!

The system of training and retraining creative and technical personnel for Uzbekistan media

Shuhrat Satimov¹

Creative personnel training and retraining

One of the global trends today is that social development tends to enhance the demand for education and new technology, and promote public involvement in social and political life. Rapid IT development, information market growth, and media competition build-up attach special importance to the issue of giving quality training to media professionals.

The need for journalists capable of working in competitive and innovative environments is also due to the modern trend in the development of Uzbekistan media that is manifested in the quantitative and qualitative growth of both governmental and nongovernmental periodicals, radio and television stations, publishing houses and Internet publications, and the more rigid requirements imposed on media professionals by the labour market.

This trend is also largely influenced by the regulatory and legal framework now taking shape. In particular, the 2005 National Programme for the Training and Retraining of Media Personnel in 2006-2010 has been a major incentive in developing a system of media personnel training and retraining.

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The programme was designed to meet the needs of society and the state in highly skilled journalists as much as possible and to bolster Uzbekistan media development with democratic standards in compliance with international requirements and the priority tasks of democratization, renewal, transformation and modernization of the country.

The main goals and objectives of the programme are as follows:

- improving the regulatory framework and basic training methods, optimizing the structure and activities of journalism departments at universities, and launching master's degree programmes to meet current labour market demand for specialists in new professions;
- incorporating modern information and educational technologies into the curricula, including the widespread introduction of interactive teaching methods, increased number of master classes led by experienced practicing journalists, and using simulated editorial work exercises;
- using the World Wide Web for distance learning specialty courses;
- introducing innovative educational technologies to improve the quality of foreign language instruction in journalism departments;
- upgrading the infrastructure for journalistic personnel training;
- developing a system for post-secondary teaching staff retraining and skill upgrading, and for training academic and research personnel in the field of journalism.

A series of transformations and changes in media personnel training and retraining has been implemented to achieve the programme objectives.

Implementation of the National Programme has made major changes in journalism education, and the entire education system as well. In accordance with modern demands, the department of journalism at the National University of Uzbekistan has been reorganized, and an

international journalism department established at the Uzbek State University of World Languages. In order to improve the quality of journalism education, the abovementioned institutions have been training journalists with a higher education since 1999, and the departments of journalism at other institutions (except for Karakalpak State University) have been abolished. Of particular importance is the introduction of special two-year higher courses in journalism at the National University of Uzbekistan, for which applicants (who must have a bachelor's degree in other specialties) are selected by means of a competitive system.

As a result of focused actions today, creative staff for the media are being trained at the National University of Uzbekistan (36%), the Uzbek State University of World Languages (34%), Karakalpak State University (13%), in several departments at the Uzbekistan Institute of Arts (9.5%), and in two-year higher courses in journalism (7.6%), where more than 1400 students are studying for their undergraduate degree and roughly 100 are attempting to obtain their master's.

The primary post-secondary institution where journalists are trained is the Department of Journalism at the Mirzo Ulugbek National University.

This department, which has a highly qualified teaching staff and a long history of training journalists, is a leading institution in training students for work in Uzbekistan's media. To date, the university has trained roughly 3000 journalists, many of whom are already heads and editors-in-chief of Uzbekistan's leading media.

Some 150-160 students are currently enrolled in such specialized departments as Internet Journalism, Print Media, Television and Radio Broadcasting, and Public Relations and Advertising. In consideration of present needs, the department plans to open two new courses: Media Sociology and Psychology, and Media Economics and Management.

The department also has a division of journalism at Berdakh Karakalpak State University. Every year, this university graduates 30-35 students with a baccalaureate degree, and 5-7 students with a master's degree for Karakalpakstan's media.

The next institution that plays an important role in this field is the Department of International Journalism at the Uzbek State University of World Languages.

The department is the main school of international journalism whose graduates have bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The department offers such courses as Mass Communications and Information Technology, Audio/Visual Journalism, Political Management, International Journalism, and a course in Media Language, Methods, and Literature Review.

Students at the university are not only taught journalistic skills but also foreign languages, such as English, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

Graduates with a bachelor's degree, the number of whom has grown to more than 500 in the last three years, are today working in both national and foreign media.

Creative personnel are also trained at the Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts.

This institute has specialized departments to train creative staff for the media. One of these is the Department of Art, graduating experts in various arts for media outlets. To date, the department has trained some 160 skilled workers. There is also a department for students interested in directing for television.

It should be noted that in the system for the training and retraining of creative personnel for Uzbekistan media, there is a shared link called Higher Courses in Journalism. This institution can rightly be classified as both a training and retraining educational facility.

An advanced training programme in journalism was launched in 2005 at the Department of Journalism at the National University of Uzbekistan. The main objective in opening this specialized training department, which trains journalists who are working toward their master's degree, was to make high-level journalistic personnel out of graduates of other universities that do not offer a basic journalistic education.

It should be noted that this educational institution is the only one of its kind so far: within its walls, graduates trained in fields other than journalism are taught such basics as the theory and practice of journalism, newspaper and magazine publishing, television and radio broadcasting, and Internet journalism.

With regard to the quality of these newcomers to journalism, it must be said that the students represent more than 30 different specialties in which they earned their first degree. They are mainly graduates in the humanities; among them, however, are also skilled members of such fairly narrow and specialized professions as imam-khatib, veterinarian, aerospace engineer, agronomist, speech pathologist, ecologist, traumatologist, and lawyer.

The Higher Courses in Journalism invite people with first-hand experience, such as practising journalists and heads of leading media outlets, to speak to the students. This is also good in that the visiting lecturers are able to find future staff members and to draw them off the bench, so to speak, and into editorial work. There is also a more intensive

system for training journalists – the so-called master classes taught out of the editorial offices of a number of newspapers.

If we examine the system for training journalism students at post-secondary institutions in more detail, we can see that it, as in other educational institutions of the country, was formed on the basis of the Republic of Uzbekistan Law on Education, and consists of three stages: bachelor's degree, master's degree, and post-graduate studies.

In brief, applicants are selected based on the results of entrance examinations, and are required to study the theory and practical skills of journalism for four years in order to obtain their bachelor's degree. Upon completion of this programme, a student is considered to have an incomplete higher education.

In their first year of study, students are largely taught the theoretical skills of the profession. Starting in their second year, based on previously approved agreements, they are actively involved in their particular areas of specialisation through practical studies in the country's media. To improve their practical skills, second-year students are also sent to work at media outlets close to their homes during their two-month summer vacation.

In addition, while students acquire theoretical knowledge through their regular coursework, conditions are created on campus that are as close as possible to the working environment of actual media outlets. In particular, classrooms are converted into television or radio studios, and experienced professionals currently working in the field of journalism are involved in the learning process.

To improve their skills after completing the final course in their areas of specialisation, baccalaureate students defend dissertations on which they work throughout their fourth year of study.

To upgrade their level of academic involvement, baccalaureate students have the opportunity, starting in their second year, to take exams to qualify for the Republic of Uzbekistan Presidential Scholarship, the Alisher Navoi Scholarship, and numerous other scholarships and grants. Once they have produced a number of quality articles and other academic works, actively participated in public events, and taken the appropriate exams, students who meet all the requirements receive additional scholarships and have the right to attend any university in the country without examination for the purpose of obtaining a master's degree. This in turn provides a great incentive for students to work hard.

After receiving their bachelor's, graduates who want to earn another degree have the opportunity to study for a master's degree in their chosen field. If they wish to do so, they must continue their education for two additional years.

The curriculum calls for student teaching, where graduates teach to undergraduates at their respective institutions. Their hands-on skills are also developed with the aid of faculty members who work to help each student complete his/her master's thesis.

On defending the thesis, the student has the opportunity to continue his/her academic work or start work in the media.

In their first year of graduate school, students have to determine the topic of their thesis, on which they work for the duration of their three-year course.

Today's system of journalism education is on the whole developing and being supplemented by many new elements and innovations that largely help raise the level of students' professional qualifications.

In light of the above, it is worth looking at the main mechanisms for shaping and ensuring the functioning of the system for training and retraining media personnel. In particular, these can be divided into two groups: governmental and nongovernmental organisations.

The group of governmental entities includes the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Secondary Education, the Agency for Press and Information, the Agency for Communications and Informatisation, and other state bodies operating in the media field. These establishments basically provide programmes for training qualified media personnel both at universities and at other specialized academic institutions.

In turn, the group of nongovernmental organisations includes such entities as the International Public Centre for the Advanced Training of Journalists, the Public Fund for the Support of Independent Print Media and News Agencies, the National Association of Electronic Media, the Creative Union of Journalists, the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, and foreign NGOs that are mainly involved in retraining personnel for the country's media.

If we consider these individually, one of the leading nongovernmental organizations for matters of the retraining of journalists is the International Public Centre for the Advanced Training of Journalists. The centre is a private educational institution established in 1997 for the retraining of creative media personnel.

The training of journalists includes seminars and training sessions in the capital and in all regions of the country, publishing training materials,

and holding creative competitions. These seminars focus on legislative and other legal issues in Uzbekistan, developing the foundations of civil society, and strengthening the role of the media in the country's processes of reform and democratisation. Participants in these seminars include journalists from television, radio, and the printed press who work for both public and private media, along with journalism students from post-secondary institutions across the country.

The centre is constantly implementing projects for international organizations, working in regional projects in Central Asia, and promoting the free exchange of information and closer integration in the region.

The centre is also working to improve journalists' awareness of the possibilities offered by the Internet. The centre has this year successfully collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in developing Internet technologies in Uzbekistan, making journalists computer literate, and training them to create websites, personal blogs, and so on. Such seminars and training courses were held in Tashkent, Bukhara, Fergana, Termez, and Urgench; at the end of each course, the journalists had the opportunity to freely use the Internet at the UNDP Resource Centre.

Considerable efforts in the retraining of journalists are being made by the Public Fund for the Support of Independent Print Media and News Agencies.

This organisation (which is also nongovernmental) conducts a number of dedicated programmes and projects designed to improve the quality of editorial staff and raise the level of their journalistic skills, along with enhancing their knowledge of current events.

One of these is the project to create centres of journalistic excellence at a number of print media. These centres already operate in the offices of a number of the country's prominent newspapers. They are working to upgrade journalists' qualifications, to train young journalists, to raise the level of interaction between different publishers, and to study the experience of foreign journalism and subsequently put such experience into practice.

Another important initiative of the Fund is its project to improve the skills of journalists from the country's regions by having them work at the country's leading publishers, begun in January 2009. In the span of one month, those taking part in the project enhance their professional skills by taking a direct part in the work of the country's leading publishers. To date, the project can boast of having retrained over 100 journalists. In addition to these initiatives, the centre has conducted more than 100 conferences, forums, and seminars in order to accomplish the abovementioned objectives.

