



**PACE Thematic Project on  
the role of national parliaments in ensuring  
Media freedom, independence of PSB and safety of journalists  
2012-2020**

## **RATIONALE**

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) recalls in its *Resolution 1920 (2013) The state of media freedom in Europe* that "(...) freedom of expression and information constitutes a cornerstone of good governance and thriving democracy, as well as a fundamental obligation of each member State under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, "the Convention"). Member States have, in particular, a positive obligation under Articles 2 and 10 of the Convention to protect journalists against attacks on their lives and freedom of expression and prevent impunity of the perpetrators."

Member States should guarantee the fundamental right of media freedom and plurality of media but also the independence of public service media and protection of journalists in their country. The independent sources of reliable information deserving the trust of the public and ensuring democracy is even more important nowadays to counteract the phenomenon of growing information disorder, dissemination of disinformation, propaganda or hate speech via new media environment. The recent PACE report on threats to media freedom and journalists' security in Europe (Doc. 15021 of 3 January 2018) proves that the situation is still serious in many countries and that it not only jeopardize the right to freedom of expression but also democracy and political stability (see the article and the report: <https://pace.coe.int/en/news/7727/les-menaces-sur-la-liberte-des-medias-mettent-en-danger-le-bon-fonctionnement-des-societes-democratiques>).

It is therefore crucial that PACE continues its work by adopting new resolutions and recommendations calling on member States to take adequate measures to ensure media freedom in their country, but it is also important that PACE helps national parliaments to implement them in the field.

## **PACE PROJECT**

The Assembly, in co-operation with its Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media and external partners such as Open Society Media, European Broadcasting Union (EBU), European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA) and public service media (PSM) and public service broadcasters (PSB) in different countries, developed a parliamentary project on the role of national parliaments in ensuring media freedom, independence of PSB and safety of journalist as from 2012, which will be pursued in 2020-2021.

The project aims at raising awareness of Members of national parliaments of their role in ensuring media freedom and pluralism of media, independence of public media and security of journalists to guarantee the freedom of expression and the right of citizens to be properly informed.

The project targeted a large number of Council of Europe member States' parliaments and was financed by various regional or country-specific programs carried out by PACE as well as co-financed by the PACE Cooperation Programmes Operational Budget (see *the detailed calendar of activities below*). It is implemented by the PACE Parliamentary Project Support Division.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Assembly has organised so far twelve activities between October 2012 and December 2017, with a total number of 622 participants registered: 260 parliamentarians (PACE MPs and MPs from national parliaments) and 362 other participants (experts, representatives of PSB, EBU, EPRA, NGOs, international organisations, representatives of governments). More activities are currently planned in 2020-2021 for Western Balkan countries.

The activities within the framework of this project focused on the role of national parliaments in improving and implementing legislation which may guarantee media freedom and media pluralism, respectful of the plurality of opinions. A few seminars also focused on the importance of ensuring the independence of public service broadcasting and the transparency of media ownership as well as on the need for media impartiality and independence in the run-up and during elections by enabling adequate representation of all political opinions.

The implementation of activities in the framework of this project permitted a broad dialogue between representatives of parliaments, PSM and multiple stakeholders and strengthened practical implementation and reforms of existing laws on media freedom in target member States.

### CALENDAR OF IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES IN 2012-2019 and participation statistics

Date and Venue	Activity and framework programme	MPs	Other participants
15 October 2012 ZAGREB	Seminar on the role of national parliaments in ensuring the independence of Public Service Broadcasting in Council of Europe member States (for parliaments of Balkan region) <i>With financial support of Open Society Foundation: Media Programme</i>	14	24
21-22 May 2013 LONDON	Conference on the role of national parliaments in Media regulation in Europe <i>With financial support of Open Society Foundation: Media Programme</i>	44	36
24 September 2013 BRUSSELS	Conference on transparency of Media ownership <i>OB – PACE Operational Budget</i>	15	37
12-13 May 2014 ISTANBUL	Conference on the role of national parliaments in Media governance in Europe <i>OB – PACE Operational Budget</i>	26	26
4 December 2014 PARIS	Conference on Media freedom and the security of journalists <i>OB – PACE Operational Budget</i>	45	43
12 June 2015 KYIV	Regional Conference on awareness raising of the safety of journalists <i>PGG - Partnership for Good Governance, joint programme with EU 2015-2017 for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine</i>	16	28
4 July 2016 BERLIN	Regional Parliamentary Conference on Media freedom as a cornerstone for democratic elections <i>PGG 2015-2017</i>	22	33
11 April 2016 LONDON	Conference on national parliaments' role in improving freedom, independence, transparency and diversity of Media <i>PGG 2015-2017</i>	27	24

10-11 November 2016 PRAGUE	Seminar on Public Service Media and democracy <i>OB – PACE Operational Budget</i>	15	4
24 February 2017 TIRANA	Parliamentary Seminar on Freedom of expression in the Media <i>Financed by Action Plan for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017</i>	11	40
29 May 2017 SARAJEVO	Parliamentary Seminar on Independence and Impartiality of media <i>Financed by Action Plan for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017</i>	11	40
6 December 2017 BUDAPEST	The role of national parliaments in improving independence and pluralism of the Media <i>PGG 2015-2017</i>	14	27
Total		260	362
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPATION</b>		<b>622</b>	