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# The Professional Formation of Journalists in Europe Analysis of Journalists' Obligations According to the Regulations Stated in the Editorial Guidelines of Press Agencies and Journals, and in the Ethical Codes of UNESCO and the European Union

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**The Professional Formation of Journalists in Europe  
Analysis of Journalists' Obligations According to the Regulations  
Stated in the Editorial Guidelines of Press Agencies  
and Journals, and in the Ethical Codes of UNESCO  
and the European Union**

**Introduction**

Some of the main institutions in which journalists undergo their professional formation are daily newspapers and press agencies. They often have internal regulations which help journalists meet the standards of their profession and the criteria of good practice, and therefore guarantee to readers that what they receive from the mass media is well-formulated information. However, it should be remembered that such guidelines should by no means be treated as equal to deontological codes, as codes are self-regulatory standards for professional journalism in general, usually for the whole country. The present article analyses editorial codes, or guidelines, and when the term “deontological code” is used, it should be understood in its broader sense. The internal regulations which are discussed in this text are mainly codes of conduct which, once approved by an agency, may in some cases be legally binding, for instance in work-related disputes between journalists and their employer. They may include certain ethical principles, but cannot be classified as deontological codes in a technical sense.

The conclusion which summarises the situation in Europe shows that internal regulations are in fact present in many countries, but they are referred to in various different ways, e.g., as an honour code, charter of journalists, or a declaration of journalists' rights and obligations. Regardless of its name, such a document is intended to be a guide which has a chance to become effective as long as a journalist has a sense of morality. It is not a legal text, but it still has certain law-like value especially in the places where journalists are employed.

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## Test sample

In order to establish a representative sample, the most important journals from the analysed countries have been selected, such as *La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *El País*, *El Mundo*, *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Tageszeitung*, *The Guardian*, as well as the most popular agencies, e.g. *EFE*, *ANSA*. Having conducted a thorough analysis of the codes, the author has distinguished some obligations of journalists which are mentioned by various institutions and which have become a common element among different deontological documents, both in press agencies and in journals: freedom of information, expression and opinion; respect for human and moral values; the responsibility of the informing party for the message and public comment; professional secrecy; the obligation to serve the truth and objectivity in journalism; and the duty to correct any errors and mistakes. These obligations provide the basis for further analysis.

Apart from the documents of press agencies and newspapers, the international codes of journalism ethics issued by UNESCO and the European Union have been studied, namely the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* dated 10 December 1948,<sup>1</sup> the *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, drafted under the auspices of UNESCO through the meetings of international and regional organisations in the years 1979–1983, and published in Paris on 20 November 1983,<sup>2</sup> during the fourth consultative meeting attended by 400,000 journalists from all around the world, and *Resolution 1003 of the Council of Europe* dated 1 July 1993.<sup>3</sup> For practical reasons, I have provided only a general outline of my research and referred only to the documents listed above. However, it should be remembered that there exist a number of country-specific documents which constitute an important point of reference in the discussion on how professional education of journalists satisfies the moral obligations to which I refer in this study.

## Obligations of a journalist

For practical reasons, my analysis of professional formation shall be ordered according to the journalists' obligations listed above.

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<sup>1</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10.XII.1948)*, <http://www.ohchr.org/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>2</sup> *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>3</sup> *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

## 1. Freedom of information

### Freedom *from* – freedom *to*

The guidelines of press agencies focus on the issue of “negative” freedom, i.e. freedom *from* external circumstances. For instance, the *EFE* agency expresses it as follows: “*EFE* rejects all kinds of pressure from institutions, political parties, economic, cultural, religious, social and ideological groups or groups of other type which attempt to modify or influence information in order to protect their interests.”<sup>4</sup> (“*EFE rechaza cualquier presión de las instituciones, partidos políticos, grupos económicos, culturales, religiosos, sociales, ideológicos o de otro tipo que intenten alterar o influir en la información en beneficio de sus intereses*”). The Italian agency ANSA refers to “freedom *from*” by stating as follows in the preamble to its code: “In its social activity, the Agency relies on certain strictly defined principles of independence, impartiality and objectivism, which are included in the code, as well as on local and international law [...]”<sup>5</sup> These examples show us that the freedom of information is certainly well defined in the deontological codes of press agencies. However, in my opinion, they lack reference to freedom as something positive, i.e. related to the use of full human potential, in other words, freedom *to*.

Analysis of the guidelines of major European daily newspapers shows that they are becoming increasingly similar to the codes of press agencies in their tendency to understand freedom in its negative sense. The German newspapers *Die Tageszeitung*, *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* and Italian *Corriere della Sera* emphasise that those who work in the mass media have to be free from bias etc. The code of *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (especially point 1) declares that this newspaper “is a political daily newspaper which is independent from political parties, groups of interest and trade unions”<sup>6</sup> (“*Die Süddeutsche Zeitung ist eine politische Tageszeitung, unabhängig von Parteien, Interessengruppen und Wirtschaftsverbänden*”). *Corriere della Sera* emphasises in its “Magna Carta” the independence of journalists and publications from any group which could exercise pressure on them (art. 1).<sup>7</sup>

The deontological codes of the Spanish daily newspapers *El País* and *El Mundo* and Italian *La Repubblica* refer only to the negative dimension of freedom. For instance, the editorial code of *El País* states that this newspaper rejects any form of pressure from people, political parties, business, religious and ideological groups who attempt to use information for their own benefit. This independence

<sup>4</sup> *EFE, Estatuto*, art. 8, <http://www.efe.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>5</sup> *ANSA, Statuto*, art. 1, <http://www.ansa.it/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>6</sup> *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung, Statut*, art. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Corriere della Sera, Magna charta*, art. 1, <http://www.corriere.it/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

from pressure in transferring information guarantees that the rights of the readers and their protection remain the principle of journalists' work.<sup>8</sup> (*“El País rechazara cualquier presión de personas, partidos políticos, grupos económicos, religiosos o ideológicos que traten de poner la información al servicio de sus intereses. Esta independencia y la no manipulación de las noticias son una garantía para los derechos de los lectores, cuya salvaguardia constituye la razón última del trabajo profesional”*) It is also added that “impartiality of journalism should be assumed in relation to the sources.

