

# AT A CROSSROADS

## SAFEGUARDING MEDIA FREEDOM TO PROTECT DEMOCRACY

24TH OSCE CENTRAL ASIA MEDIA CONFERENCE  
6-7 JULY, 2023  
BISHKEK



## DRAFT AGENDA

Venue: Hyatt Regency Bishkek (191, Abdrahmanov str.)

### DAY 1: 6 JULY

09:15 – 09:45

Registration

09:45 – 10:30

**High-level opening panel**

**Moderator:** Jürgen Heissel, Director, Office of the OSCE RFoM

**Teresa Ribeiro**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

**H.E. Zheenbek Kulubaev**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kyrgyz Republic (tbc)

**H.E. Altynbek Maksutov**, Minister of Culture, Sport and Youth Policy, Kyrgyz Republic (tbc)

**Ambassador Alexey Rogov**, Head of OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek

**Zhasulan Umiraliyev**, Adviser to the Minister of Information and Social Development, Kazakhstan

**Shiri Shiriyeu**, Director, Centre for Strategic Studies of the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Representatives of other state authorities (tbc)

*Room: Shayir*



**10:30 – 11:15**

**Stage Interview: At a crossroads: Why we need to safeguard media freedom now**

*Room: Shayir*

**Moderator: Ton van den Brandt**, Principal Adviser, Office of the OSCE RFoM

**Teresa Ribeiro**, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media

**Erica Marat**, Member of RFoM AGEFOM (Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on the Freedom of the Media)

11:15 – 11:30 **Family photo**

11:30 – 11:45 **Coffee break**

**11:45 – 13:00**

**Session 1**

**Session 2**

**Countering disinformation while safeguarding media freedom**

*Room: Shayir*

**Freedom of expression in the age of algorithms and AI**

*Room: Akyn*

**Moderator:**

**Bettina Ruigies**, Senior Advisor, Office of the OSCE RFoM

**Speakers:**

**Lola Islamova**, Chief Editor, Anhor.uz, Uzbekistan

**Asel Sooronbaeva**, Chief Editor, Checkit Media, Kyrgyzstan

**Ariuntuya Ayurzana**, Project manager for the News for Equality journalists' network, Mongolia

**Duman Smakov**, Chief Editor, FactCheck.kz, Kazakhstan

**Moderator:**

**Deniz Wagner**, Advisor, Office of the OSCE RFoM

**Speakers:**

**Krisztina Rozgonyi**, Professor, Department of Communication at the University of Vienna & Senior Scientist, Institute for Comparative Media and Communication Studies (CMC) at the Austrian Academy of Science

**Ruslan Dairbekov**, Co-founder, Eurasian Digital Foundation, Kazakhstan

13:00 – 14:15 **Lunch Reception**

**14:15 – 15:30**

**Session 3**

**Session 4**

**SAIFE masterclass**



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<p><b>Privacy, protection of sources &amp; digital safety of journalists</b> <i>Room: Shayir</i></p>	<p><b>Mapping mechanisms and tools for the protection and safety of journalists in Central Asia</b> <i>Room: Kurultay</i></p>	<p><b>Spotlight on the impact of AI on freedom of expression</b> <i>Room: Akyn</i></p>
<p><b>Moderators:</b></p> <p><b>Aidar Botagarov</b>, Advisor, Office of the OSCE RFoM</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <p><b>Jürgen Heissel</b>, Director, Office of the OSCE RFoM</p> <p><b>Julie Posetti</b>, Deputy Vice President and Global Director of Research, International Centre for Journalists</p> <p><b>Gulmira Birzhanova</b>, Legal Adviser, Media Legal Centre, Kazakhstan</p> <p><b>Semetei Amanbekov</b>, Chief Editor, Bulak.kg internet platform, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><b>Ilkhom Khamidov</b>, Media Lawyer, Uzbekistan</p>	<p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Dane Koruga</b>, Senior Advisor, Office of the RFoM</p> <p><b>Zulzaya Nyamkhuu</b>, Communications Officer, Globe International Centre, Mongolia</p> <p><b>Nabeelah Shabbir</b>, Freelance Journalist, Senior Research Associate, International Centre for Journalists</p> <p><b>Elira Turdubaeva</b>, President, Association of PR communicators, Kyrgyzstan</p>	<p><b>Krisztina Rozgonyi</b>, Professor, Department of Communication at the University of Vienna &amp; Senior Scientist, Institute for Comparative Media and Communication Studies (CMC) at the Austrian Academy of Science</p> <p><b>Noah Giansiracusa</b>, Professor of mathematics and data science at Bentley University (online)</p> <p><b>Ruslan Dairbekov</b>, Co-founder, Eurasian Digital Foundation</p> <p><b>Yelzhan Kabyshev</b>, Director of «Digital Paradigm» PF, drfl.kz and Internet Freedom (ifkz.org) Project Manager</p>

