

Conference

Whose Media, Whose Interests?

—
Ownership,
Public Sphere
and Online Space

18 September 2016,
Václav Havel Library
Ostrovni 13, Prague



ORGANIZERS

The conference is jointly organized by the Václav Havel Library, Aspen Institute Prague and the Centre for the Study of Political Philosophy, Ethics and Religion, Charles University in Prague, with support from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, University of Oxford.



CONFERENCE'S AIM AND FOCUS

The aim of the conference is to critically reflect upon some of the main issues which currently surround debates about the performance of media in the Czech Republic and Central Europe in general, namely the changing models of media ownership, the independence of public service broadcasting, as well as the spreading of disinformation and propaganda via the social network sites. Across the region, a large number of commercial media have recently undergone a process of ownership transformation, characterized by departure of established international investors and their replacement by local businessmen, many of whom are advancing political interests.

While causing concerns for the future of journalistic freedom and autonomy under the new, economically powerful and politically connected proprietors this development also highlights the importance

of preserving and nurturing journalistic professionalism and political independence of public service media, counterbalancing the tendencies towards instrumentalization and politicization of the commercial media domain. Online media and social networks represent a new player in the field with massive and instant reach. At the same time, they are more vulnerable to disinformation and propaganda than traditional media.

The conference will bring together internationally renowned experts and media practitioners, as well as local decision makers and government representatives, in order to debate the above mentioned issues and the challenges they represent for the future of democracy in the Czech Republic and in the region. At the same time, we hope the discussions will lead to practical recommendations to resolve the current issues.

OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAM

9:30	Registration at Václav Havel Library, Ostrovní 13
10:00–10:15	Welcome and Introduction Michael Žantovský , Václav Havel Library Pavel Bělobrádek , Deputy Prime Minister
10:15–12:15	Media ownership and journalistic autonomy Keynote speaker John Lloyd , Financial Times and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Panelists Matúš Kostolný , Editor-in-Chief, Daily N Tamás Bodoky , Editor-in-Chief, Atlatzso.hu Petr Kamborský , Chief Columnist, Lidové Noviny Dalibor Balšínek , Editor-in-Chief, Echo 24 Moderator Václav Štětka , Loughborough University
12:15–13:15	lunch break
13:15–15:15	The role and independence of public service media Keynote speaker Christian Nissen , Copenhagen Business School, fmr Director General of Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR) and member of the EBU Administrative Council Panelists Jacek Żakowski , journalist, Polityka weekly Veronika Sedláčková , journalist, Czech Radio Istvan Hegedus , civic activists, Hungarian Europe Society Moderator David Levy , RISJ, University of Oxford
15:15–15:45	coffee break
15:45–17:45	New media, propaganda and manipulation Keynote speaker Brian Whitmore , senior Russia analyst and author of Power Vertical Blog, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Panelists Ivana Smolenová , researcher, Prague Security Studies Institute Monika Richter , researcher, University of Oxford Kristina Potapova , analyst, Martens Centre Jindřich Šídlo , journalist, Seznam.cz Moderator Michael Žantovský , Václav Havel Library
17:45–18:00	Closing remarks Jiří Schneider , Aspen Institute Prague