



ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN JOURNALISTS

# MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

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Dear colleagues,

After a (too) long wintertime in Europe, Spring is finally there. And I hope, this will not only apply to nature but also to the situation in the EU. After the Prague Spring and the occupation of Czechoslovakia, in 1968 one of the most famous Czech songwriters, Karel Kryl, wrote a song in which he sang: „We expected Spring but it was Frost that came, and so a terrible Winter went on and on...” That winter was symbolic for to the very hard time in Czechoslovakia during 20 years after 1968. Although this can't be directly related to our time, since then we often use Kryl's words in connection with troubles, crises and unexpected changes. But I hope, that every colleague from East to West, from North to South has had in the last months not only „frozen“ experiences outside and inside but also some positive and nice ones.

In a few weeks it will be World Press Freedom Day (WPFDD). This is every year a very important moment for all AEJ sections. It gives an opportunity to organise, sometimes together with other organisations, events focusing on this good we have now in most European countries, but still not everywhere of the same quality and at the same level. Especially in post-communist countries we know very well, what freedom of the press and freedom of expression means.

For now, I hope you will enjoy the new Newsletter. It would be great when you send me your comments. Good luck for all of you.

Tibor Macak, Int. Secretary General AEJ

[www.aej.org](http://www.aej.org)

The AEJ Newsletter is a quarterly publication for the members of the Association of European Journalists.



## World Press Freedom Day

AEJ Sections are encouraged to organise or participate in World Press Freedom Day events on or around 3 May (Friday). The theme of Ensuring the Safety of Journalists and Media Workers has been chosen by UNESCO as its major theme this year. UNESCO says much more must be done by governments, media and all relevant social groups to tackle the root causes of violence against journalists, which are corruption, organised crime and laws that criminalise journalism. Or Sections may decide on any theme of concern in their country. Events can be in the form of rallies, debates, seminars and special coverage in the media. Sections are asked please to send reports about WPFDay events to be posted on the AEJ website, with text and photos if available. Please send info about your plans as soon as possible - including the theme and date – to William Horsley on [wh@williamhorsley.com](mailto:wh@williamhorsley.com) AND to Kristina Hristova of the Bulgarian Section and AEJ website manager on [kristinahri@gmail.com](mailto:kristinahri@gmail.com).

So far Sections which say they will be involved in WPFDay actions include Armenia, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the UK. AEJ Media Freedom Representative William Horsley will participate as a panel speaker in the UN-organised international WPFDay events in Costa Rica. DETAILS including the Draft Programme and Concept Paper are here: <http://www.unesco.org/new/?id=46282>

## European commission public consultation on media freedom

The AEJ is taking part in the consultation with the office of Commissioner Neelie Kroes in response to the January report of the High-Level Group headed by Vaira Vike-Freiberga – see <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/high-level-group-media-freedom-and-pluralism>.

AEJ Media Freedom Rep. William Horsley will contribute, taking account of information from AEJ Sections and our past Surveys and Congresses. TIME IS SHORT as the consultation period only lasts until early June. ALL SECTIONS are invited to send any particular responses or comments on the Recommendations as soon as possible to William on [wh@williamhorsley.com](mailto:wh@williamhorsley.com) The two main issues are 1) How to strengthen the independence of 'regulators of Audio-visual services' in EU states and 2) How to safeguard media freedom and pluralism and what role of EU institutions? (and others like the Council of Europe/European Convention on Human Rights). Peter Kramer is also helping to coordinate our contacts with the Commission in Brussels. The consultation is open for all journalistic groups to take part of course.

## AEJ co-organises Brussels conference on MEDIADEM's media research (details on [www.aej.org](http://www.aej.org))

The AEJ was a co-organiser of the MEDIADEM conference on Media Freedom and independence: Trends and Challenges in Europe in Brussels on 7 February. Mediadem researchers presented their findings and proposals to the EU and the Council of Europe for strengthening media freedom and ethics including stricter media self-regulation. AEJ Representative in Brussels Peter Kramer chaired one session and AEJ Media Freedom Representative William Horsley spoke about acute pressures reported by the Association's members and called on the EU to act on journalists' need for protection from political and commercial interference. Other AEJ participants were President Eileen Dunne, Secretary-General Tibor Macak, Jozsef Horvat from Hungary and John Boyd from Slovakia. The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) and the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) were also co-organisers of the conference, held in the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the European Union.



## Message from Kristina Hristova, AEJ-Bulgaria:

Dear AEJ members,

The Bulgarian media on EU affairs – Evropa.Dnevnik.bg, is starting free newsletter for EU journalists in English. The newsletter is part of European parliament funded project “Your focus on your EP”. The newsletter provides summary in English of the most important positions, results and debates held in the framework of the project. The debates cover subjects of EU interest and on topics of the European parliament agenda. The participants in the debates are MEPs and EU political experts from all over the Europe.

The project consists of :

Virtual plenary sessions, “Be a MEP”, where the

readers can express their opinions and vote on a subject from the parliament's agenda; MEPs positions related to the results and voting in the “Be a MEP” virtual plenary sessions;

On-line debates on EU important issues with the participation of prominent EU experts, economists and politicians.

You will receive exclusive summary of the positions in the debates in English. The project is not restricted to Bulgarian experts and MEPs, we invite the persons that are most interested to express their position regardless of nationality or EP political parties affiliation.

Please send me an email if you are interested : kristinahri@gmail.com . I would like also to ask you to distribute this information to those journalists that could be interested in the EU debates summaries.

### **AEJ members' only area at aej.org**

If you did not register so far, please do it now, go to the homepage of the website (top right) and click on: No user yet? Register. In case you are registered but forgot your password click on: Forgot password.

To this effort, we kindly ask the valuable cooperation of the Secretary - Generals of each national section, as they will be asked (by email) to confirm membership of people who request access.

### **Daily News on AEJ website**

Now you can find on our website not only the most important news about activities of and around our Association, but also links to **THREE MAJOR EUROPEAN NEWS WEBSITES:**

- PRESSEUROP
- EURACTIV
- EUROPEAN BUSINESS REVIEW (EBR)

**DO NOT MISS TO VISIT REGULARLY THE MEMBERS' AREA OF aej.org FOR IMPORTANT NEWS & UPDATES**

You may find more updates about news and events at <http://www.aej.org>

### **For national section's news, you may visit:**

British Section - [www.aej-uk.org](http://www.aej-uk.org)  
Bulgarian Section - [www.aej-bulgaria.org](http://www.aej-bulgaria.org)  
Dutch Section - [www.vej-aej.nl](http://www.vej-aej.nl)  
Finnish Section - [www.europeanjournalists.net](http://www.europeanjournalists.net)  
French Section - [www.aje-france.com](http://www.aje-france.com)  
Greek Section - [www.aejgreece.gr](http://www.aejgreece.gr)  
Irish Section - [www.aej.ie](http://www.aej.ie)  
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Serbian Section - [www.uens.rs](http://www.uens.rs)  
Spanish Section - [www.aeuropeos.org](http://www.aeuropeos.org)  
Ukrainian Section - [www.aej.org.ua](http://www.aej.org.ua)

### **FOR COMMENTS AND IDEAS:**

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