“The journalist's independence is a primary value which should be protected with the utmost care.”<sup>9</sup> (*“Las relaciones con las fuentes habituales habrán de mantenerse con la distancia suficiente para que no condicionen la imparcialidad del trabajo periodístico. La independencia del periodista es un valor esencial que debe preservarse con el máximo cuidado”*) Point 2 of *El Mundo's* code is similar: “*El Mundo* shall definitely reject pressure exerted by any person, institution or political, economic, ideological or religious group who attempts to make use of information for their own benefit.”<sup>10</sup> (*“El Mundo rechazará, de modo tajante, la presión de cualquier persona, institución, o grupo político, económico, ideológico, o religioso, que trate de poner la información al servicio de sus intereses”*).

### Limitations to freedom of information

There exist certain limitations to freedom of information, especially in terms of privacy and protection of underage individuals. In point 5 of its code, the Italian agency ANSA informs that “it ensures the confidentiality of all the information in its possession, unless express and conscious consent to disclose such information has been obtained, and always in accordance with the binding law and procedures related to privacy.”<sup>11</sup> In the guidelines of *The Guardian*, there are special clauses which refer to the persons under 16 years of age, who retain their freedom in a situation involving a journalist's investigation. If children under 16 become victims of a sex crime, the press is not allowed to identify them. The media cannot use the word “incest” if the underage victims might be identifiable, and the relations between victims and culprits may not be discussed either. In such difficult cases, journalists need to obtain special permission, and they can publish the name of the person accused of such crime only if they are legally allowed to do so.<sup>12</sup> (*“Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion. A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another*

<sup>8</sup> *El País, Estatuto*, art. 3.3, <http://www.elpais.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>9</sup> *El País, Manual de estilo de diario*, art. 1. 15, <http://blogs.elpais.com/files/manual-de-estilo-de-el-pa%C3%ADs.pdf> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>10</sup> *El Mundo, Estatuto*, art. 2, <http://www.upccanarias.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>11</sup> *ANSA, Statuto*, art. 5, <http://www.ansa.it/> (16 January 2014).

<sup>12</sup> *The Guardian, Statute*, <http://www.theguardian.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

*child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents. (art. 6.1–6.2) The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences. (art. 7.1) In any press report of a case involving a sexual offence against a child – i) The child must not be identified. ii) The adult may be identified. iii) The word “incest” must not be used where a child victim might be identified. iv) Care must be taken that nothing in the report implies the relationship between the accused and the child. (art. 7.2) Journalists must identify themselves and obtain permission from a responsible executive before entering non-public areas of hospitals or similar institutions to pursue enquiries. (art. 8.1) Relatives or friends of persons convicted or accused of crime should not generally be identified without their consent, unless they are genuinely relevant to the story. (art. 9.1) The press must not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless there is adequate justification and they are legally free to do so”. (art. 11).*

It may be concluded on the basis of an analysis of the guidelines of daily newspapers and press agencies that the notion of “freedom of information” can be defined as the right to inform anyone about what is happening in social and political life or about other things, subject to relevant limitations.

The internal regulations of newspapers and press agencies reflect Isaiah Berlin's theory, which is still considered an important step for properly understanding the concept of freedom and its influence on journalism.<sup>13</sup>

In my opinion, however, the concept of freedom of information on the deep level of humanity, namely the moral level, is neglected here. Some of the analysed codes refer to this subject, though. For instance, *Die Tageszeitung* mentions respect for the journalist's conscience, and it does not force journalists to write something that would be against their values. Point 3 of its code reads that “the editorial staff of the journal is free and self-sufficient. No journalist can be forced to write or draw against their own conscience. Opinions of the members of the editorial staff shall be respected.”<sup>14</sup> (“*Die Redaktion die Zeitung frei und selbständig.*”

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah Berlin made a distinction between two concepts of liberty, and distinguished between positive and negative freedom. Freedom understood as the ability and possibility to act is considered positive. It is related to the realisation of full human potential. Positive freedom is also referred to as “freedom to.” Negative freedom is understood as external interference. In other words, it is freedom from limitations imposed by others. This concept has been heavily criticized, regardless of how such a division influences the perception of reality. The history of philosophy has questioned Isaiah Berlin's theory. Gerald MacCallum was convinced that these two types of freedom cannot be opposed to one another, as in his opinion it is impossible to logically separate the lack of interference from the possibility to do something. “Whenever the freedom of some factor or a group of factors is questioned, it is always about freedom from some restriction, pressure, interference or borders in doing or not doing something, in becoming or not becoming something.” (See: G. MacCallum, *Libertà negativa e positive*, [in:] I. Carter, M. Ricciardi, *L'idea di libertà*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1996, p. 21).

<sup>14</sup> *Tageszeitung*, Statut, art. 3, <http://www.taz.de/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

*Kein Redakteur und keine Redakteurin dürfen gezwungen werden, gegen die eigene Überzeugung zu schreiben und zu bebildern. Ansichten von Redaktionsmitgliedern werden respektiert“)*

## 2. Freedom of expression and opinion

This type of journalist's responsibility is present only in some of the deontological codes of daily newspapers and some codes of press agencies. For instance, German newspaper *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* emphasises the importance of freedom of expression as long as it does not threaten or violate the state order. As it is stated in point 1 of its guidelines, “*Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* is obliged to observe the legal and democratic order, in accordance with the German constitution. The newspaper respects the freedom of faith, conscience and opinion of everyone and rejects all the aspirations of radical groups which threaten the state order.”<sup>15</sup> (“*Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* ist der im Grundgesetz der Bundesrepublik Deutschland festgelegten rechtsstaatlichen und demokratischen Ordnung verpflichtet. Sie achtet die Glaubens-, Gewissens- und Meinungsfreiheit des einzelnen und lehnt alle Bestrebungen radikaler Gruppen ab, welche die rechtsstaatliche Ordnung gefährden“)) Newspapers like the Spanish *El Mundo* express their informational independence and freedom in the possibility to express one's own arguments as a sign of freedom of information, but also freedom of expression. As far as the analysed codes of press agencies are concerned, only Spanish *EFE* declares its own freedom of expression (in the preamble),<sup>16</sup> whereas the Italian agency *ANSA* does not refer to it. The Spanish agency has also included in its internal regulations a provision according to which press agencies should not have anything in common with political, economic or other interests.<sup>17</sup> *The Guardian* does not discuss freedom of expression in its editorial guidelines.

