

Journalists' Code of Conduct

Adopted in April 1997 by the Union of Cyprus Journalists, the Association of Publishers of Newspapers and Magazines, and the owners of the Electronic Media.

This code applies to all media (print and electronic, semi-state or private) and those working for them.

Respect for the truth and the citizen's right to objective, complete and reliable information is an obligation of all the media and journalists.

Respect for the journalist's right to unobstructed access to the sources of news and transparency and necessary prerequisites for proper information.

The conduct, dignity, honesty and professional work of journalists should be of the highest standard.

Journalists have an obligation to defend their independence and not to allow interference with their work.

Journalists in carrying out their functions:

- (a) respect and promote democracy and the other universal values. They respect and promote the human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all.
- (b) show the indicated sensitivity in matters that concern national security and are particularly careful in presenting issues such as violence, crime, human grief and death and also of information or pictures that could cause panic or horror or revulsion.
- (c) act always in good faith and comply with the letter and spirit of this Code.

Press Ethics Committee

An Ethics Committee is established (hereinafter called "the Committee") which is charged with monitoring the implementation of this Code.

The Committee, including its President, consists of thirteen members. They are persons of high moral standard and recognised high reputation. The President of the Committee should preferably have legal training.

The President and three of the members of the Committee are appointed jointly by the Union of Journalists, the Association of Publishers and the Owners of Electronic Media. The other nine members are appointed, three by the Union of Journalists, three by the Association of Publishers and three by the Owners of Electronic Media.

The post of President or member of the Committee remains vacant with the death, resignation or conviction for an offence involving fraud or for reason of physical or mental invalidity. The replacement takes place on the basis of the above provisions.

The Committee's tenure of office is for two years.

In case of temporary absence of the President, his duties are carried out by that member of the committee who, by a unanimous decision of the committee, was nominated acting President at its first meeting.

The Committee may take procedural decisions only if at least the President and six of its members are present.

Breach of the Code is established by a decision of the Committee which is taken by a majority of seven votes. The person or the media against whom or which the complaint has been made is entitled to be present or to be represented in the procedure before the committee, and is given every opportunity to be heard, to give explanations personally or through other persons.

The Committee makes rules of procedure which are put in force from the day they are notified to the Union of Journalists, the Association of Publishers and the Electronic Media.

The Committee receives, deals with and decides on complaints about alleged violations of the code by a journalist and/or the media. It also gives, in the spirit of this Code, guiding lines for interpretation purposes.

The Media and those working for them undertake the obligation to co-operate with the committee in carrying out their investigations.

The committee may exceptionally deal at its own initiative with a concrete case which may be tantamount to breach due to its importance and seriousness.

The aim of the committee is the settlement, as soon as possible, of any dispute that may be created by the breach of this Code. If no settlement is achieved the Committee examines the complaint and decides whether the Code has been breached.

The Committee is not entitled to impose any penalty or to adjudge compensations or to deal with a complaint which is the object of procedure before a court or other legal organ. The decisions and findings of the committee are publicised. The member of the media against which the decision has been taken is obliged to publish the relevant decision.

Accuracy

The Media ensure that no inaccurate, misleading, imaginary or distorting news, information or comments are published. In case this has happened they go ahead and make a correction or express an apology. The Media, while they have the right to support concrete positions, should draw a clear distinction between a fact and a comment or speculation.

Right to Reply

The Media provide to those affected, in the right case and particularly after they have been attacked, the opportunity to reply.

Private Life

The reputation and private life of each person is respected. Interventions and investigations into the private life of persons, without their consent, including the taking of pictures on private property and also the gathering of information through bugging equipment, are generally unacceptable and their publication could be justified only in extreme cases and solely in the public interest.

Investigations or taking and publication of pictures/images of persons in hospitals or similar institutions are carried out discreetly and following permission where this is indicated and after the identity of the journalists has been stated.

Mourning/Grief

In case of mourning, grief or shock, the approach to be adopted should be characterised by maximum discretion and sympathy and avoidance of any act that may increase human pain.

Securing of Information

Journalists should generally not try to secure information or images/photographs through false representations or in another fraudulent manner.

Journalists do not secure or try to secure information or images/pictures through intimidation or blackmail.

Copyright

The Media and journalists respect and implement the legislation in force for the time being concerning the protection of copyright. Where reproduction from another source is allowed this is done with respect for the author/creator and credit is given to the source.

Economic Benefits

Journalists do not use and do not transmit for their personal benefit information of an economic nature they receive before it is made known to the public.

Confidentiality

Journalists have a moral obligation to maintain professional confidentiality regarding the source of information received confidentially. A journalist is not obliged to reveal the source of his information.

Public Interest

In this Code cases which, through invocation of the public interest, justify deviation from the rule, are mainly the

following:

- (a) Helping detect or uncover crime.
- (b) Protection of public security or health.
- (c) Protection of human rights.
- (d) Prevention of misleading of the public as a result of acts or statements of individuals or organisations.

Final Provision

This Code is revised or amended only following an agreement or consensus of all the members who adopted it.

Fonte: http://www.presswise.org.uk/display_page.php?id=193

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