15:30 – 15:45 *Coffee break*

15:45 – 17:30		
Session 5	SOJ Roundtable	SAIFE masterclass
<p><b>Hate speech</b> <i>Room: Shayir</i></p>	<p><b>Legal aspects of safety of journalists</b> <i>Room: Kurultay</i></p>	<p><b>Spotlight on the impact of AI on freedom of expression (continued)</b> <i>Room: Akyn</i></p>
<p><b>Moderator: Inga Sikorskaia</b>, Director, School of Peacemaking &amp; Media Technologies, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <p><b>Dr Jennifer Jackson-Preece</b>, Associate Professor in Nationalism, European Institute and Department of International Relations, London School of Economics, UK</p>	<p><b>Moderator: Ton van den Brandt</b>, Principal Adviser, Office of the OSCE RFoM</p> <p><b>Olga Didenko</b>, Regional Media Law Adviser, Internews Kazakhstan</p> <p><b>Madina Tursunova</b>, Media Lawyer, Uzbekistan</p>	



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<p><b>Gulnara Babadjanova</b>, Director, In-Service Training Centre of Journalists, Uzbekistan</p> <p><b>Elmira Toktogulova</b>, Director of the MediaConsult Public Foundation, Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><b>Bekdurdy Amansaryyev</b>, Editor-in-Chief, Orient media agency, Turkmenistan</p> <p><b>Zarina Akhmatova</b>, Journalist, Program Manager, Internews, Kazakhstan</p>	<p><b>Zhasulan Umiraliyev</b>, Adviser to the Minister of Information and Social Development, Kazakhstan</p> <p><b>Ganbat Ganbold</b>, Officer in Charge of International Mechanisms, National Human Rights Commission, Mongolia</p> <p><b>Yelena Maxyuta</b>, Judge of the Supreme Court, Kazakhstan</p>	
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17:30-18:40

## Movie screening

Movie screening: **Made to Measure**

Facilitator: **Deniz Wagner**, Advisor, Office of the OSCE RFoM

Room: *Shayir*

19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner**

## DAY 2: 7 JULY

10:00 – 11:00

## Session 6

Journalism Representation: **Media self-regulation in Central Asia**

Room: *Shayir*

**Moderator: Liliana Vițu**, Chair of Audio-visual Council, Moldova

**Gunjidmaa Gongor**, Executive Director of Media Council of Mongolia

**Nurgul Abdykerimova**, Director, Media Development Centre, Kyrgyzstan

**Karim Bakhriev**, Chairman of the Public Board, Union of Journalists of Uzbekistan

**Aliya Samudin**, Head of International Projects, Kazakhstan Media Network

11:00 – 11:15 **Coffee break**



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11:15 – 12:30	
Session 7	Workshop
<p><b>Media and digital literacy initiatives in Central Asia</b> <i>Room: Shayir</i></p>	<p><b>Shaping a practical toolkit for the safety of journalists</b> <i>Room: Kurultay</i></p>
<p><b>Moderator: Duman Smakov</b>, Chief Editor, FactCheck.kz, Kazakhstan</p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <p><b>Martina Chapman</b>, National coordinator of Media Literacy Ireland</p> <p><b>Saida Sulaymanova</b>, Director, Centre for the Development of Modern Journalism, Uzbekistan</p> <p><b>Alyona Koshkina</b>, Media Literacy Programme Manager, MediaNet International Centre for Journalism, Kazakhstan</p> <p><b>Aichurek Usupbaeva</b>, Founder and Director, Media Sabak Foundation, Kyrgyzstan</p>	<p><b>Facilitator:</b> <b>Ton van den Brandt</b>, Principal Adviser, Office of the OSCE RFoM</p>

12:30 – 12:50
<p><b>Stage Talk: Aligning media freedom and security concerns; personal observations from a former journalist, now media regulator</b></p> <p><b>Liliana Vițu</b>, Chair of Audio-visual Council, Moldova</p> <p><i>Room: Shayir</i></p>

12:50 – 13:30
<p><b>Takeaways from the Conference</b></p> <p><b>Teresa Ribeiro</b>, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media</p> <p><b>Antje Grawe</b>, UN Resident Coordinator in Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><i>Room: Shayir</i></p>



13:30 – 14:30 *Lunch*

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### SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