<sup>15</sup> *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Statut, art. 1.

<sup>16</sup> The preamble to the *EFE* guidelines is as follows: “Freedom of speech and the right to true information are two inseparable realities in our legal and constitutional order, and they are definite principles which inspire and oblige *EFE* journalism.” (“La libertad de expresión y el derecho a una información veraz son dos realidades indisolubles en nuestro ordenamiento jurídico y constitucional y son los principios irrenunciables que inspiran y comprometen el quehacer periodístico de la Agencia *EFE*.”), <http://www.efe.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>17</sup> “It is the mission of the *EFE* agency to provide information service to the society. Its task is to contribute to effective enforcement of the citizens' right to obtain true, adequate, trustworthy and high-quality information, not subject to any private, political, economic or other interests.” (“La vocación de la Agencia *EFE* es el servicio público en el ámbito de la información. Sus funciones incluyen contribuir al ejercicio efectivo del derecho de los ciudadanos a disponer de una información veraz, relevante, de calidad y fiable, no sometida a intereses particulares, ya sean estos de naturaleza política, económica o de cualquier otro tipo.”) (*EFE*, Estatuto, Preámbulo), <http://www.efe.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

The so-called freedom of opinion, or freedom of speech, is a concept which is tightly related to the freedom of information and freedom of expression. Generally, it should be emphasised that freedom of speech means that everyone has the right to be free from oppression caused by their beliefs. This notion is used only in some deontological codes. Point E.4 of the code of *La Repubblica* reads as follows: “Every journalist (at any level) is free to write what he or she thinks. This does not mean that there is no discussion and exchange of opinions, especially during the first morning meeting.”<sup>18</sup> [*Ciascun giornalista (a qualsiasi livello) è libero di scrivere ciò che pensa. Ciò non toglie che ci siano dibattiti o scambi di opinione durante le riunioni, in particolare nella riunione principale del mattino*].

The relation between freedom of information, opinion and communication develops as a requirement for participation and, eventually, as the right of citizens and the community. Ethical codes support journalists and the society in mutual execution of rights and obligations, which are generally linked to the relationship between freedom and the mission of those who work in the media.

In my opinion, complementing the norms included in the guidelines of the newspapers and press agencies cited above, and thus opening up a wider perspective, are international documents which refer to the directors of media companies. With time, it might happen that information is considered not only as *freedom of the one who informs*, but also as *the rights of the citizens* who receive information.<sup>19</sup>

It is important for a journalist to be aware of the fact that he or she is responsible for defending a double principle, namely unrestrained investigation and the truthful publication of information, as well as the freedom of fair commentary and meaningful criticism.<sup>20</sup> Such a statement confirms journalists’ sense of freedom of speech. They are free in their search for the facts and have the right to comment on them and explain them with due objectivity and fairness. This right should be protected by the state law, as it is sometimes violated by the owners or managers of media centres.

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<sup>18</sup> *La Repubblica, Statuto*, art. E. 4.

<sup>19</sup> See: J.M. Desantes-Guanter, *Derecho a la información. Materiales para un sistema de la comunicación*, Fundación Coso, Valencia 2004, pp. 74–75.

<sup>20</sup> “In all situations, journalists should follow the double principle of free investigation and publication of true information, freedom of comment and criticism, but also the right to fair comment and adequate criticism.” (“El periodista defenderá, en toda ocasión, el doble principio de la libertad de investigar y de publicar con honestidad la información, la libertad del comentario y de la crítica, así como el derecho a comentar equitativamente y a criticar con lealtad.”) (*El nuevo código de la FIP*, art. 2), <http://www.ifj.org/> [accessed: 16.03.2014]; See: N. Blázquez, *La nueva ética en los medios de comunicación*, BAC, Madrid 2002, pp. 219–220. Also: “Journalists have the right to protect the freedom of press and the natural law.” (*Moral Code of European Journalism*, art. 5), approved by the 2nd International Congress of the European Community of Journalists in March 1972 in Rome: N. Blázquez, *op. cit.*, pp. 220–221.



Freedom of information implies the responsibility of the one who transmits information. These are two inseparable aspects of the same principle, as freedom and responsibility are interrelated.<sup>21</sup> The one who informs should offer true and objective information to society, with guaranteed respect or authentic cultural values. Freedom will not exist without such respect, and without freedom of information, democracy will not develop, and other human rights will fade.

Freedom of speech has certain restrictions, or, in fact, horizons. In terms of freedom, the good of humanity, which is also a social good, is the horizon. Therefore, our freedom is “restricted” or maybe “defined” by the freedom of others, which is why responsibilities and obligations exist.

### 3. Respect for human and moral values – journalists’ responsibility for information and public commentary

We will now analyse the codes of various press agencies and daily newspapers from the point of view of this significant area of responsibility, i.e. respect for human and moral values. Almost all of these documents refer to this problem in some way. How these values are understood in detail and how they are put into practice in everyday choices is not something that might be concluded directly from the regulations. This would require more research and a methodology which reaches beyond the framework of this article. However, it is meaningful whether this subject is referred to or ignored. An analysis which compares various texts is a good starting point for defining the attitude and axiology of various journals and press agencies. I have classified the references to human values into three conceptual categories. The horizon of human values reaches beyond *lex scripta*.

As far as the guidelines of press agencies are concerned, *ANSA* and *EFE* thoroughly discuss the problem of a journalist’s responsibility in the transfer of information and public commentary, and the subject of human and moral values as the basic aims of this profession. The Spanish office expressly states that its job is to act as an information service for society. Press agencies satisfy the citizens’ right to obtain true, adequate, high-quality and trustworthy information.