The National Association of Electronic Media (NAESMI) has made major efforts to retrain journalists. This organization is not just a professional association of nongovernmental electronic media; it is also a focal point for informational, educational, professionally oriented, and collaborative efforts. In brief, it is a major media resource centre whose main thrust is educational and advisory activities – in other words, it is a training centre.

The main aim of the centre is to create a pool of highly professional personnel for the regional stations of NAESMI members and to produce high-quality electronic products.

To accomplish this, more than 107 professional seminars and workshops have been held for creative teams so they can master modern methods of seeking out and processing information, along with the skills needed

for investigative journalism and developing actual news and analysis programmes. In parallel with this, journalists can master the basic skills for effectively using modern communications technologies in the editorial process. Over the last five years, the NAESMI Training Centre has trained around 5,000 workers from nongovernmental stations and held more than ten extramural seminars. Basic to the holding of seminars was the development of appropriate methodological concepts, including modules that summarise the practical experience of correspondents and editorial staff at nongovernmental electronic media outlets.

It is also worth noting that the NAESMI has successfully implemented five of the programme's projects over the last few years:

1. educational, with tutorials, theoretical seminars, and on-the-job training;
2. communicative, with round tables, promotional events, and master classes;
3. interactive, with extramural seminars, exhibitions, and professional workshops;
4. conceptual, with conferences, forums, and panel discussions;
5. theoretical, with special literature provided.

The overall task of the NAESMI Training Centre is to create a special communications community whose members dominate the market thanks to "openness": the open exchange of information, new knowledge, and new technologies, support for socially-oriented initiatives of creative personnel; and much more.

Along with the above, it should be noted that foreign nongovernmental nonprofit organisations (NNO) are making definite efforts to retrain journalists and upgrade their professional skills. In particular, projects of such international organisations as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, the Ebert Foundation, The Deutsche Welle Academy, and USAID have been implemented with the help of domestic NNOs. Such projects include Liberalisation of the Judicial Branch: Working Together with the Media; Legal Support for Small Business Initiatives in Uzbekistan: Media Coverage; Cooperation between Press Services and the Media; and Cooperation between NNOs and the Media: Third Sector Development. Training courses, seminars, and round tables have been conducted as part of virtually all such projects.

The training and retraining of technical personnel

Under the conditions of the widespread and comprehensive introduction of information and communications technologies (ICT) in all areas of life, it is vital that we train highly-qualified personnel with a thorough knowledge of state-of-the-art equipment and the technologies for creating, processing, and transmitting information.

In light of this, considerable efforts in this area are being made in Uzbekistan. In particular, faculties and departments that specialize in training engineering and technical personnel are being set up at post-secondary institutions. These include the Department of Television Technologies recently established at the Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT), the Faculty of Cinematography at the Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts, and the Republic of Uzbekistan Professional College of Television and Radio.

TUIT campuses have been opened in the cities of Nukus, Karshi, Samarkand, Fergana, and Urgench to further expand and integrate

information, communications, and innovative technologies in the educational process in the regions. As of today, the university has over 9,000 students, a 750-strong faculty, and state-of-the-art computers available.

In the area of mass media, the university was already training personnel in the broadcasting field, along with technicians and engineers in radio communications, digital television and radio, information management and processing, and information security.

The Television Technologies Department opened at TUIT in 2009 and now trains TV camera operators, special lighting engineers, video editors and engineers, computer graphics engineers, and sound engineers. In other words, the new department trains personnel in the areas of television/video pre-production, production, and post-production. Training is conducted in the light of foreign experience, and is based on close cooperation between the students and domestic TV channels.

The Uzbekistan State Institute of Arts makes its own contribution in the area of training engineering and technical personnel. It has its own Faculty of Cinematography, which trains skilled camera operators. To date, the faculty has graduated some 200 students.

It should be noted that the faculty's physical plant and technical facilities were recently upgraded. In particular, state-of-the-art types of special equipment, lighting gear, and video and still cameras, were placed at the faculty's disposal, along with separate operator's rooms. This has had a direct impact on the level of training.

Today, the specialized secondary training of technical personnel is an important factor in the development of the media in Uzbekistan. For this

reason, the Republic of Uzbekistan Professional College of Television and Radio was opened in early 2009.

Based on the needs of the country's media, this educational institution specializes in the training of engineering and technical personnel. The college trains skilled workers in such specialties as Camera and Radio Operator, Sound Engineer, Video Editor, Gaffer, Television and Radio Maintenance, Computer Technologies, and Accounting. The College of Information Technologies also trains workers in the field of Computer Layout and Graphics.

At present, some 300 students are enrolled at the college.

In consideration of the current needs and prospects for the development of Uzbekistan's media, a great deal of attention is also being given to upgrading the qualifications of different categories of the country's technical workers.

TUIT is making considerable efforts in this direction. In particular, its Department of Television Technologies now has a special department of correspondence studies to provide the country's media with highly trained personnel to meet the needs of around-the-clock broadcasting. Some 50 students are being trained as camera operators, special lighting engineers, video editors, computer graphics engineers, and sound engineers.

Uzbekistan's National Television and Radio Company (NTRC) is also making considerable efforts in the area of personnel retraining.

NTRC has organised training courses in television editing and design using computers and information technologies. Personnel in the corresponding divisions are being trained to work with newly-acquired

digital TV and radio equipment in programmes organised with the help of local experts and advisors from Sony (Japan), and Siemens and BFE Studio und Medien Systeme (Germany).

NTRC has also organised computer training courses for the company's workers and its regional divisions. These efforts are one line of work for the company's Centre for Computer, Information, and Media Technologies, created in 2005 under the auspices of its main office and intended to improve workers' computer literacy, particularly that of editors and TV and radio journalists, and to teach them effective methods for finding information on the Internet, working with different search engines, computer editing and layout techniques, and so on.

State of and outlook for journalism education in Kyrgyzstan

Parida Bostonova¹

1. Traditions in the current educational system for journalist training (foreign and domestic experience, stages in the establishment and development of journalism education)

Editorial boards continually criticise the existing system for training journalists in academic institutions from the position of parties interested in changing it into a more practice-oriented model; that is, editors want to get experienced journalists straight off campus. No matter how hard local instructors try to strengthen the practical component of professional training, however, it is impossible to fully implement a practice-oriented model of journalism education: the inflexible mechanism of comprehensive state evaluation of the operations of higher educational institutions regularly heads off all innovative programmes developed by faculty members and returns them to the one and only educational scheme approved by the state standard.

As is well known, the requirements for training journalism majors are laid out in the State Educational Standard for Professional Training. Our educational standards share common roots with the Russian standards: before the 1990s, we did our training under the uniform State Educational Standard. Even after becoming a sovereign state, however, we used the Russian standard as the basis for developing our own State Educational Standard.

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If we analyse the current state standard, we find that the proportion of intrinsically journalism disciplines in it has been growing ever since the 1970s.

In the post-Soviet period, the development of journalism education has generally been characterised by the programme becoming quite broad in its selection of didactic courses: sociology, political science, economics, jurisprudence, and other fields of the contemporary social sciences are perhaps overrepresented. Such new disciplines as management, marketing, advertising, and public relations have been introduced as well.

Despite this, however, the system of journalism education in the post-Soviet period managed to survive with its former quality and exists under the conditions of a universally recognised professional crisis, one cause of which might be an imperfect state standard that touts the cognitive, informational nature of a journalism education's content, along with its being highly standardised. Among the humanities, the State Educational Standard for Journalism contains the greatest number of compulsory subjects, with the number of hours needed to master the material strictly fixed. Neither are we encouraged by the following: right now, as the next generation of standards is under development, not only are talks on further standardisation of the journalism programme not abating, they are on the contrary gaining strength.

What is the way out? I believe we shouldn't move toward developing the new generation standard formally, but involve all the interested parties: the editorial boards of print and electronic outlets, Internet publishers, information agencies, journalist associations, journalists themselves, and press services. It would be nice if we could discuss the problems of journalism education and ways to solve them, and look upon journalism education through the eyes of media heads and public media

organisations. We would like to hear the opinion of members of faculties and departments of journalism.

What sort of difficulties are today's journalists encountering? What does journalism education lack? How urgent are the problems of a shortage of qualified personnel in the media and the area of raising the qualifications of working journalists? What professional qualities and skills does a journalist need to meet the demands of today's information market? How do we reduce the eternal gap between theory and practice?

Perhaps we should turn to the European model of education – to the German experience, for example? In Germany, there have traditionally been two main lines of professional media education: the theoretical (academic) and the practical. These correspond to the two main models of journalism education. The first involves a long-term training of future journalists and students of journalism in the journalism institutes operating within German universities. The second model basically requires journalists to learn concrete professional standards, knowledge, and working skills while on the job, and is implemented primarily on the basis of different journalism schools and short-term courses. Along with this, there are numerous additional possibilities – professional education combined with a supplementary journalism major, for example. At present, there are around 170 educational institutions in the country where journalists are trained on the basis of various approaches to learning.²

2 D'Inka, W. "Journalism: Between the Profession of Dreams and 'Spiritual Drudgery.'" *The Contemporary State of University Philological and Journalism Education: Prospects for Its Modernisation and Entry into the International Realm of Education. Materials from the International Academic and Practical Conference on Journalism*. Rostov State University – Free Russo–German Institute of Journalism. Rostov on the Don, 2004. P. 30.

2. Kyrgyzstan's media under the new economic conditions

The country's media environment has undergone fundamental changes in the last 19 years. We have been witnesses to quantitative and qualitative changes in the media industry: the nature and specifics of journalistic activity have changed; formats have changed, along with the market and content of journalistic work; and there has been a convergence of traditional media – the press, radio, – and television, network media and mobile telephony.

Media outlets have new functions and therefore new duties and jobs that demand training skilled workers with the corresponding qualifications.

If the role of propaganda and agitation was part of journalism in the era of the command-administrative system, circumstances arose during the period of the country's transition to a market economy that radically altered the face of our journalism. This primarily had to do with the creation of an information and communications industry in which completely new sectors, such as advertising, public relations, and marketing communications operate in a completely new style. Information agencies and electronic versions of newspapers were a new element of Kyrgyzstan's media, leading to the need to train personnel for on-line/off-line publications. A demand for business journalists arose with the development of a market economy. The media's income structure, economics, and management methods changed. The media themselves became a part of the market. Many outlet owners now no longer think of how to win the blessings of their mayor, provincial governor, or president, but how to find a way into the hearts and wallets of their readers and advertisers. In other words, qualified media managers are needed.

