

*Strengthening Media Freedom
in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
North Macedonia and Serbia*



Outcome statement of the third Regional Conference of the initiative: “Strengthening Media Freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia”

Mavrovo, 20 September 2024

We, the organisers of the third Regional Conference “*Stronger Together: Journalists and Judiciary Safeguarding Media Freedom*” and implementers of the project “*Strengthening Media Freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia*”, namely:

Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Free Press Unlimited

BH Journalists Association

Association of Journalists of Macedonia

Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia

Centre for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Centre for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of the Republika Srpska

Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia

Judicial Academy of the Republic of Serbia

Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (Studiecentrum Rechtspleging, SSR)

Dutch Association of Journalists (Nederlandse Vereniging van Journalisten, NVJ)

Recognise the progress made during the four years of the project implementation in advancing media freedom and the safety of journalists in the region. Namely, established and strengthened relationship between the judiciary and the journalists’ community, better understanding of each other’s profession and position – especially related to communication or informing the public, engagement in mutual advocacy efforts, development of journalists’ safety guidelines and protocols with the special focus on the safety of women journalists, as well as increased engagement in matters related to media freedom and judicial follow-up to threats by targeted law enforcement and judiciary representatives, as a result of cooperation/dialogue with journalists;

Value the tremendous effort in the development of new institutions and mechanisms aimed at fostering better relationships between the judiciary and safeguarding media freedom, and look forward to seeing how these efforts will contribute to a more resilient and supportive environment for journalism in the future;

Appreciate the transfer of knowledge through SSR and NVJ, which inspired us to incorporate successful models and lessons learned into our programmes and boost our viability;

Remain fully committed to being engaged in this process, contributing our expertise, and actively participating in peer-to-peer exchanges and collaboration with our partners in the Netherlands;

Recognise the challenges that lie ahead and pledge to continue our dedicated efforts in ongoing collaboration on journalist safety, strengthening the relationship between the judicial system and the journalism community, combating disinformation, and fostering trust with the aim of creating a more resilient and supportive environment that upholds the principles of media freedom and judicial accountability;

Acknowledge the complexity of the situation in each country and are eager to continue working together to develop effective solutions that will address these critical issues and promote a safer, more transparent, and more robust media landscape that supports democratic governance and reinforces the rule of law.

Reaffirm our collective commitment to the agreements and principles set forth during this initiative. By endorsing the outlined actions, we pledge to continue strengthening media freedom and journalist safety through collaboration, dialogue, and mutual support.