

## Break-out Session 3: Back to the basics: freedom of the media matters

### Panelists:

**Alison Bethel McKenzie**, Executive Director of the International Press Institute

**Galina Sidorova**, Journalist and Chairperson of the International Press Institute

**Frank La Rue**, UN Special Rapporteur on Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

**Dunja Mijatović**, Representative on Freedom of the Media at OSCE

**Hadi Adanali**, Senior Advisor at the Office of the Turkish Prime Minister

**Gulya Akhundova**, Journalist

**Martine Ostrovsky**, Former Head of the Legal Department of AFP and Members of Reporters without Borders

### Moderator:

**Sylvie Coudray**, Chief of Section of Freedom of Expression at UNESCO

### Session Summary

The right to freedom of opinion is the right to be properly informed. In this context Frank La Rue emphasized that information prevents ignorance and thus counteracts negative sentiments in a society, because hate speech can only be countered by more speech and more education.

Following that freedom of opinion is also connected to freedom of the press. Galina Sidorova outlines how a theoretical situation of press freedom can be paradoxically turned in its own opposite, when it comes to censorship in Russia. Furthermore she stresses the general importance of public and civic participation in order to sustain press freedom and promotes tolerance as means against hate speech.

The panelists agree unanimously upon the freedom of expression as a social and individual right. In a truly democratic society freedom of expression is the fundament of broad social inclusion in the political discourse.

The practical term of journalist needs some redefining as a person gathering and distribution information or media content to the public. So, as a phenomenon of new media, more and more citizen journalists (e.g. bloggers) need to be considered as such with the implication to grant them the same individual press freedom. This goes hand in hand with growing personal responsibilities and establishing profound professional training.