Therefore, it is the mission of agencies to realize the following values: equity and impartiality in relation to the laws of the countries in which they operate, compliance with the strictest codes of behaviour in relation to the state adminis-

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<sup>21</sup> Point 3 of the *UNESCO Code* (1983): “*Information in journalism is understood as a social good and not as a commodity, which means that the journalist shares responsibility for the information transmitted and is thus accountable not only to those controlling the media but ultimately to the public at large, including various social interests. The journalist’s social responsibility requires that he or she will act under all circumstances in conformity with a personal ethical consciousness*”, in: *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, 1983, art. 8, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

tration, in full agreement with institutional functions, honesty, transparency and credibility, loyalty and in good faith, with confidentiality and respect for their employees and other people, protection of the environment and safety, also in relation to the place of work. The Italian press agency *ANSA* invites its shareholders to take part in the decision-making process regarding rights and responsibilities, and guarantees transparency, clarity and completeness of information regarding the situation and operation of the company, as well as the right to obtain such information.<sup>22</sup> The *EFE* agency states precisely that human and moral values constitute the aims of those who transfer information: “All forms of discrimination should be avoided, whether due to religious beliefs, origin, social situation, culture, sex, ethnic origin or any disease or disability to work. *EFE* never publishes such information which could provoke violence. Moreover, the agency respects the right of people to privacy, dignity and an accurate image.”<sup>23</sup>

These rights, formulated by both the Italian and Spanish agencies, confirm without doubt that their guidelines expressly defend certain specific human and moral values and acknowledge the great responsibility of those who publish information.

We should now examine the presence of this problem in the codes of daily newspapers. We have already noted at the beginning that all daily newspapers discuss this subject. Newspapers, or at least their guidelines, declare that the basic human and moral values shall be respected, as was explained in points 33–35 of the Council of Europe Resolution of 1993,<sup>24</sup> but they also assure the recipients of

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ANSA, Statuto*, art. 3; 6, in <http://www.ansa.it/> (16.III.2014).

<sup>23</sup> See: *EFE, Statuti*, art. 4, 9, 10, 16, in <http://www.efc.com/> [accessed: 16.03.2014]: “Impartiality, lack of prejudice and honesty are the basic principles in obtaining objective information for any of the media.” (*EFE*, 4); “Processing of the *EFE* information material will prevent all kinds of discrimination related to religion, origin, social status, culture, ethnic origin, sex, disease or disability.” (*EFE*, 9); “*EFE* respects the right of physical persons to privacy, dignity and good name, all of which should be considered when they collide with the citizens’ right to information.” (*EFE*, 10) “*EFE* will never publish information which encourages to violence and will not glorify it.” (*EFE*, 16) [*“La imparcialidad, la exactitud, la carencia de tendenciosidad y la honradez son principios ineludibles para lograr una información objetiva y rigurosa en cualquiera de los soportes”*]. (*EFE*, 4) “*El tratamiento del material informativo de EFE evitará cualquier tipo de discriminación por razones de religión, origen, situación social, cultura, etnia, sexo o cualquier enfermedad o discapacidad”*. (*EFE*, 9) “*EFE respeta el derecho de las personas a su intimidad, al honor y a la propia imagen, que serán sopesados cuando colisionen con el derecho de los ciudadanos a estar informados”*. (*EFE*, 10) “*EFE nunca publicará informaciones de manera que inciten a la violencia o hagan apología de ella”*. (*EFE*, 16)].

<sup>24</sup> “*The media have a moral obligation to defend democratic values*” („*I mezzi di comunicazione hanno l’obbligo morale di difendere i valori della democrazia*”) (Council of Europe, Resolution 1003, 1 July 1993, art. 33). „*No-one should remain neutral vis-à-vis the defence of democratic values*”. (“*Nessuno deve mantenersi neutrale di fronte alla difesa dei valori democratici*”). (*Idem*, art. 34). „*Care must be taken not to broadcast programmes, messages or images glorifying violence, exploiting sex and consumerism or using deliberately unsuitable language*.” (“*E’ opportuno evitare*

their moral responsibility, which is regulated by point 1 of the same resolution.<sup>25</sup> The newspapers refer to more or less the same regulations as the *EFE* and *ANSA* agencies, although they sometimes emphasise different aspects.

As far as a journalist's responsibility for information and public commentary is concerned, Italian daily newspapers offer the widest autonomy of choice and management of information for their editorial staff; strict separation of shareholders' rights; responsibility in the scope of economic, production and organizational management; and the prerogatives of independence from internal or external authorities, political strategies and editorial teams. Undoubtedly, it is a sign of responsibility when a publisher is actively involved in ensuring the autonomy of information.

In order to become a responsible journalist, one needs to undergo some preparation for proper fulfilment of the mission. The guidelines of *La Repubblica* read: "In order to become a journalist, one needs to pass the secondary school final examinations. Good writing skills are required, as well as the ability to identify the importance of events and describe them objectively."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, responsibility also includes the practical skills that a journalist needs.

The editorial guidelines of the British *The Guardian* discuss in detail the problem of the responsibility of the editor-in-chief and the publisher. They both should guarantee that the deontological code will be observed and put into practice, not only literally, but also in line with its spirit. As far as journalists are concerned, those who fulfil their duty to maintain professional standards in their work are considered responsible.<sup>27</sup> German daily newspapers, both *Die Tageszeitung* and

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*la trasmissione di programmi, messaggi o immagini che esaltino la violenza, sfruttino il sesso e il consumo, ovvero facciano uso di un linguaggio deliberatamente sconveniente*). (Idem, Council of Europe, 35).

<sup>25</sup> "I mezzi di comunicazione sociale assumono, nei confronti dei cittadini e della società, una responsabilità morale che deve essere sottolineata, segnatamente in un momento in cui l'informazione e la comunicazione rivestono una grande importanza sia per lo sviluppo della personalità dei cittadini, sia per l'evoluzione della società e della vita democratica". (Idem, art. 1).

<sup>26</sup> *La Repubblica*, Statuto, art. E.

<sup>27</sup> "All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. The Code, which includes this preamble and the public interest exceptions below, sets the benchmark for those ethical standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It is the cornerstone of the system of self-regulation to which the industry has made a binding commitment.