3. The problems of training journalists who meet today's information requirements

The problem of the obvious discrepancy between the rapidly developing industry and the parameters for training skilled professionals is now on the agenda. The feud between real-world workers and academics has gone from one extremity to another. At a round table organised by Internews to discuss the problems of Internet journalism, for example, heated words were exchanged over journalistic personnel, and (as always) many journalists once again blamed faculties of journalism for all their current woes. The claims brought by practitioners against newly minted university alumni were the classical complaints of the latter being incompetent. Meanwhile, virtually no constructive proposals for improving the current situation in media personnel policy were made.

The problem of training journalists at university is due to conflicts between

- society's great need for professionally competent and responsible journalists and the actual level of personnel currently working in the media;
- the rapidly changing situation in the development of communications and the insufficient professional competency of graduates and their fitness to work on state-of-the-art technical equipment;
- the growing demands for journalist flexibility and the traditional methods of organising the academic process in higher educational institutions;
- the tasks post-secondary institutions face in educating qualified specialists who have mastered the theory and practice of journalism equally well, and the absence of concrete foundations for tackling these tasks;
- the need to imbue future journalists with spiritual, moral, and ethical values as professionals taking part in the process of shaping public

opinion, and the lack of clear axiological reference points due to the late-20th century crisis in the values system.

A survey

Since academic institutions have to satisfy the personnel needs of contemporary information markets, we turned to the country's leading print media on the subject of studying professional journalists' opinions with regard to the training of journalists for today's media.

Taking an active part in the survey were journalists from such newspapers as *Kyrgyz Tuusu* (3), *Aalam* (5), *MSN* (2), *Vecherny Bishkek* (2), *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* (1), *Erkin Too* (5), and *Journalistnews* (2).

Of these, 11 were men and 5 were women. Four had worked in the media for 5 years or less; 2 from 5 to 10 years; 2 from 10 to 15 years; and 6 for more than 15 years.

They all had a higher education; 8 had majored in journalism, while 5 came from other fields.

We asked the following questions:

1. *In your opinion, what professional qualities should a newly graduated journalist have?*
2. *Should a journalist specialize in any particular area? If so, what kind (thematic, genre, or professional)?*
3. *What academic disciplines are needed today in a journalism education?*

4. *Can media outlets serve as venues for training students on the job? If so, under what conditions?*
5. *Is it possible to set up a programme that combines academic and on-the-job training (post-secondary institutions + media outlets)?*
6. *Do you have proposals on how to improve curricula and programmes, if any?*

Findings of the survey (responses and comments)

From the answers we received, we can judge just how varied the professional demands made on journalists are. On the one hand, the journalist has to have universal skills and knowledge, since working at a daily newspaper means having to present life in all its many different shapes and forms; on the other, he/she has to have specialised knowledge on a selected problem or theme. Novice journalists, it seems to us, get lost when they encounter these demands, not understanding that universality is in practice always associated with specialisation.

Under the conditions of the increasingly complicated problems journalists face, it is getting increasingly harder to combine universality with specialisation.

Personal qualities were emphasised along with professional qualities: interpersonal skills, openness, integrity, commitment, honesty, diligence, responsibility, mobility, and persistence.

Today, judging from the results of our brief survey, many outlets need not just journalists who can write but professionals who are comfortable dealing with a particular theme or issue. We may also say that outlets badly need workers who understand economic, legal, psychological, and other issues.

Based on the above data, we may conclude that future journalists need both theoretical knowledge and applied disciplines that might come in handy in practice, such as psychology, computer literacy, economics, ecology, jurisprudence, state-of-the-art media computer skills, photography, and newspaper design and electronic formatting.

Having examined various aspects of journalism specialisation and the professional orientation of journalists, we may conclude that the qualification demands made on future media workers, the learning interests of the students, and the nature of the courses at any faculty of journalism are largely predetermined by the practical needs of journalism. We are convinced that in order to be effective, the journalist of today has to know how to combine universal skills with specialisation. He/she needs not only a basic university education but special knowledge associated with his/her future line of work.

With regard to academic disciplines, only a few of those surveyed indicated that such disciplines as media management, English, advertising, “on-line work in emergency situations,” and “journalism is not just a profession but a way of life” needed to be introduced. Except for the last three (which may be offered as special or extracurricular courses), these disciplines are already covered in the present State Educational Standard.

Conclusions. We thus tried to establish a dialogue with the media to clarify and respond to the requirements of media companies. This is, however, just one step on the road to creating a clear social and professional description of a skilled worker. To do this, the media have to realize their current status, determine their needs in one kind of specialists or another, and draw up a list of professional qualifications and characteristics for such personnel.

4. Our vision of educational reform

The student is the central figure in the reform of education. Why? Because under market conditions, he/she is a product/good produced by post-secondary institutions. If this is true, the product should be competitive. The main factor of competitiveness is value for money.

In the existing system of education, the Ministry of Education and Science, parents, and the students themselves act as customers, while the consumers of post-secondary graduates are newspapers and magazines, radio and television, information agencies, state bodies, and private businesses.

The result is that post-secondary institutions operate without a firm order for skilled personnel, while students also study blind, not knowing if they'll find work in their chosen field. When introducing reforms, it is, in our view, necessary to make fundamental changes to the existing system.

The consumer – that is, newspapers and magazines, radio and television, information agencies, state bodies, and so on – should act as the customer placing order for professional personnel.

This would lead to the following:

The consumer/customer

- having a direct interest in getting a qualified, skilled specialist;
- taking part in the financing and co-financing of specialist training;
- offering venues for on-the-job training and being in charge of such training;
- taking part in evaluating the quality of specialist training;
- issuing concrete assignments for academic research and producing undergraduate and graduate-level theses.

The student

- finding his/her status changed: he/she becomes not the object of instruction, but a participant in the educational process, and is motivated and dedicated to receiving a quality education;
- developing a different attitude toward the studies: he/she senses his/her own importance, has a life goal and responsibility to the employer, and his/her attitude toward the institution and studies changes;
- developing management skills, especially with regard to his/her own education (selecting the curriculum, disciplines, and instructors); these are also put into practice through the student council that organises the system of studying and accounting for students' opinion on important matters affecting their institution, and creates conditions under which the participation of every student is guaranteed in discussing problems, coming up with solutions, and making decisions.

The institution too should create the best possible social and cultural conditions for ensuring the harmonious and comprehensive development of a competent highly trained specialist with qualities of leadership and creative thinking, capable of self-improvement and self-realisation, and having a sense of civic responsibility, self-awareness, and social commitment.

Why is journalism education so ineffective in Kyrgyzstan?

Aleksandr Kulinsky¹

Before I speak on the problems of education in the field of journalism, I would like to emphasise two items that are, in my opinion, very important in this matter.

1. **Education for all.** I consider it pointless to discuss education (or advanced training) for journalists without education (or advanced training) for all media personnel. Why? Because it's impossible to turn out media product without other skilled workers (managers, advertising people, camera operators, sound people, pagemakers, and so on). Kyrgyzstan's media today are faced with an acute shortage of competent journalists, but even before this, capable (qualified) camera operators, film editors, pagemakers, proofreaders etc. were in very short supply in the country. It seems obvious to me that throughout the history of Kyrgyzstan's independent journalism, the media have had no qualified media managers. This in turn has deeply affected all of the country's media industry.
2. **No market, no decent education.** I'm convinced that the problem with education and advanced training of media personnel is directly connected with the development of the media market. And we can, in my opinion, compare the media market in Kyrgyzstan with Quasimodo, the hero of Victor Hugo's famous *Hunchback*

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of Notre Dame. Kyrgyzstan's media market is like the character: it's handicapped, malformed, and oppressed; it exists in an unfair monopolistic world; and it's prey to more powerful forces.

Allow me to explain.

- In fact the country has no single media market. There are individual regional media markets that are not always well connected with one another. Metropolitan media do not reach the regions. In addition, regional media do not always cover all of their region's territory and consequently do not fill the existing information vacuum. Regional media in turn do not bring information to the capital.
- The strongest influence on Kyrgyzstan's media market comes from the media markets of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia, and China. Kyrgyzstan remains the only country in the CIS that allows full-scale broadcasts of Russia's First Channel and RTR on its territory. With regard to the print media, such well-known titles as *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, and *Argumenty i Fakty* have a large and loyal readership in Kyrgyzstan. Their readers are therefore ready to pay quite large sums for the pleasure of reading their favourite newspapers. In Karakol, the capital of the Issyk-Kul Region, for example, information consumers buy newspapers (*Argumenty i Fakty*) for 45 soms a copy, even though this is a lot of money by the city's standards. The situation on the radio and magazine markets is unique: Russian product has virtually taken over the market.
- As is well known, the media are oriented toward making profits from placing ads. In general, the media in Kyrgyzstan work along the same lines. The country's advertising market, however, is just as heterogeneous as the media market. In Bishkek, the advertising market is well developed but *de facto* monopolised by several outlets that are in one way or another close to the government. In the regions, the advertising market is less developed. Both in

Bishkek and in the regions, the advertising market has felt the effects of the financial crisis. The market has been in decline since the middle of last year. The first thing to be cut was the number of television commercials. According to different estimates, it shrank by 25% in Bishkek in the second half of 2008 alone, and by 50-55% in the regions. This year, the number of advertisements placed in newspapers has gone down. According to estimates by experts in the field of print media, the market for print advertisements in Bishkek shrank by 30%. It would be logical to assume that in the regions, it most likely fell by 50-60%. More and more often, advertisers are offering barter deals to the media.

- Since the end of 2007, the country's media have been under enormous pressure from the government. Today, virtually all of the TV channels in Bishkek are either under the direct control of the president or are loyal to him. In the newspaper market, opposition papers are bought out or actively suppressed. Since 2005, journalism has inarguably become a dangerous profession in Kyrgyzstan.

The state of the market is producing an effect that, on the face of it, would seem absurd. Media heads are not interested in well-trained, skilled workers. There is, however, nothing contradictory about this. A well-trained, skilled worker expects a decent salary that the local media can't pay. In addition, a well-trained, skilled worker will very quickly reach the local professional and creative ceiling. He/she therefore tries to get into those media where the ceiling is higher.

The upshot is that, by investing in the education of skilled workers, post-secondary institutions, local and international NGOs, and the media themselves are training personnel for other markets. A media worker, understanding that he/she is capable of more, very quickly moves to a country with a more developed media market. An example of this is the Pyramid TV and radio company, once well known in Bishkek. Its staff are

now working successfully in the media of Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States.

Before we move to a survey of the system of education (or advanced training) for media workers in Kyrgyzstan, I'd like to say that I'm well known as a harsh critic of the system of higher education in the field of journalism. In preparing this report, I did my best to look upon issues in education more broadly and objectively.

Higher education in the field of journalism. Twelve post-secondary institutions (three of which are in the regions) now have faculties or departments of journalism. In 2008, they graduated more than 500 qualified, skilled specialists. Where are the specialists now? As a rule, most of them are not going to work in journalism, for a variety of reasons.

