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MEDIA NEIGHBOURHOOD AND BELARUS UNIVERSITY-IN-EXILE TO HOST HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE IN VILNIUS

NOVEMBER 27 JOURNALISM STUDENTS CONFERENCE IS PART OF AN EU-FUNDED PROJECT

The conference is aimed at students in journalism and will be focusing on "Reporting Human Rights".
It will be hosted by the European Humanities University, in Vilnius. This university is a Belarusian "university-in-exile" and is renowned for its academic freedom and desire to operate in a free and democratic environment.

Speakers will include journalists and civil society activists and university professors.

Keynote speeches and panel discussions will cover subjects such as freedom of expression and the need for media regulation, ethical issues raised when reporting human rights, the enforcement of human rights through media coverage.

The conference is organised by the AFP Foundation, as part of a consortium led by BBC Media Action and implementing the EU-funded Media Neighbourhood programme.

"Engaging students is crucial when it comes to shaping the future of journalism. This conference aims to sow seeds for tomorrow's well balanced and objective reporting, which is key to democracy and peace-building around the world", says Robert Holloway, director of the AFP Foundation.

Jean-Michel Duffrène, Media Neighbourhood Team Leader adds: "Today's journalism students are tomorrow's media professionals and this is why it is so important to involve them in our project. Freedom of expression is a basic human right, but there is a clear difference between engaged activism and objective and balanced reporting…"

Notes

- The full project title is: Media Neighbourhood: (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) *ENPI- Regional Communication Programme 2011–2013: Journalist Training and Networking.* The project is strengthening the professional capacity of journalists particularly in the areas of media independence and online media, enabling the public in the European Neighbourhood to better understand the European Union. It creates an active and sustainable professional journalism network linking journalists and editors from the European Neighbourhood, both among themselves and with European journalists. Media Neighbourhood project increases awareness and knowledge among journalists of media ethics and effective and impartial investigative reporting standards and improves the capacity for media in the region to operate as financially viable and professional independent businesses. The EU Neighbourhood area covers 16 countries and territories participating in the European Neighbourhood policy (ENP) plus the Russian Federation. ENP was developed by the EU with the main objective of avoiding the emergence of a division between the enlarged EU and its neighbours. It strives to strengthen prosperity, stability and security for all.

- BBC Media Action is leading a consortium consisting of IREX Europe, Fondation AFP, Société Générale de Presse et d'Edition s.a.l. (L'Orient – Le Jour), Canal France International, French Televisions Group, LDK Consultants Engineers and Planners SA and the Media Development Center.

- BBC Media Action is the BBC's international development charity. We believe media can inspire and support individuals and transform societies. We work with media to help reduce poverty and promote rights around the world. Media helps people make sense of events, engage in dialogue, and shape their own lives. Yet many millions still lack access to free, reliable and practical information. We work with partners to help poor and marginalised people access their own rights, increase their choices and lead healthier lives. We help people be heard and to hold their leaders to account. The aim is to inform, connect and engage people around the world.

- About AFP Foundation: The AFP Foundation is the non-profit arm of the AFP News Agency, set up in July 2007 to provide training and support to journalists in developing countries. It exists to raise journalism standards worldwide and promote press freedom.

- Please visit www.medianeighbourhood.eu or www.facebook.com/medianeighbourhood for more information