*It is essential that an agreed code be honoured not only to the letter but in the full spirit. It should not be interpreted so narrowly as to compromise its commitment to respect the rights of the individual, nor so broadly that it constitutes an unnecessary interference with freedom of expression or prevents publication in the public interest. It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to apply the Code to editorial material in both printed and online versions of publications. They should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists, in printed and online versions of publications". (The Guardian, Statute, Preamble), <http://www.pcc.org.uk/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].*

*Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, declare their independence,<sup>28</sup> and by doing so state that they want to protect human and moral values against all forms of discrimination. They emphasise two primary values: freedom, defined as respect for the opinions of others, and democracy, which respects the dignity and rights of all citizens. Point 1 of the code of *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* reads that “SZ respects the freedom of religion, conscience and opinion of everyone and rejects aspirations of radical groups which threaten the public order in the country.”<sup>29</sup> (“SZ achtet die Glaubens-, Gewissens- und Meinungsfreiheit des einzelnen und lehnt alle Bestrebungen radikaler Gruppen ab, welche die rechtsstaatliche Ordnung gefährden“). Point 8 reads: “The editorial committee protects through the code the tasks and obligations (of the editorial staff)”<sup>30</sup> (“Der Redaktionsausschuss nimmt die in diesem Statut niedergelegten Aufgaben und Rechte wahr“). Moreover, in point 2 of its guidelines, *Die Tageszeitung* confirms that it is against any pressure, stereotypes and conformism in terms of language and topics.<sup>31</sup> The editorial staff rejects the influences of individuals, political parties and economic, religious or ideological groups.<sup>32</sup>

Horizon of human values is set by the positive law

In some cases, human and moral values are only defined by positive law, which means that no source other than *lex scripta* is considered a source for them. The Spanish daily newspaper *El País* is a good example here.

*El País* describes itself as “an independent national newspaper which publishes general information with a clear European vocation, defends pluralist democracy in accordance with liberal and social principles, and declares that it protects the democratic order and the law established by the Constitution.”<sup>33</sup> (“*El País* de define estatutariamente como un periódico independiente, nacional, de información general, con una clara vocación europeísta, defensor de la de-

<sup>28</sup> For instance, *Die Tageszeitung* has included the following statement in its guidelines: “*Die Tageszeitung* is an independent national daily journal with a political and cultural profile.” (“*Die TAZ* ist eine unabhängige überregionale Tageszeitung für Politik und Kultur“). (*TAZ*, Statut, art. 2), <http://www.taz.de/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>29</sup> *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Statut, art. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *SZ*, Statut, art. 8.

<sup>31</sup> “*Die Tageszeitung* stands against pressure, stereotypes and conformism in terms of language and topics“ (“*Die Tageszeitung* widersteht dem Druck der Stereotype und des sprachlichen und thematischen Konformismus“). (*TAZ*, art. 2.), <http://www.taz.de/> (16 March 2014).

<sup>32</sup> “The editorial staff rejects influence of individuals, political parties or economic, religious or ideological groups.” (“*Die Redaktion* weist jede Einflussnahme, jeden Druck seitens einzelner Personen, politischen Parteien, ökonomisch, religiös oder ideologisch orientierter Gruppe zurück“). (*Ibidem*)

<sup>33</sup> *El País*, Estatuto, art. 1.1.

*mocracia plural según los principios liberales y sociales, y que se compromete a guardar el orden democrático y legal establecido en la Constitución*”). This statement constitutes the general approach of the newspaper to human and moral values. Constructed in this manner, it reduces the scope of values to those acknowledged by the legal order in a given moment, so it is a positivist way of understanding values. Sometimes, the constitution is modified due to some political reasons, whereas values should have a permanent point of reference, both for the media and for citizens. For instance, if a given newspaper defends life, it will not publish an article which supports abortion or euthanasia. It may happen that a parliament in a European country will vote against life, and it may even change the constitution and its main principles. Then, on the basis of its guidelines, *El País*, which used to defend life, is obliged to promote the culture of death after the new election. In my opinion, including such a statement in the code is imprecise and ambiguous because by putting together two phrases: “independent newspaper” and “defends pluralist democracy in accordance with liberal and social principles which oblige it to protect the democratic order and the law established by the constitution,” it leaves to the journalists much space to fulfil their mission in a manner which may be far from objective human and moral values.

In comparison to *El País*, *El Mundo* is much more precise: it defends the rights of minorities, protects citizens against aggression of any authority, and protects human rights as defined by the United Nations in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and in the *European Convention on Human Rights*.

Internal regulations of daily newspapers and press agencies which do not refer to the problem of human and moral values

It may happen that the editorial guidelines of a newspaper do not refer to undeniable human and moral values. The journalist ethical codes of UNESCO and the European Union include professional standards of journalism which, among others, recommend respect for human and moral values and journalist’s responsibility for information. Point 8 of the *UNESCO Code* defends “human rights, social progress and national liberation, while respecting the distinctive character, value and dignity of each culture, as well as the right of each people freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems.”<sup>34</sup> The same fragment emphasises the active participation of a journalist in social changes which are directed towards a better society, and which contribute through dialogue to an atmosphere of trust in international relations. Such an attitude in a journalist fosters

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<sup>34</sup> *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism* (1983), p. 8, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

peace, justice, disarmament and the development of the country. It is concluded in this fragment of the code that journalists should “be aware of relevant provisions contained in international conventions, declarations and resolutions.”<sup>35</sup> This statement shows that the UNESCO code reflects a horizon of human values that reach beyond the positive law.

Through Resolution 1003 on the ethics of journalism, the Council of Europe reminds us that journalists bear a moral responsibility. Considering the situation in society, terrorism, the discrimination of minorities, xenophobia and war, “the media have a moral obligation to defend democratic values: respect for human dignity, solving problems by peaceful, tolerant means.” Interestingly, the document offers some solutions to journalists, which refer to their specific moral responsibility, and the Council explains the reasons for this. Journalists are given a well-defined task: they are “to oppose violence and the language of hatred and confrontation and to reject all discrimination based on culture, sex or religion”<sup>36</sup> (art. 33). Moreover, “care must be taken not to broadcast programmes, messages or images glorifying violence, exploiting sex and consumerism or using deliberately unsuitable language”<sup>37</sup> (art. 35).

