

EU and Media Engagement Strategies to Protect Human Rights

Knowledge-sharing event

September 30 - October 2, 2025

Sofia, Bulgaria

Day/date	Time	Programme
Day 0 - September 30	19:00	Welcome dinner at Raketa Rakia Bar: ul. Yanko Sakazov 17, 1527 Sofia
Day 1 - October 1	9:00-09:30	Welcoming and Introduction to Day 1 Moderators: NHC
	9:30-10:00	Setting the Context: Legal and Media Environment in Bulgaria and Romania <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the recent legal challenges or (if any) favourable conditions for civil society? How do media approach covering EU policies, human rights and collaboration with CSOs? Moderators: ECNL
	10:00-11:00	Introduction: EU Law on Human Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is EU law? Division of competences: EU competencies vs. National Member States' Competencies EU and human rights: EU Charter of Fundamental Rights Speakers: ECNL
	11:00 - 11:30	Coffee Break

	11:30-12:30	<p>Panel Discussion: Educating Media and Journalists on EU and Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do journalists and media approach EU and human-rights related topics? • The most popular (mis)conceptions about EU and human rights in the media. (+ examples of media confusion between EU, CoE, EU court and Strasbourg Court, etc) • Why investing in education/training of journalists/editors on human rights and long-term relationship with media can be beneficial? • What are the best practices of EU and human rights education for journalists? <p>Moderator: Maryia Sadouskaya-Komlach, Global Engagement Strategist, Free Press Unlimited; Chairwoman of the Board, Free Press for Eastern Europe (FPEE)</p> <p>Panel Participants - Alexandra Dmitrova-Nenova, Communications and Fundraising Coordinator, Amnesty International Bulgaria; Diana-Georgiana Dragomir, Communications Coordinator, Bankwatch Romania; Marius Daea, Science+ Coordinator in Romania, FPEE; Ivan Radev, Vice-President, AEJ</p>
	12:30 - 13:30	<p>Training: Legal Avenues for Using EU Law to Protect Civic Space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use EU law in national level litigation? • What are the legal avenues for triggering action by EU institutions? • Who else can take up the matter when the EU law has been breached? <p>Speaker: ECNL</p>
	13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
	14:30 - 15:30	<p>Navigating Media Engagement & Pitching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key tactics to approach journalists and newsrooms

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you make the media interested in what you offer? • Maintaining relationships with media and journalists over longer periods of time • Choosing the right angle to present your story • Persuading the journalist/editor that your story can bring them added value • Writing a pitch and presenting it to the outlet <p>Speakers: Natalia Marshalkovitch, Senior Programme Coordinator, FPEE</p>
	15:30 -16:00	<p>Introduction to Goup Assignment:</p> <p>Mapping a Legal Strategy (Group 1+2) and Media Engagement & Pitching (Group 3+4) in Defence of Human Rights</p> <p>Moderators: ECNL and FPEE</p>
	16:00-17:00	Working on the Assignment in Groups
	17:00 – 17:30	End of Day 1 + Housekeeping for Day 2- NHC
<p>Day 2 - October 2</p> <p><i>[During the Day 2 groups can meet up in breaks to refine their presentations based on new knowledge received]</i></p>	9:00-9:15	<p>Welcome and Introduction to Day 2</p> <p>Moderator: NHC</p>
	9:15-10:00	<p>Advocacy Avenues with the EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU Tools for CSOs to uphold the Rule of law in their countries (Rule of Law Mechanism, Rule of Law Cycle, Rule of Law Framework) • NHC Director Joeri Buhner Tavanier presents experiences working on Rule of Law report in the Netherlands • Tools developed by civil society to inform and advocate with the EU on civic space issues (Early Warning Alert System) <p>Moderator: ECNL and NHC</p>
	10:00- 10:45	<p>Session 3: Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPPs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Anti-SLAPP directive and its transposition within Romania and Bulgaria

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council of Europe Recommendation on countering SLAPPs complementing to the EU Directive <p>+ brainstorming on campaigns for effective implementation of both instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASE coalition against SLAPPs - examples and statistics (3) <p>Speakers: ECNL; Maryia Sadouskaya-Komlach, Global Engagement Strategist, Free Press Unlimited; Chairwoman of the Board, FPPE; Zahari Iankov, Legal Expert, BCNL; Luca Ciubotaru, Project Manager, LiderJust; Marius Daea, Science+ Coordinator in Romania, FPPE</p>
	10:45 - 11:00	Coffee Break
	11:15 - 12:00	<p>Panel Discussion: Campaigning as a Direct Way of Communicating to Target Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to plan an effective awareness/communication campaign • Tips and tricks to get media attention to your campaign • What channels are best to get your message on? • How to formulate the right message for your target audience? • How to engage bloggers and content creators? • Legal challenges <p>Moderator: Yevgeniya Plakhina, Coordinator of Training, Educational and Knowledge Sharing Programs, FPPE</p> <p>Speakers: Levena Lazarova, Executive Director, The Wake UP Foundation; Andrada Cilibiu, Communication Manager and Sexual and Reproductive Rights Expert, FILIA Center; Marcela Rilovic, Communications Manager, NHC; Ivana Rosenzweigova, Senior Legal Advisor, ECNL</p>
	12:00 – 13:00	Lunch
	13:00 – 14:00	Workshop: Communicating Directly to Target Audience: Content and Measurement

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the simple tricks to make things attractive for social media? • What audience metrics are important? • How to attract media attention after publishing a viral story? <p>Speaker: Vitali Ruhain, Head of Innovations FPEE</p>
	14:00 – 15:30	<p>Practical workshop: Using ChatGPT and other AI Instruments to Format Content for the (Social) Media</p> <p>Speaker: Vitali Ruhain, Head of Innovations, FPEE</p>
	15:30 – 16:00	Coffee Break
	16:00 – 17:00	<p>Presentation of the Group Assignment + Feedback from the Participants (and Trainers)</p> <p>Moderators: FPEE and ECNL</p>
	17:00 – 17:30	Conclusions of the Event- NHC