<p><b>Stage Interview:</b></p> <p><b>At a crossroads: Why we need to safeguard media freedom now</b></p>	<p>Exploring the overarching theme of this conference, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Teresa Ribeiro and expert from the Advisory Group of Eminent Experts on Freedom of the Media Erica Marat will be interviewed live on stage. Why are we at a crossroads? What constitutes media freedom in these turbulent times? And what are the ways forward to guarantee secure societies and thriving democracies?</p>
<h3>PANEL SESSIONS</h3>	
<p><b>Session 1:</b></p> <p><b>Countering disinformation while safeguarding media freedom</b></p>	<p>Disinformation is plaguing our media and our societies, more than ever before. Countering it, however, is not an easy task. There is a delicate balance between security considerations and media freedom as a central pillar of our democratic societies. The session will explore how to tackle this international problem with a multi-sectoral approach, to increase awareness on and enhance resilience to disinformation.</p>
<p><b>Session 2:</b></p> <p><b>Freedom of expression in the age of algorithms and AI</b></p>	<p>The online information spaces is ever more shaped and arbitrated by platforms and digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), which has a large impact on freedom of expression, media pluralism, democracy and comprehensive security. This panel will explore regional implications and identify policy responses to safeguard access to reliable, diverse, and public interest information in the digital age. The RFoM's SAIFE project, which puts a spotlight on the impact of AI on freedom of expression, will be place in the context of the Central Asia region.</p>
<p><b>Session 3:</b></p> <p><b>Privacy, protection of sources &amp; digital safety of journalists</b></p>	<p>The fast-paced digital environment often poses challenges with regard to the privacy, confidentiality and safety of journalistic sources. These challenges include surveillance, threats to encryption and anonymity, and national security/other legislation with impact on the protection of journalistic sources. The session will focus on the legislative and practical issues with these challenges, as well as internet throttling and shutdowns.</p>
<p><b>Session 4:</b></p> <p><b>Mapping mechanisms and tools for the protection and safety of journalists in Central Asia</b></p>	<p>Throughout Central Asia region, journalists continue to face attacks, online threats and harassment, including of gendered nature, in connection to their work. This session will dive into regional trends, current challenges and persisting gaps, while mapping recent response efforts, including legislative measures, and other mechanisms and tools, for enhancing the protection and safety of journalists, and combatting</p>



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	impunity. The recently developed ‘OSCE Guidance Tool for Monitoring Online Violence Against Female Journalists’ will be presented and discussed.
<b>Session 5: Hate speech</b>	Hate speech can seriously undermine social cohesion, pluralism and peaceful co-existence in diverse societies. With the emergence of new digital technologies in the recent decades, it has become a viral phenomenon across the Central Asia region and beyond. While important to counter, legal responses should be carefully balanced and must not be misused to suppress open democratic debate on sensitive or controversial issues of public interest. This panel session will explore what constitutes the notion of hate speech in the region and where the line is drawn between “prohibited” and “allowed”.
<b>Session 6: Panel: Journalism Representation: Media self-regulation in the region</b>	Looking into media self-regulation (MSR) in Central Asia region, its current status and ways forward. The speakers and participants will share experiences and best practices on how to strengthen the role of MSR bodies in upholding ethical standards in journalism in the digital age.
<b>Session 7: Media and digital literacy initiatives in Central Asia</b>	We live in an increasingly saturate and invasive information ecosystem. To be able to navigate, media and digital literacy are an essential constellation of skills – necessary for freedom of expression and access to information, and for building pluralistic and well-informed democratic societies. This session will explore inspiring and impactful regional projects and initiatives in Central Asia and internationally that contribute for citizens to better understand the role of media and think critically about the news they receive.
<b>OTHER SESSIONS AND SIDE-EVENTS</b>	
<b>Masterclass: Spotlight on the impact of AI on freedom of expression</b>	Building on the morning-session “Freedom of expression in the age of algorithms and AI”, this half-day SAIFE training will exemplify how the use of AI in information spaces affects free speech and media freedom; explore necessary safeguards to ensure healthy information and media ecosystems; and build capacity of state and non-state actors, in particular NHRIs and regulators. Renowned expert trainers will unfold key principles around transparency, accountability and democratic oversight, while participants will have an opportunity to assess and address human rights challenges stemming from the use of AI through scenario-based case studies.
<b>Roundtable: Legal aspects of safety of journalists</b>	This roundtable, which is part of the Safety of Journalists project of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, will focus on the use of legal instruments and procedures to harass, intimidate, hinder and stifle journalistic work, including by targeting their financial reserves. These practices range from the use of criminal and administrative law to the use of private law, sometimes also described as Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPP). Renowned



	experts will discuss this topic and develop concrete recommendations on how best to prevent these attacks on the legal safety of media.
<b>Workshop: Shaping a practical toolkit for the safety of journalists</b>	This workshop aims to gather innovative ideas and insights on how to shape and design a toolbox for the safety of journalists. This toolbox is being developed by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, aiming to provide an accessible set of guiding tools on how to improve the safety of journalists, combining good practice examples of national measures and recommendations for the OSCE participating States, as well as media outlets, journalists and civil society.
<b>MOVIE SCREENINGS</b>	
<b>Made to Measure</b>	Screening of the award-winning interactive storytelling documentary 'Made to Measure' by Laokoon, co-produced by the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The film experiment creates a doppelganger of a person based solely on their online data, illustrating how a fraction of a person's data is sufficient to identify their interests, intimate personality traits, and opinions, and to predict – or even manipulate – their thoughts and behavior. The documentary screening will be followed by a Q&A session.