- The best graduates (approximately 10-15% of the total) will never join the profession. While still students, they'll understand that going into journalism is not worth the effort. They won't make a lot of money while the risks are too high. So, they join advertising agencies or similar companies as soon as they graduate.
- Second-string students might go into the profession, but they soon leave it and try to find work in more profitable professions.
- All of the others could potentially go to work in the media. Out of every ten such graduates, at best only one is suited for working at a newspaper. Only one out of 20 can work in television.

This breakdown of mine is not just statistical. It was done more on the basis of logic. Some of the best graduates do, of course, go to work in the media, but they are very few. Kyrgyzstan's media outlets unfortunately have to deal primarily with members of the third category. Even if they hire the best one out of ten, the media are forced to invest a great deal of effort and money in his/her retraining.

If we're talking about quality of education in journalism, it's quite far from the desired level, in the opinion of many of those actually working in the field (outlet heads, editors-in-chief, experienced journalists).

To sum up the main complaints about higher educational institutions, they are as follow:

- Five or six years ago, institutions were reproached for not teaching their students practical skills. This rebuke remains true to this day. Students know little about media operations and their future duties, and have none of the most important professional skills.
- Educational institutions are criticised today because their graduates lack basic knowledge, make gross errors in grammar and syntax, and are not what one would call erudite. At the same time, they're overloaded with knowledge of philology and literature (although their written work contains the crudest mistakes imaginable).
- Educational institutions fail to turn out skilled workers in a great many lines of work. The media industry in Kyrgyzstan is quite small. Five hundred new journalists graduate every year; this is an awful lot for Kyrgyzstan when you stop and consider that an average of 3-5 journalists work at every newspaper, and 10-12 are employed by a TV station. At the same time, however, the media painfully lack pagemakers, camera operators, film editors, gaffers, directors, photographers, programme managers, media managers, advertising experts, and DJs.

Hence the media's main requirements for educational institutions and the system of higher journalism and media education:

- Stress practical skills. Media practice shows clearly that, as a rule, those students who begin working in the media in their second or third year get firmly grounded in the industry and reach professional

heights. Practical training should therefore be a regular part of their education.

- Improve the curriculum by including modern trends in journalism. I would like to note here that the heads of faculties and departments of journalism have already tried to move jointly toward reforming educational standards. When the new minister of education, Abdylda Musayev (who was once dean of a faculty of journalism himself), assumed his post, this process speeded up at first. After the country's president, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, announced the start of education reform, however, the process of improving the standards of education in journalism came to a halt.
- Train personnel in the specialties they need.

Since the personnel crisis in the media gets worse with each passing year, the media are more and more often raising the issue of creating an independent school of journalism that would train personnel with consideration given to the media's real needs. The prospects for creating such a school are very hazy, however. In Kyrgyzstan, preliminary work to create a school of journalism has gotten underway twice, but the process came to a halt both times. All calculations showed that it would be dependent on grants and would never even break even. However, the matter of creating a school of journalism is still on the agenda.

Advanced training of media personnel was for a time proceeding very rapidly. International organisations, and then local NGOs, held a number of seminars and training sessions on a wide range of topics. Can we say that these efforts did Kyrgyzstan's media market any good? I don't think so. Under Kyrgyzstan's conditions, training courses and seminars turned out to be rather ineffective ways of raising the professional level of media workers. Why? After finishing his/her training, the media worker goes back to a team where everyone works the same old way. He/she very

quickly reverts to the old way of doing things, since that makes it easier to get by.

It might therefore be worthwhile to hold training sessions not just for one worker but for the whole team at once. Maybe then the new ways of doing things would get a foothold and sprout roots. The Media Complaints Commission is to hold several such sessions for teams of journalists this year. We'll see what, if anything, comes of this.

Media owners and directors are an important element in firmly putting new skills into practice. If they don't understand and don't accept the new methods, no retraining or advanced training of an individual worker will be successful. The worker will perhaps use the knowledge or skills he/she acquires, but not here and not now.

Where are we headed?

The situation with higher education in journalism and advanced training of media workers is a vicious circle of problems. I'm sure that success in solving all of the problems that make up the circle are rooted in the persistence and stubbornness of all those involved in the process.

What are we already able to accomplish?

1. We can hold training sessions and seminars for post-secondary instructors. They need this very, very badly. Most instructors have never worked in the media and base their lectures on course materials and books published in the days of the Soviet Union. Training sessions and seminars for instructors should focus on a number of areas:

- » raising the instructors' professional skills (teaching modern methods of instruction). The Media Complaints Commission held a training session for journalist ethics instructors in March of this year. They were provided with materials from the commission's cases, methods of interactive teaching, and Kazakhstan's first ever textbook on the professional ethics of journalism (*The Professional Ethics of a Journalist*, written for post-secondary institutions by commission member Yelena Cheremenina);
 - » filling in the gaps. I think instructors themselves should undergo practical training in all types of media, and not just teach students out of textbooks;
 - » training sessions and seminars aimed at creating standard programmes and modules on the widest possible range of subjects taught in post-secondary journalism courses.
2. We can hold training sessions and seminars on post-secondary teaching methodology for practicing journalists who would like to work with students. The problem, after all, is not that practicing journalists are egotistical and don't want to share their knowledge and experience with young people. They simply don't know how to do it. Creating academic programmes several months long is beyond the abilities of most journalists. They need to learn how it's done.
 3. We can begin working to create up-to-date methods of instruction that have been adapted to the conditions of Kyrgyzstan. The methods we develop should be available to all.
 4. We can make training courses and seminars commercial. Their effectiveness will then increase. Free seminars and training courses are unfortunately of no use to anyone. The experience of Bishkek's Media Support Centre Foundation in conducting commercial training courses shows that the media and some of their workers are ready to

pay for the chance to study. In cases like these, their attitude toward the educational process is one of much greater responsibility.

5. We can continue the process of conceptualising and possibly gradually creating a school of journalism in Kyrgyzstan. This is an idea worthy of discussion. I'd stress that the school itself would be unprofitable under the current conditions in Kyrgyzstan. But we might find someone, or a group of people or organisations, that would be able to make it self-supporting (and possibly even profitable).

The measures I've proposed are obviously just the first steps in the right direction. It is quite possible that they will not lead to the changes we need. By trial and error, however, all stakeholders will be able to find the correct path to reforming the approaches in effect in higher education and advanced training of media workers. Otherwise, Kyrgyzstan's media will continue to stagnate and lose human potential, along with the accomplishments they've managed so far to achieve. As a result, they'll simply disappear from the planet's informational field.

Developments in the field of media freedom in Central Asia

Trends in the development of freedom of speech in Kazakhstan

Tamara Kaleeva¹

As you all know, Kazakhstan has in the past (and especially energetically in this year of 2009) been preparing to assume the chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010. Under these conditions, largely unique to this newly independent state, trends noted long ago in the development of the situation with freedom of speech in Kazakhstan have become especially prominent.

We want to look nice in the international arena – like a snow leopard that has boldly sprung toward a free market and democracy. For domestic consumption, stability (understood as uniformity and irremovability of government) and unity of the people (interpreted as unanimous approval for everything the government does and says) are the priorities in the life of society.

These two lines exist as parallel worlds. It is possible that the only point (or one of the very few points) at which they intersect is the annual conferences of the Warsaw-based OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). The latest conference ended just a week ago. The members of the government delegation told the conference that in Kazakhstan

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- there were already 2973 officially registered media outlets, and 80% of these were private; that is, they determined their editorial policy independently;
- the courts were independent and even a presidential advisor recently paid the newspaper *Vremya* 5000 tenge (about \$40) by court order in compensation for moral damage;
- new liberal amendments were made in 2008 to the laws regulating media operations.

The democratic successes in the country were shown in brochures beautifully printed by Kazakhstan's embassy in Poland, for example, *Kazakhstan on the Road to Democracy and Reform* (high-quality paper and layout, lavish full-colour printing). Meanwhile, opposition journalists brought their own newspapers, printed on a digital duplicator and put together with a stapler like, for example, *S Perom i Shpagoi* (*With Pen and Sword*). These newspapers contain stories on arrested and convicted journalists, publications put out of business, and attacks on printing plants.

What then do we have in reality, objectively and without qualification? Let's examine the facts.

The freelance writer for *The Age* newspaper, Vadim Kuramshin, had been serving an unprecedented sentence of three years and ten months' imprisonment for slander ever since 2006. He was convicted of using the word "frauds" in an article defending the interests of simple peasants. On 6 October, while the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting organized by ODIHR was under way in Warsaw, his sentence was reviewed and he was released on parole, but he is still considered a criminal.

In 2008, the editor of the newspaper *Law and Justice*, Tokbergen Abiyev, was sentenced to three years for giving bribes. His newspaper had attacked a great many people, and a lot of them didn't like it at all. They didn't convict the editor last year for his articles, however; they convicted him for bribery. The financial police issued a press release on this matter, in which they explained straightforwardly that Abiyev tried to buy materials that would compromise members of the judicial branch from a high-ranking official of a major government agency. How the official of that agency was punished, what became of these materials, or whether anyone was actually compromised, the press release didn't say. An intriguing story that fires the imagination, for sure, but it doesn't end there. While serving his time in prison, the editor got another three years for malicious non-compliance with a court order. It seems that five years ago, he was ordered to pay 5 million tenge to the subject of a newspaper article who claimed to have suffered moral damages. He didn't have the money to pay back then, and he certainly has no money at all behind bars.

There were two more freedom of speech prisoners in Kazakhstan in 2009.

In August, the editor of the newspaper *Alma-Ata Info*, Ramazan Yesergepov, was sentenced to three years for illegally gathering and divulging state secrets. His actual crime was publishing a document on how agencies of the National Security Committee were trying to keep a private businessman from meeting with the country's president. The judicial proceedings were closed to the public, and journalists were not allowed in the courtroom even while the sentence was being read out. Press releases were later delivered by hand and had to be signed for.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, issued a special statement on this court proceeding, and called upon Kazakhstan's authorities to abolish the sentence. He reminded them that

“criminalizing civilians or journalists for breach of secrecy deprives the public of important information and leaves investigative journalism without one of its most important tools.”

On 13 August 2009, in a suit brought by the governor of West Kazakhstan Region, a former advisor to the governor, Alpamys Bekturganov, was sentenced to one year’s imprisonment for slander. He had held a press conference in July at which he expressed his concern over the serious problems of the region and suggested that many of the problems were being aggravated by the governor himself. He of course immediately became a *former* advisor, and soon found himself behind bars. Another criminal case was opened against him even after he was arrested and sentenced, this time for abuse of office. Bekturganov was charged with embezzlement of \$800 and sentenced to another three years’ imprisonment. Another court, this time civil, ordered him to recant his slanderous statements, and the region’s Writers’ Union, just as in Soviet times, struck him off its rolls “for unbecoming conduct.” We needn’t explain that few souls are brave enough to try criticising the government after an example like this.

