

***The Best Tool To Combat Intolerance  
Ethical Journalism Against Hate Speech: A European Experience  
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Contemporary journalism is undergoing crises. Financial crisis, digital revolution, artificial intellect challenge professional values. The political and business pressure and precarious work in the media field made its on impact. As well as millions of internet users spread information and compete traditional media. Internet gives voices to many, but some of those are voices of hate. At the same time traditional media generate intolerance on a daily basis, presenting political opponents or migrants coming to Europe in the worst way. Therefore, two questions - would it be possible to combat hate speech? What professional community could do for that? – are of a special interest to us.

International journalist organizations, like the International and European Federations of Journalists together with UNESCO and other UN agencies started developing their strategies to overcome hate and intolerance in the beginning of 21 century. For example, the World Congress of Journalists reminded about Rwanda tragedy and danger of hate speech that could provoke real violence, and called to pay special attention to education programs on ethics and professional standards.

In 2009 Mr. Aidan White, that time General Secretary of IFJ, published the first comprehensive global study of intolerance in the media on the global scale. This report has been discussed in all professional organizations and gave a fresh start to International Ethical Journalism Initiative. Its main goal has been raising awareness in ethical issues and sensitive topics in the media at the time of globalization. Ethical standards and open discussion on hot issues, as well as strong professional cooperation and solidarity in protection of basic values of journalism should promote trust between media and audience and resist “infotainment”, simplification of the content, stereotypes and manipulation of the media by political and business elites.

Following those ideas a new organization “International Ethical Journalism Network” was established. The organization is based in London and aims at holding annual reports, professional training sessions, practical recommendations and open discussions all over the globe. Recent report, issued in the fall of 2018, has special focus on hate speeches and migration, and provides some fresh strategies elaborated by media professionals and experts. The core of those recommendations is a tougher involvement of the audience and ordinary people in the discussion of migration.

In a preface, Mr. Aidan White explains an urgent need in elaborating of a new approach and forming public programs to support a fresh agenda for change of journalism. Journalism is a public good. This slogan was and remains the basic for professional community. No doubt, the ethical journalism is the main tool for those changes. A new strategy to protect profession and build trust between media and their readers should be based on reinforcement of old principals, taking into account today’s media development and need to combat hate.

It is important to notice that Mr. Aidan White mentioned five core principles for the future strategy of media:

-1- Ethics. It means strengthening attachment to core values inside journalism – accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, transparency and accountability – and eliminating hate-speech, building respect for pluralism, holding power to account and challenging abuse of human rights

-2 - Digital knowledge, which requires a new generation of journalists and editors to understand the digital age, acquire the technical skills they need, and put data journalism at the heart of editorial work at all levels.

-3- Sustainability builds public support for new and creative ways of journalism while presenting the editorial independence that ensures public trust in ethical media.

-4-Engagement is going to ensure that journalism has a positive side. It also helps to increase understanding of journalism's role in a new information space while building respect for democracy and human rights.

-5- Responsibility means media and journalism must be trustworthy, intolerant of conflicts of interest, transparent about their work and always ready to hear the complaints and views of others.

Those principles should be a centerpiece of any strategy for reviewing the fortunes of journalism. Building public trust requires a new vision from policymakers that goes beyond political self-interests and public relations. Whether it is countering the information wars in conflict zones or creating a plural information space for elections, citizens need access to information they can trust, from people they can identify.

The report and its recommendations give new perspectives for journalist organizations, promoting non-replacing “journalism of values“ with efficient management and cheap information work.