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Freedom of Information: Empowering Journalism

June 3, 2014

A workshop/training for Kosovo journalists on freedom of information, organised by Legalleaks, is ongoing in Pristina. The Legal Leaks training will empower journalists to use their national freedom of information laws as a regular part of their work. The training provides guidance on how to file freedom of information requests and contributes to protecting media freedom by delivering techniques by which journalists can protect the security of their data and of confidential sources of information.

The training will have a strong component of data journalism skills, with training on how to process, analyse and present data obtained under access to information requests, including use of data visualisation techniques. Follow-up legal advice through a Help Desk will deliver ongoing support for journalists and bloggers using freedom of information laws in their country or around Europe.

The organisers and partners Access Info Europe, UNESCO, Press Council of Kosovo are working to empower journalists to recoup their role as public watchdogs through exercise of their right of access to information in both their own country and other countries. All participants receive a national version of the Legal Leaks toolkit which is a detailed guide on how to file freedom of information requests in the 45 of the 56 OSCE participating states (in Europe, Central Asia and North America) which have such laws as well as how to file requests to the European Union.

During the first-day training experts and participants on Monday discussed the right of access to information and why is it important for journalists; what is an access to information law and how can you use it; understanding the decision making process at the EU level and discovering what national information we can access using the Regulation 1049. Today media experts from Kosovo and Europe will present their views on Regulation vs. Self-Regulation; Codes of ethics and due diligence: how to do quality journalism; and the ethical journalism in the information era: The right to information, the right to reuse data, leaks, and whistle-blower protection.

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