

CODE OF ETHICS FOR JOURNALISTS OF SLOVENIA

Preamble

Arising from the freedom of expression and the right to public sector information as the fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and international documents regarding the protection of human rights, and from the principles of the Munich Declaration, the journalists of Slovenia, joined together under the Slovene Association of Journalists and the Slovenian Union of Journalists, hereby adopt this Code. The Code contains ethical standards which serve as directives and obligations regarding the work of journalists and other content creators which is published in the Slovenian media, regardless of the work's form of distribution. The compliance of individual actions with this Code is determined by the Journalists' Ethics Council, a joint body of the Slovene Association of Journalists and the Slovenian Union of Journalists. The Code is amended and clarified as per the Recommendations of the Journalists' Ethics Council (NČR).

Journalistic work

1. A journalist has to verify the accuracy of the collected information and avoid errors. Errors that are made - even though unintentional - must be acknowledged and remedied. In this case, the NČR can rule that the journalist was not in breach of the Code.
2. A journalist must avoid the improper or personally offensive presentation of information and facts.
3. When publishing information that contains serious accusations, a journalist shall generally obtain a response from the persons concerned and put this response in the same article or, if delayed, obtain a response as soon as possible. The same must also be done when summarising serious accusations from other media or archives. If the journalist could not obtain a response, this lack of response shall be explained to the public.
4. A journalist must not withhold information crucial for understanding the covered topic.
5. It shall be noted when a journalist publishes unverified information, rumours, or speculation.
6. Whenever possible, a journalist must state the source of the information.
7. When publishing research results, a journalist must state the contracting entity, the provider, and the duration of the conducted research. When publishing public opinion polling results, wherever possible, the sample and method should also be mentioned. If that information could not be obtained, the public shall be made aware of the lack of such information.
8. A journalist can agree to ensure the anonymity of the source of identifiable information. Such a source can be used only if the information could not be obtained in a different manner and publishing it is within the public interest. The journalist shall honour the agreement regarding the anonymity of the source.
9. A journalist shall avoid paying for information.
10. Editing, forecasts, titles, and subtitles must not distort the content. A symbolic or stock photograph shall also be appropriately marked.
11. Plagiarism or forgery of documents is prohibited.
- 12.* A journalist must not use illicit means of collecting information. If the information which is of the utmost importance to the public cannot be obtained otherwise, the journalist's actions as well as the reasons for them must be presented to the public.
- 13.* A journalist must always be introduced as a journalist and explain the purpose of the journalist's collecting data. The status of a journalist can only be withheld if the journalist tried to obtain information that serves the public interest but could not obtain said information while declaring the journalist status.
- 14.* A journalist can record audio or video, and take pictures only after the consent of the person being recorded or photographed has been given. The consent can also be tacit (e.g., if the person does not object). Under exceptional circumstances, a journalist can record and take pictures without consent if the journalist

reasonably believes that, by doing so, the journalist shall uncover information that serves the public interest. The reasons for the journalist's decision must be explained in the article.

15. A journalist shall distinguish between information and commentary. The difference between a report on the facts and commentary must be sufficiently clear so that the addressee of the report can distinguish between the facts, and the views or opinions of the journalist.

Electronic publications

16. The editor-in-chief is responsible for the contents of the commentaries and other audio-visual materials of the readers, listeners, or viewers. The editor-in-chief shall establish rules for the selection and inclusion of commentaries. A commentary that does not comply with the published rules must be removed as soon as possible.

16.a The editor-in-chief is responsible for the transparent supplementation and correction of the contents of online media and establishes the rules. When a journalist or an editor corrects an error, the intervention must be marked in such a way that it is clear what the error was. When an article is merely supplemented with new information, the time of the latest amendment must be evident.

General ethical standards

17.* A journalist shall respect the right of an individual to privacy and avoid sensational and unwarranted disclosure of the individual's privacy in public. An intervention in the privacy of an individual is justifiable only if the public interest outweighs the respect for privacy. When reporting about public figures and those who want to gain power and influence, and draw attention, the right of the public to information is more extensive. A journalist should bear in mind that collecting and publishing the information, photographs, and recordings of the individuals can hurt those individuals who are not used to the attention of the media and the public.

The journalist must be particularly considerate when mentioning names or publishing photographs and recordings of persons involved in accidents, and offenders or victims.

18. A journalist shall take into account that no one is guilty until guilt has been proven by a competent authority's decision. If the decision is not final, this shall be noted by the journalist.

19. A journalist must show special consideration when publishing photographs or recordings, collecting information, and reporting about children and minors, persons with developmental, physical, and mental disabilities, and members of other vulnerable groups.

20. A journalist shall avoid ethnic, racial, gender, age, religious, geographical, and other stereotypes, and details related to sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, social status, or other personal circumstances of individuals and groups.

21. Incitement to violence, dissemination of hatred and intolerance, and other forms of hate speech are prohibited. A journalist must not permit such actions and if that is not possible, the journalist must immediately respond to or condemn such actions.

22. In the articles on sexual abuses and family tragedies, a journalist shall not disclose the identities of victims and their family members, and the identities of offenders shall not be disclosed when that action would disclose the identities of the victims. The same shall apply for articles on other criminal offences when minors are included in them. Identities can be disclosed provided there is consent from the adult victims.

23. A journalist shall report about suicide and attempted suicide only if it serves the public interest. In doing so, the causes and circumstances of suicide or attempted suicide are stated with caution. Methods and locations of the deed are not stated. The identity of the person who committed suicide or attempted to commit suicide is disclosed only if it serves the public interest. The exception to this is reporting about historical figures.

Conflicts of interests

24. If a journalist is personally involved in the events the journalist is reporting about and this therefore presents a conflict of interests, the journalist shall either disclose this conflict of interests, or discontinue reporting the events.

25. Intertwining or joining journalistic and advertising or political propaganda texts is prohibited. Advertising messages, paid publications, and paid advertisements must be recognisably and clearly distinguished from journalistic texts. If there is any doubt, the text must be clearly designated as an advertisement. Hybrids between advertising or political propaganda and journalistic texts are prohibited.

26. In order for a journalist to avoid an actual or perceived conflict of interests, the journalist must refuse gifts, favours, rewards, and other benefits. The journalist shall avoid work outside of the journalist profession which would reduce his credibility or the credibility of the journalist community.

27. A journalist shall not misuse the information on financial events obtained in the journalist's professional work for personal interests. If the journalist trades securities about which he reports, the journalist shall disclose this information to the public.

The rights of journalists and relations with the public

28. A journalist has the right to turn down a job that is in breach of this Code and the professional standards of the journalist profession.

29. No one shall change the meaning or rewrite the article of a journalist without the journalist's consent. A journalist has the right to sign articles written by the journalist. It is not possible to sign said articles without the journalist's knowledge or against the journalist's will.

* When applying the exceptions permitted by Articles 12, 13, 14, and 17, and when interfering with the rights of others, a journalist must obtain the opinion of the editor-in-chief.