#### 4. Professional secrecy

The result of the analysis of the guidelines of daily newspapers and press agencies from the point of view of professional secrecy may seem surprising. *ANSA* does not mention this issue in its code. The Italian agency guarantees the confidentiality of all the information it obtains and avoids searching for and using confidential data, but this is not the same as professional secrecy. We need to remember that professional secrecy is mostly about not disclosing the sources of information. The *EFE* agency, in turn, makes an express statement that “journalists of *EFE* have the right to professional secrecy and conscience clauses.”<sup>38</sup> Moreover, journalists have the right and obligation to keep secret the sources which helped them obtain information. The code of the Spanish agency focuses in detail on professional secrecy, and it describes to whom and by whom information should not be disclosed: “Professional secrecy is an obligation towards the director, third parties and judicial bodies, and it applies to the author of a given

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<sup>35</sup> *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, 1983, art. 8, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>36</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>37</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>38</sup> “*Los periodistas de EFE tienen derecho al secreto profesional y a la cláusula de conciencia, que son regulados en capítulos específicos de este Estatuto*”. (*EFE, Statuto*, art. 22), <http://www.efe.com/> (16.III.2014).

informational piece and to any other journalist or person connected with EFE who knows the source of information or confidential data.”<sup>39</sup>

The press agency also notes that the secrecy obligation is not absolute, as there are greater goods which come before it: “in the case of crime against life and against human dignity, *EFE* journalists are not obliged to professional secrecy.”<sup>40</sup> Journalists who participate in legal proceedings are not obliged to disclose their sources of information (art. 43). The agency guidelines include a clear declaration: “Journalists who obey professional secrecy cannot become subject to repression or sanctions.”<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, why do some agencies not want to make a written statement about professional privacy in their statutes? Two answers to this question seem most probable: it is either due to mere negligence, which would be rather surprising, or for other reasons, for instance to avoid the obligation to comply with such regulations, which would impose carefulness on the newspaper.

Let us discuss daily newspapers now. As in the case of agencies, only some of them present the clause in question. The German (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Tageszeitung*) and Italian (*La Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*) newspapers do not mention the subject of professional secrecy in their guidelines. Resolution 1003 of the Council of Europe dated 1 July 1993 on ethics in journalism and other documents (ethical codes) refer to the right to professional secrecy. Although they are considered more significant than the guidelines of individual newspapers, this does not mean that the newspapers do not discuss this subject in their regulations because they accept what has been established by higher-level documents. This can practically be excluded, as the ethical codes of these newspapers were written before 1993, i.e. before the European resolution.

Let us now focus on the deontological guidelines of the British daily newspaper and two Spanish ones. It is worth noting that *The Guardian* refers to the issue of professional secrecy as a “moral obligation”: “Journalists have a moral obliga-

<sup>39</sup> “Como garantía del derecho de los ciudadanos a la información, los periodistas de EFE tienen el derecho y el deber de guardar el secreto profesional y de no revelar la identidad de las fuentes que le hayan facilitado información con la petición de confidencialidad”. (*Idem*, art. 39). “El secreto profesional obliga frente a la Dirección, frente a terceras personas y frente a la autoridad judicial, y vincula tanto al autor de la información como a cualquier otro periodista o responsable de EFE que hubiera podido conocer la identidad de la fuente o los datos confidenciales”. (*Idem*, art. 40).

<sup>40</sup> *Idem*, art. 44.

<sup>41</sup> “Los periodistas de EFE citados a declarar en un procedimiento judicial podrán invocar su derecho al secreto profesional y negarse, en consecuencia, a identificar a sus fuentes. La empresa amparará el ejercicio de este derecho con todos los medios a su alcance”. (*Idem*, art. 43) “Los periodistas de EFE no estarán vinculados por el secreto profesional cuando puedan evitar la comisión cierta de un delito contra la vida y la libertad de las personas”. (*Idem*, art. 44) “Los periodistas de EFE que se acojan al secreto profesional no podrán ser objeto de represalias ni sancionados por ello”. (*Idem*, art. 45).

tion to protect confidential sources of information.”<sup>42</sup> Both *El Mundo* and *El País* treat professional secrecy as a right, but also as a moral obligation. Protection of information sources guarantees that the readers obtain true and independent information. It protects journalists as well, in case they were subject to pressure from those who insist on disclosure of the information source.<sup>43</sup>

Point 4 of the UNESCO Code published in Paris on 20 November 1983 refers to the subject of professional secrecy in the following way: a “journalist’s right to refrain from working against his or her conviction or from disclosing sources of information.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, professional privacy is not widely discussed in the Code, which may be surprising and provoke the following question: Why does such an important document addressed to all people of the media (including the press agencies discussed above) not include a wider written clause on this subject?

In my opinion, the best way to guarantee professional secrecy is to include a professional secrecy clause in legally binding documents. In this article, this subject will not be discussed, as the positive law of European states is diversified, and there are various legal decisions which reveal a multitude of cases. Therefore, this is rather a subject for another research and analysis.

## 5. Obligation to remain true and objective in journalism

All the deontological guidelines of press agencies analysed in this article contain very express references to the obligation to remain true and objective in journalist work, although they verbalize it in various ways. All those who work for the media are called upon to give testimony to certain values, as they pay service to a society that wants to be well-informed on the basis of reliable sources which guarantee objective, true and certain information.

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<sup>42</sup> “Journalists have a moral obligation to protect confidential sources of information” (*The Guardian*, Statuto, art. 14), <http://www.pcc.org.uk/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>43</sup> “El Mundo treats professional secrecy as the right and ethical obligation of journalists. Protection of information sources guarantees that the readers will obtain true and independent information. No El Mundo journalist can be forced to reveal the sources of information.” (“*El Mundo considera el secreto profesional como un derecho y un deber ético de los periodistas. La protección de las fuentes informativas constituye una garantía del derecho de los lectores a recibir una información libre y veraz. Ningún redactor de El Mundo podrá ser obligado a revelar sus fuentes*”). (*El Mundo*, Statuto, art. 8), <http://www.fesp.org/> [accessed: 16.03.2014]. “Request for anonymity of the source should be respected, but it should be checked whether some conditions are satisfied, for instance lack of fear of revenge (...)” “*La petición de anonimato por parte de una fuente debe respetarse, pero hay que procurar que figure alguna indicación del porqué de tal exigencia: por temor a represalias (...)*”. (*El País – Manual de estilo del diario*, 1.11), in <http://www.scribd.com/doc/977969/Periodismo-MANUAL-DE-ESTILO-DEL-DIARIO-EL-PAISEspana> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>44</sup> *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, 1983, p. 4, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].



