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Censorship and self-censorship

Speakers and participants of the conference How to report on corruption? said that media reporting on corruption is made difficult because of government pressure and its influence on editorial policy, on one hand, and lack of courage of journalists, on the other hand, who resort to self-censorship and operate on the line of least resistance

Banja Luka, 21 September 2009 - Transparency International Bosnia and Herzegovina (TI BiH) and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) held a conference titled *How to report on corruption?*, Whose main goal was, primarily to raise awareness about the importance for the journalists themselves to apply the principles of investigative journalism in order to be prepared for the challenges of reporting on corruption and corruption scandals.

The reason behind the conference is a worrying situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where journalists who report on corruption scandals are exposed to attacks and pressures, even by the representatives of BiH authorities, which led to the emergence of self-censorship within the media themselves.

Panelists of the conference were journalists who distinguished themselves among competitors with their integrity, and who through their work successfully reported on corruption, and they conveyed their experiences, recalling the circumstances in the political arena and in society in general, giving recommendations for the improvement of the situation in BiH and the region, when it comes to reporting on corruption. The attendees were addressed by Bakir Hadziomerovic, editor of the magazine "60 Minutes", Brankica Stankovic, editor of the show "Insider" on TV B92, and Marija Milic, editor of EuroBlic, as well as Natasa Tesanovic, Director of Alternative Television, and Damir Miljevic, economic analyst, who spoke about the way they overcame obstacles and gained their reputation in pointing out to the corruption and the way they fought with the pressures.

The conference was opened by Srdjan Blagovcanin, Executive Director of TI BiH, who introduced the participants to the topic of corruption, speaking about the role of media in recognizing this phenomenon in a society, and briefly analyzing the situation of media in Bosnia-Herzegovina when it comes to reporting on corruption.

Bakir Hadziomerovic, editor of the magazine "60 Minutes", spoke about the censorship of the media, reflecting on the political situation in which media operate, which is according to him extremely hostile towards those who point out to the corruption and corrupt practices, also speaking about the cases in which the media were blackmailed and those when journalists and the media were exposed to open threats.

Brankica Stankovic, editor of the magazine "Insider" on Television B92, also spoke at the Conference and reviewed the situation in Serbia and the state of media freedom in the region, as well as the consequences of the new law on information. Stankovic, among other things, emphasized the

responsibility of journalists themselves to, acting as the voice of the public, pressure on the government and the judiciary to deal with corruption with concrete measures.

The Conference was attended by many journalists, representatives of media houses from all over BiH, which also had the opportunity to discuss about the reputation of the media and journalists in BiH today.