On the whole, our statistics show that 21 journalists in the country have faced criminal prosecution since the start of the year. Of these, 12 were accused of slander. There have been around 150 civil claims against media outlets and journalists, with about 1.5 billion tenge (or around US \$10 million) being sought in compensation for moral damage. The oldest opposition newspaper, *Taszhargan*, which began operating in 1998 under the title *DAT*, was ruined and forced to close because of enormous lawsuits. The popular newspaper *Respublika* was put out of business by a court order to pay damages in the amount of 60 million tenge; even before the order come into force, the newspaper had been deprived of access to printing plants, which made its publication impossible. I think

the newspaper's staff can tell you all about the twists and turns in what is almost a detective story themselves.

The primary reasons for such happenings lie hidden mainly in the laws of Kazakhstan. To a large degree, the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan that regulate the activities of journalists and the media do not meet international standards. They do not incorporate the principle of free dissemination of information regardless of state borders. The Republic of Kazakhstan Criminal Code contains four articles providing for enhanced protection of personal non-property rights of public officials, including the president of the country, parliament members, and government representatives. Insult and slander have not been decriminalised. Administrative legislation contains more than 40 separate constituent elements of administrative offences in the area of media operation. In most cases, an outlet's suspension and shutdown are the sanctions applied, along with confiscation of its print runs, even for purely technical shortcomings.

On the eve of the question of Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship being decided, then foreign minister Tazhin promised in Madrid to liberalize media legislation. In the brochure *Kazakhstan on the Road to Democracy and Reform*, the changes that became law in February of this year are eloquently described. These five amendments played no substantial role whatsoever in the work of journalists. The sole merit of the law, in our view, was that it was harmless; that is, for the first time in many years, no new repressions or restrictions were introduced. In the Kazakhstan embassy's brochure, however, not a single word is said about the recently passed law that went into effect on 2 August 2009. It deals with the legal regulation of information and communications networks and is commonly known as the Internet law. None of us are surprised that the embassy apparently forgot about it in its brochure.

There really is nothing to boast about. The new law equates all Internet resources (websites, blogs, chatrooms, forums, e-shops, and so on) with the media, and their owners now bear criminal, civil, and administrative liability on the territory of Kazakhstan, just as journalists do. The law also requires Internet service providers and website owners to keep for two years all of the personal details of subscribers and Internet users that they submit when registering with the Internet resources. The same law introduces news grounds for suspending and closing all types of media.

The Kazakhstan public uniformly expressed its disagreement with the government's proposals like never before, and the OSCE expert concluded that the law did not conform to the standards of the OSCE, but the law was passed anyway. I incidentally would like to note that the activism of the journalistic community, and of the country's civil society in general, has grown considerably, but the government continues to turn a deaf ear to public opinion.

A new draft law was introduced in parliament in September, a new version of the Administrative Violations Code. As usual, a government explanatory note describes the virtues of this work with no less talent than a used car salesman. So far as the media are concerned, the only thing new about this document is that it contains additional punishments for additional sins.

For example, the draft of the revamped code contains such violations of the law as "biased media coverage of the election campaigns of candidates and political parties" and "media publication of propaganda materials that knowingly denigrate the honour, dignity, and business reputation of a candidate or political party."

I've talked with a great many serious lawyers, and they say no one has ever been penalised for bias anywhere in the world. This means we'll once

again be ahead of the rest of the world. In addition, the authors of the proposal evidently never would have guessed that editors do not have the right to edit parliamentary candidates' materials. Neither can they refuse to publish a candidate's materials, so long as they have already published their price list; otherwise, they'd again face criminal prosecution. In a word, either don't cover elections at all or get ready to go to court. This just adds more weight to all of the fines, confiscations, closings, and suspensions so lovingly preserved in the Ministry of Justice's new version of the code.

Then lawmaking will, we have to assume, continue in agreement with the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009–2012. This type of plan was developed in Kazakhstan for the first time and presented in Warsaw by a government delegation. With regard to freedom of speech, the plan recommends that the government:

1. improve legislation regulating media activities, with consideration given to international human rights instruments ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan;
2. draft and adopt a law on the access of citizens to information in 2011 to fully ensure the public's constitutional right to obtain information;
3. strengthen the legal liability (material, administrative, and criminal) of state officials for obstructing the legal activities of journalists and other media representatives;
4. ensure that media outlets may be suspended only by court order;
5. legislatively establish statutes of limitations in cases of defending honour and dignity;

- strengthen the instruments of collaboration between governmental agencies and institutions of civil society, and create favourable conditions for the effective implementation of the state's social mandate.

Both in the text of the plan and during its presentation at the conference in Warsaw, it was said that the document was drafted jointly and on an equal footing with civil society. True, there are such sections in the plan, but so far as the section on freedom of speech is concerned, it is clear that no one other than bureaucrats had a hand in writing it. I at least think I know the vast majority of journalistic NGOs in the country, and none of them will admit to having helped draft it. This is also evident from the content of the plan. Let's glance at its points together.

First point: Improve legislation. Our government is doing just that, and the latest product of such improvement is the Internet law mentioned earlier.

Second point: Draft a law on access to information. Of course, why not? Surely it will, in accordance with the Constitution, just govern how information affecting the personal rights of citizens is provided, but there will of course be something else regarding publically important information that journalists need. The provision in the current law on the media stating that information must be provided within three days suits journalists just fine, incidentally. The problem is that it isn't obeyed anywhere.

The third point is completely incomprehensible: Strengthen the legal liability for obstructing lawful activities. In Kazakhstan, such liability is prescribed in any case. We even have criminal liability under Article 155 of the Criminal Code. It's another matter entirely that not one official has been convicted under this article in the last ten years; none of the cases have even gone to court.

Let's go on: Ensure that media outlets may be suspended only by court order. Nowadays in Kazakhstan, media operations may be suspended by decision of the court and the outlet's owner. Are plans really being made to take this right away from the owners?

Fifth point: Legislatively establish statutes of limitations in cases of defending honour and dignity. Well, finally! Only ten years have gone by, and our government has resolved upon reinstating a provision that was present in the 1991 law and taken out of it in 1999. It is possible, by the way, that it won't be fully reinstated. Earlier, ten years ago, we had a one-year statute of limitations, and they may now establish a limit of three to five years. It is not for nothing that all those years the officials have complained about the alleged violation by statutes of limitations of the human right to defend one's honour and dignity.

I won't even touch the sixth and final point; it is nothing but wishful thinking. So, this is all the government wants to do in the area of freedom of speech in the next three years. There are no plans to decriminalise slander and insult, or to fix the amounts of redress for moral damage. There are not even any plans to update the Civil Code's article on the right of using someone's image. Our journalists, just like in Soviet times, have to ask permission from the official caught with his hand in the cookie jar before they can photograph him in court.

According to the legislative plan, the government is supposed to present another two laws of great importance to journalists by the end of the year: amendments to the Criminal and Civil Codes. We've seen these bills; all of the provisions are the same as before. Even the shortened statutes of limitations prescribed by the National Plan aren't there. Just the same unlimited and termless lawsuits, the same Manichaeian (for journalists) Articles 129, 130, and 319 of the Criminal Code, and so on.

I could go on and on describing both the real picture of freedom of speech and the one our government wants the world to see, but the colours would all be the same. In general, we can say that the situation with freedom of speech remains somewhat less than desirable. Under these conditions, we recommend that the government continue working, just as we shall, to

- decriminalise slander and insult and abolish extraordinary measures for protecting government officials;
- simplify the registration of new media outlets;
- introduce restrictions on monopolisation of the media, and lift the ban from media ownership by foreign nationals and companies;
- limit the application of such means of punishment as suspending the operations of and shutting down media outlets only to the exceptional cases covered by the country's Constitution;
- abolish the law on regulating the Internet as undemocratic and violating international principles and standards in freedom of expression;
- restrict the statute of limitations in suits against the media to defend one's honour, dignity, and business reputation;
- fix the amounts of redress for moral damage;
- free journalists and other citizens who have been imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of expression and to obtain and disseminate information.

I thank you for your attention and await your comments.

Tajikistan's media landscape

Nuriddin Karshiboev¹

Tajikistan's media operate under extreme conditions. According to data from sociological surveys, over 40 percent of the country's independent media are on the verge of bankruptcy. At the same time, the government-owned media are subsidized out of the state budget. An appeal from the heads of leading media outlets and organizations to the country's government to develop a programme for state support of the media under the conditions of the current financial crisis by offering tax breaks went unheeded.

According to the results of a survey conducted among the heads of Tajikistan's media outlets and organizations, Tajikistan's media are feeling the effects of the world financial crisis sharply. The survey was conducted as part of a round table held at the initiative of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation – Tajikistan and the Tajikistan Union of Journalists.

Of those surveyed, 92% answered “yes” to the question “Has the world financial crisis affected your media outlet?” The same number was recorded in response to the question “Has your income gone down?” The extent of the damage caused by the crisis was estimated variously. Among 73% of those surveyed, the figure varied between 10-35%. The greatest amount of losses was 80%. Because of this, 41% of the respondents believed it was possible that their outlets might be forced to shut down. Among the print media, 63% indicated that the crisis had

¹ Nuriddin Karshiboev, chairs the National Association of Independent Media Tajikistan (NANSMIT)

affected the purchasing power of their audience and that this had led to a larger than normal reduction in the circulation of their recent issues. Still, only 30% had rushed to downsize their staff. This was mainly due to a serious shortage of qualified media personnel in the best of times. The amounts of money needed to break out of the crisis also varied, depending on the size of the outlet and the region of its distribution or broadcasts. The highest amount given was 120,000 somoni (around US \$27,000), while the lowest was 7,000 somoni (more than US \$1,500). Almost all of the media heads, regardless of the outlet's form of property, admitted that they needed material and technical assistance from state or international organizations. However, the percentage of those in need of support from the state or from international organizations differed considerably: 65% and 84%, respectively. In response to the question "What, in your opinion, could help Tajikistan's media get through the period of financial crisis?" 40% of the respondents said "Lowering taxes and additional sources of income (state investment, grants, commercial promotions and projects, etc)."

According to data from the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan, there are currently 148 registered newspapers in Tajikistan, 44 of which are state-owned, 94 are privately owned, 26 are publicly owned, and 26 are sectoral publications. Among the seven registered information agencies, one is state-owned and six are private.