Therefore, let us examine the wording of the guidelines. The preamble to the code of *ANSA* reads as follows: “The Agency invokes the principles of strict independence, objectivity and impartiality, which are included in its guidelines, and this refers to respect for national and international law.”<sup>45</sup> In the case of *EFE*, the very introduction to the code emphasises the public nature of information service paid by the agency.<sup>46</sup> It is free from any ideological line, rejects all forms of manipulation, and relies on the reality of facts. In order to fulfil its duty of remaining true and objective in its journalism, the Spanish agency uses various sources of information and respects basic ethical principles which are referred to in points 4 and 30 of the Resolution 1003 of the Council of Europe dated 1 July 1993: “News broadcasting should be based on truthfulness” (art. 4). “In journalism, controversial or sensational items must not be confused with subjects on which it is important to provide information” (art. 30).<sup>47</sup>

Newspapers, like press agencies, confirm that they make an effort to stay objective when presenting facts to their readers, and they express these attempts in various ways, but always with the same aim.<sup>48</sup> This obligation to provide clear, complete and objective information does not exclude a certain bias in a given press title. For instance, the deontological code of *La Repubblica* includes the basic principles of truth and objectivity, but at the same time, this Italian daily underlines its secular and antifascist character, and its openness to the ideas and demands of the democratic left wing. The Spanish agency *EFE* emphasises in its guidelines that it does not express its opinion, but presents information set in a given context accompanied by journalist analysis which is based on facts and examination of the sources of information and elimination of any form of manipulation, with respect for ethical values which constitute the basis for the protocol of information gathering and modification.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *ANSA, Preamble*, <http://www.ansa.it/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>46</sup> “Due to the public nature of its mission, the *EFE* agency does not follow any ideological line, does not publish its opinions, but only information, news, reportage and journalist analysis in any medium, based on the reality of events, research of all the sources, and rejecting all manipulation, with respect for basic ethical principles related to obtaining and processing of information.” (“Por su condición de servicio público informativo, la Agencia *EFE* carece de línea ideológica, no transmite opiniones propias, sino noticias, crónicas, reportajes y análisis periodísticos, en cualquier soporte, basados en la veracidad de los hechos, la consulta de todas las fuentes, el rechazo de toda manipulación y el respeto a los principios éticos que rigen el protocolo de obtención y edición de información” transl.) (*EFE, Statuto*, Preámbulo de la Agencia).

<sup>47</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>48</sup> For instance, *Die Tageszeitung* has included the following statement in point 2 of its statute: “*Die TAZ engagiert sich für eine kritische Öffentlichkeit*”. (“*Die Tageszeitung* is obliged to criticism”). The so called “Magna Charta” requests to make effort to provide the readers of *Corriere della Sera* true information”.

<sup>49</sup> “Due to the public nature of its mission, the *EFE* agency does not follow any ideological line, does not publish its opinions, but only information, chronicle, reportage and journalist analy-

Objectivity in journalism must be viewed as not only the main aim of the newspaper's editorial staff, but also as a basic right of its readers. *El Mundo* mentions this in point 2 of its guidelines: "The independence of information, objectivity, credibility and lack of manipulation are the main objectives of the editorial staff of *El Mundo*, and they are also basic rights of *El Mundo* readers."<sup>50</sup>

The variety of examples of internal provisions in daily newspapers and press agencies shows that both surely have "good intentions": they want to be true and objective. The problem lies in the fact that their statutes often fail to properly describe this basic obligations of journalism. In fact, there seems to be a discord between the concept of truth and the concept of objectivity. It looks as if objectivity were a paradigm of truth in information. However, the notion of objectivity is ambiguous, as has been observed by various authors.<sup>51</sup> This article is not the proper place to develop arguments in this debate; suffice it to say that the notion of objectivity, understood as the rightful attitude of the subject making judgements, corresponds to the pragmatic dimension of a statement/judgement (sincere intention to seek for and tell the truth), whereas the notion of truth corresponds to the semantic aspect of a judgement (truth to reality). Journalists do not collect "facts", as some academic explanations describe it, but they formulate judgements which may be or not be consistent with reality, which means they are either true or false. Objectivity and the research model of journalist truth, in relation to the ambiguous academic positivism which was popular at the beginning of the history of journalism and encouraged not telling the truth, have introduced more disorientation than support into journalism.

Point 3 of Resolution 1003 of the Council of Europe dated 1 July 1993 remains debatable: "The basic principle of any ethical consideration of journalism is that a clear distinction must be drawn between news and opinions,

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sis in any medium, based on the reality of events, and rejecting all manipulation, with respect for basic ethical principles related to obtaining and processing of information." ("Por su condición de servicio público informativo, la Agencia EFE carece de línea ideológica, no transmite opiniones propias, sino noticias, crónicas, reportajes y análisis periodísticos, en cualquier soporte, basados en la veracidad de los hechos, la consulta de todas las fuentes, el rechazo de toda manipulación y el respeto a los principios éticos que rigen el protocolo de obtención y edición de información"). (*EFE, Estatuto*, Preámbulo del Estatuto de Redacción).

