

## **Journalists' Code of Practice**

### **ESTABLISHING ACT OF THE JOURNALIST'S CODE OF PRACTICE**

We, the Cyprus Union of Journalists, the Cyprus Publishers Association and the Owners of Electronic Mass Communication Media, by common agreement sign this Establishing Act of approval and acceptance of the Code and declare that we shall implement the present Code with unreserved respect for the truth and the right of the citizens to objective, full and reliable information.

We sign this Establishing Act in Nicosia, today, 21/5/1997 and put our initials on all pages of the original of the Journalist's Code of Practice, which is trusted to the Cyprus Union of Journalists for safe keeping and reproduction of copies for all concerned.

The Cyprus Union of Journalists  
The Publishers Association  
The Owners of Electronic  
Mass Communication Media

### **Establishment of an Ethics Commission**

A Journalistic Ethics Commission (Cyprus Media Complaints Commission) is established (hereinafter called "the Commission") which is charged with monitoring the implementation of this Code.

The Commission consists of thirteen members, including its Chairman. They are individuals of high moral standards and established prestige. The Chairman of the Commission should preferably have a legal background.

The Chairman and three of the members of the Commission are appointed jointly by the Union of Journalists, the Association of Publishers and the Owners of Electronic Media. The other nine members are appointed, three by the Union of Journalists, three by the Association of Publishers and three by the Owners of Electronic Media.

The post of the Chairman, of the vice-chairman or of a member of the Commission becomes vacant upon the death, resignation or conviction of the holder of the post for an offence involving fraud or for reasons of physical or mental incapacity. Such a vacancy is filled by applying the above provisions.

The Commission's tenure of office is two years.  
In the case of a temporary absence of the Chairman, his duties are carried out by the vice-Chairman.

The Commission may take procedural or other decisions only if at least the President, or in his absence the vice-President and six of its members are present.

Breach of the Code is established by a decision of the Commission which is taken by a

majority of seven votes. The person or the media named in a complaint is entitled either to be present or to be represented in the procedure before the Commission or before a sub-Commission which is convened for this purpose and is given every opportunity to be heard, to give explanations personally or through other persons.

The Commission makes rules of procedure which come into force on the date on which they have been notified to the Union of Journalists, the Association of Publishers and the Owners of Electronic Media.

The Commission receives, deals with and decides upon complaints about alleged violations of this Code by a journalist and/or the media, including the internet versions of established media with audio-visual content. It also issues, within the spirit of this Code, interpretative guidance notes.

The Commission may, exceptionally, deal on its own initiative with a case, which may constitute a breach of any clause of the Code, because of its importance and seriousness.

It is up to the discretion of the Commission to decide whether to deal with a complaint which is the subject matter of a procedure before a Court of Law or any other organ exercising jurisdiction under law.

The aim of the Commission is the settlement, the soonest possible, of any dispute that may have arisen by the breach of this Code. If no settlement is achieved, the Commission examines the complaint and decides whether the Code has been breached.

The Commission is not entitled to impose any penalty or to adjudicate compensation. The decisions and findings of the Commission are published. The journalist or the media found in a decision for breach of the Code has an obligation to publish the relevant decision.

The operational and other relevant expenses of the Commission are being equally borne by the Union of Journalists, the Publishers' Association and the Owners of Electronic Media. The Commission may accept donations or contributions from persons or organizations, when it deems that such donations or contributions do not involve the risk of throwing shadows upon the impartiality and right judgment of the Commission or its members.