

VIII South East Europe Media Forum to be held Oct. 16-18 Skopje

**Premier media event in South East Europe to unite media, civil society, academia and business from across region**

VIENNA, 11 October 2014 - The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), the Media Program South East Europe of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Central European Initiative (CEI) announce the VIII South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF), to be held 16-18 October 2014 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

VIII SEEMF is being organised in partnership with UNESCO, the European Commission, International Academy - International Media Center (IA-IMC) and South East and Central Europe PR Organisation (SECEPRO); and in cooperation with the South East European Network for the Professionalization of Media (SEENPM), Macedonian Institute for Media, Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM/ZNM), the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, the Council of Europe (COE), the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso (OBC) and the M6 Education Center in Skopje

The event will bring together media CEOs, editors-in-chief, leading journalists, business professionals, CEOs from companies active in South East and Central Europe, representatives of marketing and public relations agencies, civil society representatives, academics and representatives of state institutions from South, East and Central Europe.

The theme of this year's SEEMF is "Media in South East Europe: Not enough or too much information?". Discussions will cover the right to access information, data journalism, privacy and the protection of sources, self-regulation and standards of quality reporting. A session will also be dedicated to opinion making in times of conflict and will discuss the lessons of the media war in Ukraine.

"The CEI is committed to respond to the need of safeguarding media freedom and freedom of expression in the EU and across Europe. This is why we sponsor activities such as the South East Europe Media Forum and the Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism" said Ambassador Giovanni Caracciolo, CEI Secretary General. "This year, the Forum also includes a session on Ukraine, which shows our

attention to media developments related to crisis situations in the region".

Christian Spahr, head of KAS Media Program South East Europe added: "Nowadays, citizens and journalists don't lack of information - they are overwhelmed with it. But the information they get is often incomplete and biased. In times of conflict and political transition, we need to debate whether media inform or misinform. The South East Europe Media Forum takes it as its mission to gather all relevant stakeholders."

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, further noted: "SEEMF is the leading annual media event in South, East and Central Europe. We bring together every year several hundred media representatives and the event also serves to support the media, professional reporting, press freedom and journalism in the host country".

Nikola Poposki, minister of foreign affairs of Macedonia, will deliver the welcome address. Other keynote speakers will be Johann Wadepful, member of the German Bundestag and of the chamber's Foreign Affairs Committee and Danilo Türk, president of Slovenia from 2007-2012. Special remarks will be given by Erhard Busek, former vice-chancellor of Austria.

In addition, the annual CEI SEEMO Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism will be officially presented to this year's winners.

Several other key events are being organised around SEEMF. UNESCO, together with the Macedonian Institute for Media, will host an event to present the new press council in the host country and discuss the perspectives and challenges for this media self-regulatory body, the youngest in the region. On Oct. 15 and 16, IPI, together with the Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI), will lead an experts seminar on defamation for journalists and lawyers in the host country. Following SEEMF, the Safety Net for European Journalists will conduct a roundtable discussion on way in which censorship disguises itself in countries considered to have a free press.

On Saturday, Oct. 18, SEEMO will organise the annual Commission on Media Policy, with this year's topic "Strengthening the Press under Pressure of War and Repression". The Commission, which was founded by former US president Jimmy Carter in 1990, will be co-chaired by Ellen Mickiewicz, director of the DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and

Democracy at Duke University and former Austrian Vice-Chancellor Busek. During the Commission, SEEMO will present a special diploma as part of the Dr. Erhard Busek/SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe to Nenad Sebek, spokesperson of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

Apart from working sessions, SEEMF offers a unique opportunity to meet leading professionals for an open discussion about media, press freedom, marketing, business and new media in South East and Central Europe.

About SEEMF VIII

Working languages: English, German, Macedonian and Ukrainian

Date: 16, 17 and 18 October 2014

Venue: Holiday Inn Hotel, Mosa Pijade 2, Skopje

Venue for Commission on 18 October: M6 Educational Centre, 810 Street, Skopje.

The South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) is a joint project by the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS), Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). The first SEEMF was held in 2007 in Zagreb.

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