There are 44 publishing houses registered in the country. Of these, 6 are state-owned and 38 are private. A total of 148 printing houses currently operate in the country; of these, 25 are state-owned and 123 are private.

There are no exact statistics on the number of media outlets, since some outlets were not allowed to re-register with the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan because they were registered with the Ministry of Justice.

Five state television channels and three state radio stations currently operate in Tajikistan and cover 100 percent of the country's territory. At the same time, there are 16 non-state regional television stations and 7 independent radio stations.

On 7 February 2009, Tajikistan's President Emomali Rakhmon signed the decree "On the Response of Officials to Critical and Analytical Material in the Media". This subordinate act was intended to encourage newspapers, radio, and television so that public debate on social issues of the day could get under way. Some officials, however, saw this step as an attack on their authority, and instead of reacting to critical and analytical materials, they regularly prepare themselves for self-justification. They sometimes accuse the media and journalists of spreading unreliable information and libelling and insulting them.

Such an attempt was made by Anvari Vaisiddin, Mayor of Vakhdat (20 kilometres from the capital Dushanbe) with regard to the editor of the newspaper *Business and Politics* Olimjon Kurbonov. In a joint declaration, the Tajikistan Union of Journalists (TUJ) and the National Association of Independent Media of Tajikistan (NANSMIT) condemned the attempt to put pressure on the newspaper's editor. The analysis of the article "The Use of Water as a 'Breathing Problem'" (*Business and Politics* No. 23 of 4 June 2009) and Mayor Vaisiddin's response "Alternatives Are Either Nonexistent or Far Afield" (*Business and Politics* No. 29 of 16 June 2009) showed that the author raised the issue of combining farms into a public organization (the Association of Water Users) for the efficient and fair use of water and highlighted the role of local executive agencies in attracting worldwide investment to develop agriculture. The article criticised certain unlawful actions of the local authorities who were impeding the solicitation of investment funds from international organizations and preventing the leaders of the farms newly established by the Association of Water Users – citizens of Tajikistan – from exercising their constitutional

rights. Instead of responding at once to the critical material, the Mayor of Vakhdat tried to put pressure on the author and the outlet in order to draw public attention away from the raised issue by means of unfounded accusations of bias and material interest against the author. The Mayor's response is itself a typical bureaucratic run-around that has nothing whatsoever to do with the requirements of Presidential Decree No. 622, "On the Response of Officials to Critical and Analytical Material in the Media".

While recognizing the legal right of officials to reply and refute, media organizations believe attempts by officials to express doubts over the level of professionalism of articles' authors to be inappropriate. A response ought to go straight to the heart of the matter, and not be a means of self-justification. It certainly should not contain criticism, libel, or insults directed against journalists or the media. Moreover, high-ranking bodies or officials should be the ones to respond to publications, not the minor officials whose behaviour was criticized.

To be fair, it should be noted that journalists are sometimes guilty themselves: they take on too much responsibility and occasionally act as overseers, judges, and prosecutors. When this happens, the legal foundations and ethical norms of journalism are violated.

At the same time, the presence in the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan of articles that make libel and insult criminal offences limits the possibility of the democratic principle of free speech for the country's media being observed. People are consciously afraid to exercise their constitutional right to freedom of speech. This step could have dire consequences.

Ozodbek Khosabekov in an open letter addressed to Tajikistan's Prime Minister Asadullo Gulomov ("Where Has the Money Gone?" *Asia Plus* No.

2, of 10 January 2008) raised the issue of corruption in one government agency of the Gorno–Badakhshan Region and paid for it.

In the opinion of experts, the argument between Khosabekov and M. Rakhmatov over the publication of the open letter was a matter of civil law. Nevertheless, Rakhmatov, the head of the Gorno–Badakhshan Autonomous Region’s Department of Capital Construction, first filed a suit with the Rushan District Court, claiming he had suffered moral harm, and then an additional criminal complaint. The Rushan District Court opened a criminal case against Khosabekov under Article 135.3 of the Republic of Tajikistan Criminal Code. The criminal case was sent to the Rushan District Prosecutor for preliminary investigation.

Kosabekov was found guilty by the Rushan District Court on 20 June 2008 under Article 135.2 of the Republic of Tajikistan Criminal Code and sentenced to 200 hours of mandatory work. The Rushan District Court’s verdict of 20 June 2008 was upheld by decision of the Gorno–Badakhshan Autonomous Region’s Judicial Review Board for Criminal Cases on 23 July 2008.

Once convicted, however, Khosabekov disagreed with the decisions of the trial and appellate courts and asked the Republic of Tajikistan Supreme Court to review the case. He also appealed to Tajikistan’s Prosecutor General, as he thought the criminal case was investigated half-heartedly and one-sidedly and there was no proper judicial assessment of the true circumstances of the case.

In our view, Khosabekov was exercising his constitutional rights, since every citizen of Tajikistan has the right to demand that his/her case be reviewed by a competent, independent, and impartial court. The first court convicted him of libel in a criminal proceeding, while the second convicted him of insulting the judge when he lodged a protest against the

judge. He is now waiting for the verdict in the civil case, where he is likely to be fined a large sum of money. Attempts by journalists' organizations to defend Khosabekov's rights are running up against the corporate interests and ambitions of the judicial authorities.

Libel and insult are criminal offences in Tajikistan. Initiatives by Tajikistan's journalistic and human rights organizations to decriminalise libel and insult have gone unsupported by the executive and legislative branches. Our government does not want to align itself with such front-line states as the OSCE participating States that have decriminalized libel. Instead, the government is oriented toward those countries where the issue of decriminalising libel and insult has yet to be resolved.

The matter of licensing in the field of television and radio broadcasting also continues to be of interest. Not all license applicants (they number around 20) get the permission of the authorized government agency, the Government Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting. Repeated appeals by international and domestic media organizations to Tajikistan's president, government, and parliament to ensure legality and transparency in granting licenses, to streamline the operations of the Licensing Commission of the Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting, and to create an interagency council for licensing in television and radio broadcasting have yielded no positive results. The authorities are ignoring the appeals of the media and organizations of civil society.

Under the current circumstances, matters of reforming journalistic education and the training and re-training of journalistic personnel take centre stage. Faculties and departments of journalism in the countries of Central Asia are unable to train young journalists, and at times they turn into workshops training ideological workers for the ruling regime, while the efforts of organizations of civil society in this area have little

effect. The problem is clear: journalistic education is at a dead end. In a situation like this, the winding up of assistance projects and programmes supported by international and donor organizations today would be fraught with serious implications.

According to expert forecasts, attempts by the authorities to control the activities of the media on the eve of the upcoming parliamentary elections are growing. Journalists should rely, above all, on themselves and on journalistic associations to maintain the pluralism and independence of the media, freedom of criticism, and free access to information and the media. Guided by this, Tajikistan's media organizations are actively working to create a media council in the country.

The founding documents of this agency have already been drawn up: the Code of Journalistic Ethics, drafts of the Statutes, Operating Rules and Regulations, and Charter of Tajikistan's Media Council. In our view, strengthening the mechanism of media self-regulation will help provide security for journalistic activities under conditions where pressure is being put on the media.

Based on the situation in the realm of Tajikistan's media, and considering the needs and demands of the media, it would be advisable to:

- introduce the concept of “public figure” to Republic of Tajikistan legislation, in order to widen the boundaries of freedom of speech with regard to high officials;
- decriminalize libel and insult;
- give utmost support to the creation of mechanisms for media self-regulation;
- assess the needs and consider the requirements of the media in drafting educational programmes;

- carry out independent evaluations and monitoring of the educational programmes of local and international organizations;
- consider a new approach to educational projects in the field of journalism (oriented toward development, etc).

Stages in the development of Uzbekistan's non-state electronic media

Anvar Bozorov¹

The democratic processes taking place today in Uzbekistan affect all areas of society in equal measure. Projects to develop the media, create conditions and opportunities for freedom of action, and strengthen the media's legal, material, and technical bases are being successfully implemented. In Uzbekistan today, there is a broad legal framework for the successful development of the media that continues to improve through incorporating international experience.

Non-state owned TV and radio stations are taking an active part in the changes now underway in Uzbekistan. The National Association of Electronic Media (NAESMI), created by a resolution of its founding conference on 2 December 2003, holds an increasingly important place in the socio-political life of Uzbekistan society.

The period 2003 through 2009 was an era of rapid development for the non-state owned media industry in our country. For purposes of comparison, it should be noted that if the number of media outlets in Uzbekistan was around 500 just 15 years ago, this number today is already as high as 1128, more than 600 of which are operating in the country's regions. Fifty-nine companies are broadcasting in the field of television, there are 45 radio channels, and the number of websites is near 100.

¹ Anvar Bozorov, Deputy Executive Director of the National Association of Electronic Media (NAESMI)

Today, NAESMI of Uzbekistan comprises 91 non-state owned electronic media outlets, of which 32 are television stations (26 regional, 3 commercial, and 3 countrywide), 29 are radio stations (18 regional), and 30 are cable TV channels.

NAESMI of Uzbekistan annually adopts a programme for the development of non-state owned television and radio broadcasters that is then put into practice. Up-to-date technical equipment is supplied to non-state owned TV and radio stations, cable TV channels on the basis of grants and sponsor support. As part of this support, seminars for the TV and radio stations' creative and technical personnel are organised, and the creative groups taking part in the Association's various projects receive regular material and moral encouragement.

The Association has recently carried out a number of major media projects aimed at supporting and developing non-state owned TV and radio stations and cable TV channels.

For NAESMI, assistance is provided through the National Assembly of the Republic of Uzbekistan's Public Foundation for the Support of Nongovernmental and Noncommercial Organisations and Other Institutions of Civil Society. The Uzbekistan Agency of Communications and Informatics and the organisations it comprises help substantially in implementing NAESMI projects.

The Association began its activities with the adoption of the Charter of Television and Radio Broadcasters and the Journalists' Code of Ethics, the first such document in the history of domestic journalism. From the very outset, the Association's main tasks were to unite the non-state owned electronic media and to promote the idea of journalism as an active part of civil society.

In 2004, NAESMI and the 18 non-state owned TV stations operating in the country founded the NTT television channel, Uzbekistan's network of non-state owned TV companies, with an audience of 22 million. The technically advanced Bunyodkor broadcasting complex was put into operation in Tashkent. The network of 15 non-state radio stations began operating in 2009. Experts and specialists in the field assess these projects as successful efforts to create public TV and radio for Uzbekistan. The TV and radio networks' operations are based on each of their stations producing independent programmes that are later broadcast over the airwaves of the other affiliates.

The proposal to create the Forum TV satellite channel was approved by the government of Uzbekistan, and the work to open the channel for foreign countries was done in 2008 as part of the national Year of Youth programme. Forum TV's programmes are now broadcast to Europe, Central Asia, the Russian Federation, western and eastern China, north-western India, the Arabian Peninsula, the Middle East, and northern Africa.

