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local governance

Freedom of the Media

ONLINE TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR 36 CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WORK ON MEDIA LAW AND POLICY FROM THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES:

ALBANIA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, GEORGIA, KOSOVO, MOLDOVA, MONTENEGRO, NORTH MACEDONIA, SERBIA, TURKEY, UKRAINE

1 March – 2 April 2021



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

In short

The *Matra Rule of Law Training Programme* is designed to strengthen institutional capacity in the field of rule of law within government organisations in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine. To this end, seven training programmes are offered per year, each introducing the participants to best practices in a wide range of rule of law themes. Through interactive sessions combining theory and practical skills, policy advisors, members of the judiciary and other civil servants working in the government and justice sectors acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to drive reforms in their home countries. In addition, by taking part in the training programme, participants become part of a large transnational network of alumni, lecturers and relevant government departments in the Netherlands and in the target countries. This network offers a platform for learning, exchange and collaboration.

The Matra Rule of Law Training Programme is designed and delivered by Leiden Law School, the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC), and The Hague Academy for Local Governance (THA). It is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Target audience

The training on Freedom of the Media is intended for civil servants with responsibilities for media law and policy in a broad sense. Participants will be expected to offer a valuable and active contribution to the learning process and be in a position to implement the newly gained knowledge and insights in their respective organisation.

The maximum number of participants is 36. The total will represent a balance in gender and in the number of participants from the individual countries.

Eligible countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine

Application: Applications can be submitted through www.nhc.nl/matrarolt. Please note that the **deadline for submission is Sunday 24 January 2021, 12:00 pm (CET)**.

Training period: 1 March – 2 April 2021

Language: English

Training format: Online

Introduction

In its relations with pre-accession and Eastern Partnership countries, the European Union (EU) requires stable government institutions that are able to guarantee the rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities. Freedom of expression and media freedom are crucial for every democratic society. Journalists and the media keep the public informed on matters of general interest to society. They act as public watchdogs who hold governmental authorities and other powerful forces in society to account. They expose wrongdoings and corruption. They provide shared spaces for public debate. In order to perform these roles, journalists and the media need to enjoy strong legal protection.

Such protection is provided by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which guarantee freedom of expression and information for everyone. The freedom enjoyed by the media, which is based on these articles, is not unlimited. It is governed by duties and responsibilities. It is also subject to certain limitations imposed by law, for example to protect children from harmful content and to prevent the spread of hate speech. These and other themes will be examined in the training programme, including the safety of journalists (with a special focus on female journalists), minorities and the media, and the thorny question of online disinformation. While the central focus will be on the media, there will be wider attention for the range of other actors in the online communications environment, such as platforms and social media.

Objectives

The training programme aims to increase understanding of the European regulatory and policy standards relating to the concepts of media freedom and the right of the public to be properly informed. Presentations on Dutch and European experiences in dealing with these issues will encourage the participants to reflect on the situation in their own countries, to identify areas for reform and to nurture exchanges on practices in other countries. Special attention will be paid to obstacles and dilemmas in the implementation process and how to overcome them.

Approach and structure

By being demand-driven in nature and by stimulating active participation, the training programme strives to achieve lasting results. Upon successful completion of the training programme, participants will be sufficiently equipped to implement the newly gained knowledge and insights in their respective organisations. The training programme combines theory, policy and practice. The online format will comprise a mixture of guided self-learning and collective interactive components.

The programme enables participants to learn from and interact with leading Dutch and European academics. Furthermore, it enables discussion with Dutch and European practitioners and institutions in this field. Exchanging and comparing experiences is a key aspect of the programme.

Upon successful completion of the programme – which includes attendance of all components of the programme and completion of all assignments – participants will receive a certificate.

Admission requirements

Important points on which the selection of participants will largely be based are:

- The participant should clearly demonstrate his/her professional interest in a training on Freedom of the Media and the use he/she would make of the insights gained from the training.
- The participant should have practical experience as a senior civil servant with responsibility for developing media law and policy in his/her country.
- The participant should have a good command of spoken and written English.
- The participant should be highly motivated and enthusiastic.

- The participant should be comfortable sharing his/her knowledge with fellow participants (solo presentations during the programme and regular knowledge sharing in the digital learning environment will be required).
- The participant should be in the position to devote time and attention to the training programme prior to, during and after the training period. Before the training, the participants will have to complete a preparatory assignment and after the training the participants will implement and report on a concrete action plan they personally developed during the training.
- Participants should submit a signed employer's statement granting permission to participate in the training programme, including in the scheduled live sessions.

How to apply

Please read the admission requirements carefully. Candidates who meet all the requirements may proceed to complete the application form, which is available at www.nhc.nl/matrarolt.

Application forms need to be submitted in full to be eligible for selection. Applicants are required to up-load their Curriculum Vitae and a letter from their supervisor authorizing participation. Admission will be on a merit and competitive basis.

Successfully uploaded applications will receive an automatic e-mail confirmation.

Information and training programme organisation

Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Website: www.nhc.nl/matrarolt

E-mail: matrarolt@nhc.nl

Phone: + 31 (0)70 392 6700