

Self-regulation key to trust, Meyer tells European press bodies

The Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, Sir Christopher Meyer, has told the largest ever gathering of European press regulators that media self-regulation is a form of corporate responsibility that should enhance trust in journalism.

"When media generally are clamouring to demonstrate that they can be trusted, their subscription to an independent professional standards body should be the most important tool in the box", he told a dinner to mark the 9th annual conference of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe, meeting in Edinburgh for the first time.

He saluted the spread of self-regulation across the continent, highlighting the impressive achievements of those in Eastern Europe in establishing press standards bodies in difficult circumstances. He detected a new confidence in self-regulation among European politicians and officials - in part because the characteristics of self-regulation are so well suited to promoting higher standards in the digital age - and pointed to the increasing ineffectiveness of French privacy laws as an example of how ill-suited strict regulation is in the internet age.

He said that the conference had demonstrated that "self-regulation is in good hands across Europe. The challenges of the converged digital world are being anticipated and met. The privacy of the individual is being protected while the freedom of the press is maintained. Press Councils, press ombudsmen and Press Complaints Commissions offer a transparent form of modern, light touch regulation whose time has come".

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Notes

1. To read the speech, which was delivered at a dinner in Edinburgh's Signet Library on 20th September 2007, click here: <http://www.pcc.org.uk/news/speeches-2007.html>
2. In addition to the conference delegates, the dinner was attended by politicians, editors, and businessmen.
3. The Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE) is a loose-knit group of around 25 self-regulatory media bodies that meets annually to share information and ideas. It has no bureaucracy and its conference is hosted on a rotational basis. This is the first time the conference has been held in Scotland.
4. The full list of countries participating in the conference - which includes some observers from outside Europe - is: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, UK, Ukraine, and Zambia
5. For more information, contact Will Gore on 07971 620571.

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