The grant-funded NAESMI Information Centre, consisting of 18 TV and 15 radio stations, was set up as part of the Programme for the Development of Television and Radio Broadcasting to highlight the changes now taking place in Uzbekistan's regions. The *Khudud* (Region) news and analysis programme, broadcast five times a week, is produced under the auspices of the project. Today, thanks to the use of state-of-the-art technologies, live broadcasts between regional studios have begun in an attempt to organise direct dialogue.

The Parliament soati (Parliamentary Hour) current events programme examines in detail the workings of the National Assembly's bicameral system and how legislation is executed. Important bills are discussed and public opinion is studied.

The Social Project, in which 17 television stations are taking part, is focused on social protection programmes and materials, and on production of brief films on the topic.

The success of the electronic media is due to the quality of programmes aired, the size of the audience, and the effective use of innovative media technologies. This also demands a certain level of professional training among TV and radio workers.

NAESMI of Uzbekistan has created its own training centre that deals on a regular basis with the training of, and holding working and educational workshops for, the managers of television and radio stations and their creative staff.

More than 100 media forums, conferences, theoretical and practical interactive seminars, workshops, competitions, and different meetings have been held from 2004 through 2009, aimed at improving the level of knowledge, professional skills, and social activeness of TV and radio stations' creative and technical personnel. Overall, around 4,000 workers of non-state owned TV and radio stations and cable television channels have taken part in these events. The importance of the conferences and seminars held lies in their not being limited to theory only. Highly qualified experts, academics, professionals with great experience of working in television and radio, and representatives of interested ministries, agencies, and organisations are invited to speak at them, along with parliamentary deputies involved in drafting legislation for the development of the media.

It is gratifying that more and more young people are being drawn to the field of electronic journalism. As a rule, these are journalism students and recent graduates, who today work in media oriented toward the youth audience. This is a new group of personnel who are creative,

highly motivated, and enjoy a challenge. However, they lack practical knowledge. At the same time, it is these young journalists who must ensure the further development of democratic reforms in the area of Uzbekistan's media.

Creative workshops and TV and radio studios for young broadcast journalists were set up under item 113 of the national Year of Youth programme to train new personnel. A new central studio, outfitted with the latest technical equipment, was set up at the NAESMI telecomplex to create the conditions needed by the 200 young journalists taking part in the project, while regional youth studios were set up at regional TV and radio stations. The departments for socially relevant programming, young adults' programming, and children's programming established at the Erkin fikr (Free Thought) TV station have considerably improved the quality of Uzbekistan's NTT network, with a commensurate rise in its ratings.

Representatives of non-state owned electronic media are taking an active part in developing regulatory and legal documents affecting the media.

In conclusion, I can say that non-state owned broadcasting stations have raised the intensity of competition in the information field. The country's informational space is today satisfyingly full and varied, the regions have stepped up their activities, and even the most distant corners of the country receive the informational product of the non-state owned electronic media.

Freedom of speech in Kyrgyzstan

Marat Tokoiev¹

Three years ago, a meeting of partner media organizations from Central Asia was held in the framework of USAID project “Protection of democratic principles of freedom of speech in Central Asian countries” in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Much of what they had to say about the situation with freedom of speech in their countries, about the pressure on journalists and the media, was incomprehensible to the representatives from Kyrgyzstan and seemed impossible for our country. Today, we think otherwise. There are now more similarities than there are differences.

In my address then, three years ago, I said that we, despite being directly involved in the situation, remain practically unaware of the scale of the changes now taking place. A comparison of what was and what has happened since allows us to better understand today’s situation, particularly what is happening with freedom of speech in this country.

How can we characterize the situation in Kyrgyzstan today with regard to freedom of speech?

1. Journalism is a dangerous profession

We must recognize that journalism in Kyrgyzstan is one of the most dangerous professions. According to the international organization *Press Emblem Campaign*, which monitors observation of the rights of media

¹ Marat Tokoiev, Chairman of the Board, the “Journalists” Public Union

representatives around the world, our country is now included in the list of fatally dangerous states for journalists from other countries to work in. Our neighbours on the list are the Gaza Strip, Honduras, Colombia, and Afghanistan.

Since 2006, attacks on journalists have for us become an everyday occurrence. From 2006 through 2009 inclusively, we (the public organization *Journalists*²) have documented more than 50 cases of attacks on journalists. And these are just the facts that we are aware of. A great many of such incidents are hushed up by the journalists themselves. This happens because the journalists are either afraid to report them, or they simply do not believe that the perpetrators will be found and punished.

Journalists here are not only beaten up, but they are also murdered. Alisher Saipov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Siyosat (Politics)*, was gunned down in October 2007. In July of this year, following a horrific beating by the law enforcement officers, journalist Almaz Tashiyev died.

Most of the crimes committed against journalists continue to go unpunished. This is especially true in cases where, in our opinion, the motives were connected with the professional activities of the journalist. Such crimes are either not investigated at all or the investigations are unnecessarily protracted. Thus, in early August of this year, there was a brief announcement that the Interior Ministry had completed the investigation of Saipov's murder and handed the material over to the court. However, there has so far not been a judicial hearing. So far as the case of Almaz Tashiyev is concerned, the Nookat District Court sent it back for further investigation to clarify the circumstances of the journalist's beating. The judge argued that this decision was valid due

² *Journalists* is a Kyrgyz NGO which monitors cases of violations of freedom of expression and the rights of journalists and the media.

to errors during the initial investigation and the need to conduct a more detailed assessment of the circumstances surrounding the case. A version is being actively promoted that the journalist's death was due not to the beating, but to illness.

Leaving such crimes unpunished in turn fosters among the public the feeling that anyone can commit crimes against journalists and get away with impunity, and leads to a sense of defencelessness among journalists themselves.

Thus one can sympathize with those journalists who are forced to request asylum in other countries. There have already been six such cases in the last three years – something that was unimaginable earlier.

It is debatable to what extent journalists' professional activities are the reason behind these crimes. Some things, however, are obvious:

- *Cases of attacks against journalists have become commonplace.*
- *Attacks and beatings are becoming increasingly vicious.*
- *Those journalists who write critically about current affairs are the ones most likely to be severely beaten up.*
- *Crimes against journalists often go unpunished.*

It is said that journalism is the eyes and ears of society. A journalist is someone who helps us keep our bearings in this world and occasionally advises us in making the right decisions. When journalists are in fear for their life or for the safety of their families and friends; when journalists are prone to self-censorship; then there is no point in hoping that they will provide complete and objective information on events inside the country, or that they will uncover and bring to light that which keeps the life of society from becoming better.

2. Lawsuits

We have in recent months witnessed a tightening up of the judicial system with regard to journalists. This has been manifested in the rising number of court decisions against journalists and the media, and in the rising sums that the media and their employees have had to pay in compensation for moral damage.

In the words of former media ombudsman Ilim Karypbekov, the number of cases won by members of the media in the first years of the institution's existence was as high as 75% or more, but that number has steadily declined with each following year.

At the same time, the amount of moral compensation the media are forced to pay by court order is rising. One eloquent example of this: on 22 April 2009, a judge at the Interregional Court in the city of Bishkek announced a decision requiring the newspaper *Uchur* to pay a hotel 2 million soms in moral damages and 1 million soms in material damages, amounting to a total of 3 million soms. For Kyrgyzstan, this was an unprecedented figure.

It must be said that the multi-million som lawsuits brought during the time of the previous president continue, and are actively used today in the fight against undesirable media, which in Kyrgyzstan are most often opposition publications. It is worth remembering the case of the newspapers *De Facto* and *Alibi*. The newspaper *El Sozu*, which opened after *Alibi* was closed, recently announced that it too might have to close on account of multi-million som lawsuits brought against it.

Those "offended" by the media have gone further, however, creatively developing this instrument of battling the media. Along with lawsuits for moral compensation and material damage, criminal cases are being brought against editors-in-chief with the assumption that neutralizing

editorial boards reduces the risk of a new unwanted media outlet being opened. It was criminal charges that were brought against Cholpon Orozobekova and Babyrbek Jeenbekov, the editors-in-chief of *De Facto* and *Alibi*, respectively.

I don't imply that the media or the journalists who allowed falsification of the facts in their materials and intentionally humiliated human dignity, should not be held responsible. They should. However, court decisions should not lead to the closing of newspapers. Because we still do not have objective journalism in this country, the public should have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with one point of view or another on current issues.

3. Legislation

In the area of legislation, we should be working not only toward expanding freedom of speech but also toward defending the positions we have won already. Three years ago, the media community was fighting for adoption of the law on public television, for the decriminalization of libel and insult, and for reducing state involvement in the media. Today, we don't even think of this.

We are working for the Internet not to be classified as media, and for amendments and addenda to the Television and Radio law, the adoption of which was an unpleasant surprise for the media community, television and radio companies in particular, making their operations much more complicated. The quality of the laws passed by parliament is illustrated well by the country's president having issued an order to create a working group to draw up amendments and addenda to the law immediately after he signed it.

It should be recognized that a number of the laws regulating the media sphere are in need of certain amendments and addenda to bring them up to date, since they were passed long ago. The Law on the Media in particular was passed back in 1993. However, we still have well-grounded fears that, while wishing to improve the law, we could end up with a worse version of it. Legislation to introduce amendments and addenda to the Law on the Media is currently being drafted. What kind of law will we end up with, though, after it has been debated in parliament? In wanting to improve the law, will we not make it worse?

4. Mass Media Bias

The owners of most media outlets are either politicians or businessmen who have definite political interests. Media employees, led by the editor-in-chief, have to obey the owner.

This happens because almost none of our media outlets have labour agreements between employees and owners, editors-in-chief and owners, and so on. The dependence of an outlet's information policy on the political orientation of its owner is also strengthened by its economic (financial) dependence on its owner. We can count on the fingers of one hand the number of media outlets in Kyrgyzstan which are self-sustainable.

The plan to create public television that would be controlled by the public, and whose content would be determined not by the authorities but by the public, according to its needs, has fallen apart completely. Everything was done to keep it from happening.

5. Media Uniformity

Although there are still have opposition media outlets, there is a trend toward uniformity of the media, compared to what we had earlier.

It all began with the television companies. Until 20 March 2005, there were at least two television companies in Bishkek that positioned themselves as in opposition to the government: Pyramid and NTS. Today, there are no electronic media outlets that can allow themselves to criticize the government. This was accomplished in a very simple manner, without any sort of open pressure on the media: through a change of ownership.

There was only one more opposition outlet left, the television channel September in Jalalabat. It could not be acquired by the standard method, since its owner was the brother of a well-known opposition politician. So another way was found. The agreement between the television company and the local authorities on renting the ground under the channel's broadcasting tower was declared illegal.

This trend has now been extended to the print media as well. The number of opposition outlets is declining. Different methods are being used to accomplish this: lawsuits aimed at bankrupting newspapers, changes of ownership, and so on. There are many examples of this, including *Agym*, *De Facto*, *Alibi*, *Uchur*, *Asman Press*, and *Aiat Press*.

I would like to dwell especially on the situation with the local bureau of *Radio Azattyk (Liberty)*. It was always the litmus test for the level of freedom of speech in the country. In the years when freedom of speech was declining, *Azattyk* started to face problems; in the years when the situation improved somewhat, the station re-established its previous position. Today, *Radio Azattyk* has been forced to reduce the area covered by its broadcasts since it has been asked to leave state-run radio, where it was renting air time. State Radio and Television is the

country's only broadcasting company that is able to reach the whole of the country. *Azattyk's* transmissions are rebroadcast by a number of FM stations in the capital and the regions, but their radius of signal reception is no greater than 50 to 100 kilometres.

Summing up, one can say that a consequence of the growth of self-censorship among journalists, the decline of trust in the media, and the narrowing of freedom of speech is that the public is now lacking objective, reliable information, and a wide range of opinion inside the country.

It would be dishonest to say that there have been no positive moments in the area of media in recent years:

1. We have adopted, and will this year be introducing addenda to, a Kyrgyz Republic code of ethics for journalists. There is also now a commission for reviewing claims against the media.
2. Newspapers and magazines are coming together in a single industry organization – the Association of Publishers and Distributors of Periodical Publications.

These few positive items, however, are merely a response to the worsening of the situation with freedom of speech in the country.

What must we do?

First of all, the following measures must be taken on the state level:

1. The state must meet the obligations it has assumed and provide protection for the professional activities of journalists.

2. There must be state support for the media. This does not mean raising the volume of spending for state publications, but creating realistic conditions for the growth of newspapers, television and radio, in particular creating tax breaks.
3. The media should work harder to orient themselves more toward consumers than toward their owners. To accomplish this, however, the necessary legal and economic conditions must be created.
4. Media organizations must change the format and methods of their operations according to the new demands of the day: better coordination of their work, more joint operations, and adopting other forms and ways of working.
5. It is highly important that the work of the Union of Journalists be revived, since it is difficult to speak of journalists' independence without protection for their employment rights.

Appendix

11th Central Asia Media Conference

Journalism education – improvement of the quality of education and new technologies

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

15-16 October 2009

AGENDA

Day 1, 15 October 2009

9.30 – 10.00 Registration

10.00 – 10.30 Opening Session

Welcoming remarks

Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, Head of OSCE Centre in Bishkek

Opening statement

Ruslan Kazakbaev, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic

Keynote speaker

Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 13.00 First Session

International experience in the area of journalism education

Moderator: Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Current problems of journalism and journalism education

Andrei Richter, Director, Moscow Media Law and Policy Institute, Professor, Journalism Department, Moscow State University

Challenges and new directions for global journalism education

David Mould, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, Professor of Telecommunications, Ohio University, USA

No such thing as too much training

Manana Aslamazyan, Executive Director, Internews Europe, Paris

The impact of technology and consumer habits on journalist's qualifications

Dainius Radzevicius, Chairman of Lithuanian Journalists Union

13.00 Group photo

13.30 – 14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 17.30 Second Session

Journalism education in Central Asia. Presentations of representatives from each Central Asian state

Moderator: Alexander Boldyrev, Senior Adviser, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

KAZAKHSTAN*Media education in Kazakhstan: problems and prospects*

Adil Jalilov, Development Director, International Journalism Centre MediaNet; Chair, Media Alliance of Kazakhstan, a coalition of media NGOs in Kazakhstan

TAJIKISTAN*Problems and prospects for journalism education in Tajikistan in light of the new standard of higher professional education*

Abdusattor Nuraliev, Head, Department of TV and Radio, RTSU (Tajik-Russian University)

TURKMENISTAN*Journalism education in Turkmenistan*

Osman Hemzayev, Teacher, Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

UZBEKISTAN*The system of training and retraining creative and technical personnel for Uzbekistan media*

Shuhrat Satimov, Senior Researcher, Institute for Studies of the Civil Society

KYRGYZSTAN*The state of and outlook for journalism education in Kyrgyzstan*

Parida Bostonova, Dean, Journalism Department, Kyrgyz Technical University

Why is journalism education so ineffective in Kyrgyzstan?

Aleksandr Kulinsky, Independent Journalist, Chair, Media Complaints Committee

16:15 – 16:30 Coffee break

19.00 Reception

Day 2, 16 October 2009

10.00 – 12.30 Third Session

Developments in the field of media freedom in Central Asia

Moderator: Alexander Boldyrev, Senior Adviser, Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

Presentations of country representatives on developments in the field of media freedom over the last year.

KAZAKHSTAN

Trends in the development of freedom of speech in Kazakhstan

Tamara Kaleeva, President, International Foundation of Protection of Speech Adil Soz

TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan's media landscape

Nuriddin Karshiboev, Chairperson, National Association of Independent Media Tajikistan (NANSMIT)

TURKMENISTAN*Independent Turkmenistan and the media*

Atajan Annageldiyev, Head of the Department, National TV Channel
“Turkmenistan”

UZBEKISTAN*Stages in the development of Uzbekistan’s non-state electronic media*

Anvar Bozorov, Deputy of Executive Director of the National Association
of Electronic Mass Media

KYRGYZSTAN*Freedom of speech in Kyrgyzstan*

Marat Tokoev, Board Chairman, Public Union “Journalists”

11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

12.30 – 13.30 Fourth and Closing Session

Moderator: Alexander Boldyrev, Senior Adviser, Office of the OSCE
Representative on Freedom of the Media

Adoption of the Conference Declaration*Closing remarks*

Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

14.00 – 15.00 Lunch

Departure

11th Central Asia Media Conference

Journalism education – improvement of the quality of education and new technologies

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

15-16 October 2009

PARTICIPANTS LIST

KAZAKHSTAN

Vyacheslav Abramov	Director, International Journalism Centre MediaNet
Tulegen Askarov	Chair of the Board of Trustees, Soros Foundation- Kazakhstan; President, “BizMedia” Center for Business Journalism; Lecturer, KIMEP
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Galiya Azhenova	Head, Independent Centre of Expertise under International Foundation of Protection of Speech AdilSoz
Olga Dosybieva	Director, Institute for War and Peace Reporting – Kazakhstan

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Sergei Duvanov	Independent Journalist
Askhat Erkimbay	Journalist, Trainer of the International School of Journalism under Medianet
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Tamara Kaleeva	President, International Foundation of Protection of Speech Adil Soz
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Diana Medvednikova	President, North-Kazakhstan Legal Media Centre, Astana
Karliga Misayeva	Deputy Head, Journalism Department, Kazakh National University named after al-Farabi
Sergei Vlassenko	Head Media Support Centre, National Association of Television and Radio Broadcasters of Kazakhstan

Victoriya Volkova	Project Coordinator, Public Foundation “Medialife”
Marzhan Yelshibayeva	Acting Director, Internews Kazakhstan
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KYRGYZSTAN

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Gulbara Imankulova	Head, Talas Media Resource Centre
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Irina Karamushkina	Member of Parliament, Chairman, Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Information

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Ruslan Kazakbaev	First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ruslan Koshmuratov	Director, Almaz Radio
Aleksandr Kulinski	Independent Journalist, Chair, Media Complaints Committee
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Isa Omurkulov	Member of Parliament, Chairman, Committee on Education, Science, Culture and Information
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Daniyar Sadiev	Head, Batken Media Resource Centre

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PRESS RELEASE

OSCE media conference brings together participants from all five Central Asian countries

BISHKEK, 16 October 2009 - Journalists and education experts from all Central Asian states - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - discussed challenges to journalism in the region and issued recommendations on journalism education at the 11th OSCE Central Asia Media Conference, which ended in Bishkek today.

“I am pleased that Turkmenistan, absent for many years from our discussions, sent representatives of their budding journalism education system, helping our Central Asian conference achieve its full potential,” Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media said.

“Media freedom and pluralism should be the core values of the ongoing reforms of academic and on-job training across the region.”

The event was organized by the office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, hosted by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and supported by four other OSCE field offices in the region.

“The challenge of preserving and indeed improving standards of accurate and ethical journalism looms large as journalism increasingly shifts from using traditional media forms to attracting audiences through the Internet, blogging, Facebook and Twitter,” said Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. “This makes the theme of this conference, journalism education, all the more pertinent - as much for the public and media watchdogs as for journalists.”

Conference participants issued a declaration on journalism education in Central Asia, which will be available soon in English and Russian at www.osce.org/fom.

During his visit, Haraszti met Ruslan Kazakbaev, Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister; Tamara Obozova, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information; Oksana Malevanaya, the Head of the President's Secretariat; and former Foreign Minister Roza Otunbayeva, a current Member of Parliament. The discussions focused on media legislation and security of journalists.

Media advisory

OSCE organizes conference in Bishkek on journalism education and press freedom

BISHKEK, 12 October, 2009 - The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) and the OSCE Centre in Bishkek are organizing the 11th Central Asian Media Conference on Thursday and Friday in Bishkek.

The conference aims to provide a forum for discussion on media developments and challenges that journalism faces in Central Asia.

Discussions will particularly focus on existing education opportunities that could increase the level of professionalism of the media, new challenges and the influence of modern information and communication technologies. Participants also will discuss best practices in the area of journalism education and exchange experiences. International experts, civil society representatives and academics will make presentations during the conference.

In addition, the conference gives the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and the OSCE's five field operations in Central Asia a possibility to co-operate in their efforts to promote and support fulfillment of the OSCE media freedom commitments.

Conference participants are expected to draft and adopt joint recommendations in a Conference Declaration, to be used as a base for follow-up activities.

Journalists are invited to the Conference, which starts at 10 a.m. October 15 in the Ak Keme hotel, Prospekt Mira 93, Bishkek.



Miklos Haraszti, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and his senior adviser Ana Karlsreiter at a meeting during the conference



Ruslan Kazakbaev, First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic; Burul Usmanalieva, national media officer at OSCE Centre in Bishkek; and Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, Head of OSCE Centre in Bishkek, discuss media developments in Kyrgyzstan



Conference participants



David Mould, Associate Dean for research and graduate studies and Professor of telecommunications at Ohio University talks about global journalism education



Burul Usmanalieva, national media officer at OSCE Centre in Bishkek, Ana Karlsreiter, senior adviser to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media and Manana Aslamazyan, Executive director of Internews Europe at the opening session of the conference



OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszi gives an interview to a Kyrgyz journalist