<sup>50</sup> "Information independence, objectivism, discipline and lack of manipulation with the contents are the primary objectives of the editorial staff of *El Mundo* and fundamental rights of its readers." ("La independencia informativa, la objetividad, el rigor y la no manipulación de los contenidos son objetivos básicos de la redacción de *El Mundo* y derechos fundamentales de sus lectores *El Mundo*"). (*El Mundo, Estatuto*, art. 2)

<sup>51</sup> Por. N. González Gaitano, *Obiettiva, imparziale, neutrale e veritiera. L'informazione giornalistica tra modello e realtà*, "Problemi dell'informazione", a. XXIX, n. 3, September 2004, pp. 405–413; J. Ramón Muñoz-Torres, *Objetividad y verdad. Sobre el vigor contemporáneo de la falacia objetivista*, "Revista de Filosofía", Universidad Complutense de Madrid, vol. 27, n. 1 (2002), pp. 161–190.

making it impossible to confuse them. News is information about facts and data, while opinions convey thoughts, ideas, beliefs or value judgments on the part of media companies, publishers or journalists”<sup>52</sup> (art. 3). In the integral model of journalism, full separation of facts from opinions is impossible. In fact, this recommendation of the Council of Europe is characterised by an epistemological positivism which does not correspond with the truth, and does not provide journalists with realistic criteria. Points 4 and 5 of the Resolution seem to be full of epistemological chaos: “News broadcasting should be based on truthfulness, ensured by the appropriate means of verification and proof, and impartiality in presentation, description and narration” (art. 4). “Expression of opinions may entail thoughts or comments on general ideas or remarks on news relating to actual events”<sup>53</sup> (art. 5). However, later the author adds: “Although opinions are necessarily subjective and therefore cannot and should not be made subject to the criterion of truthfulness, we must ensure that opinions are expressed honestly and ethically”<sup>54</sup> (art. 5). It may be concluded from the above that such a division of facts and value judgements does not clearly reveal the basis for the “ethical correctness” of opinions, which should be subjective, not subject to verification. The author of the Resolution notes the actual impossibility of separating facts from value judgements: “Opinions taking the form of comments on events or actions relating to individuals or institutions should not attempt to deny or conceal the reality of the facts or data” (art. 6).<sup>55</sup>

The codes of ethics in journalism published by UNESCO and the European Union do not ignore the subject of truth and objectivism in journalism. For instance, the UNESCO Code published in Paris on 20 November 1983 states that “the foremost task of the journalist is to serve the people’s right to true and authentic information through an honest dedication to objective reality whereby facts are reported conscientiously in their proper context, [...] so that the public is provided with adequate material to facilitate the formation of an accurate and comprehensive picture of the world in which the origin, nature and essence of events, processes and state of affairs are understood as objectively as possible”<sup>56</sup> (art. 2).

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<sup>52</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, p. 3, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>53</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, pp. 4–5, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>54</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, pp. 4–5, <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>55</sup> Cf. N. González Gaitano, *Obiettività, imparzialità, neutralità e verità nell'informazione giornalistica*, “Perspectives on communication”, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Facoltà di Comunicazione Istituzionale, 11/2005, pp. 2–4.

<sup>56</sup> *International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism*, 1983, p. 4, <http://ethicnet.uta.fi/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

## 6. Correction of errors and mistakes

The documents which establish the criteria and rules of ethics in journalism emphasise the significance of correction, i.e. one of the media tools thanks to which individual recipients of information can take actions aimed at establishing the truthfulness of facts or compensation in the case when human dignity has been violated.

The ANSA agency and German daily newspapers *Die Tageszeitung* and *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* do not mention this problem in their deontological codes. Is it just a mere oversight or maybe the possibility of an error is not accepted there? It is surprising that there is no mention of the obligation to correct errors and mistakes, even if they have been made in good faith.

– Other analysed codes of newspapers and the statute of Spanish agency *EFE* do make reference to the subject of corrections. There are certain common ideas:

- Corrections need to be understood as an obligation, not a right;
- Any errors or mistakes that might happen in the course of journalist work will be corrected without delay and in a clear and transparent manner;<sup>57</sup>
- The obligation to make corrections is primarily the task of those in charge for a given scope of information;
- Corrections should be consulted with the author of information;<sup>58</sup>
- Corrections should be discussed by the Editorial Committee;<sup>59</sup>
- Proper technical training is needed in order to correct errors and mistakes in a proper way;<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> For instance: “The journal should first of all correct the errors on its pages and it should be done without any delay.” (*“El periódico ha de ser el primero en subsanar los errores cometidos en sus páginas, y hacerlo lo más rápidamente posible y sin tapujos”*). (*El País, Manual de estilo del diario*, art. 1.4), in <http://www.scribd.com/doc/977969/Periodismo-MANUAL-DE-ESTILO-DEL-DIARIO-EL-PAISEspana> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

<sup>58</sup> See: “All the cases of correction, modification or annulment of information shall be subject to prior consultation with its author, if it is possible.” (*“Cualquier corrección, rectificación o anulación de una noticia será consultada previamente con su autor siempre que sea posible”*). (*EFE, Statuto*, art. 55)

<sup>59</sup> For instance: “If *EFE* corrects or deletes information against the author’s opinion, then this journalist has the right to file an appeal to the Editorial Committee which shall investigate this case and issue a report as soon as it is possible.” (*“Si en contra de la opinión del autor de la información, EFE corrige, rectifica o anula una información, el redactor podrá acudir al Consejo de Redacción, que estudiará el caso y emitirá un informe con la máxima urgencia”*). (*Idem*, art. 56)

<sup>60</sup> For instance: “All members of the editorial staff have the right to obtain at the cost of the company the technical training which is necessary for proper performance of work for *El Mundo*” (*“Todos los miembros de la redacción tienen derecho a recibir por cuenta de la empresa la formación tecnológica necesaria para la correcta ejecución de su labor profesional en El Mundo”*) (*El Mundo, Statuto* art. 9, 6).

– If needed, an apology should be published along with the correction.<sup>61</sup>

The EU and UNESCO documents also mention the issue of corrections, e.g. in point 26 of the Resolution 1003 dated 1 July 1993 on the ethics of journalism.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusions

I would like to emphasise that the problems analysed in this article are often related to one another. For instance, the correction of errors or mistakes certainly requires freedom of information and expression, as well as respect for human and moral values, whereas a journalist's responsibility for information and public comment is tightly connected to the obligation of truth and objectivism in journalism. Therefore, it has been difficult for me to draw a line between the individual obligations of journalists. The division has been made mainly for practical reasons, so that the reader could at least generally see the problems discussed in this article.

There is no convergence among the analysed press agencies and newspapers. Only some of them refer to the deepest layer of humanity, i.e. the adequately formed conscience, which constitutes a point of reference for journalists in the performance of their primary obligations. However, it may be concluded that the analysed regulations mostly show that the foundations of proper professional formation are built on a journalist's openness to truth, goodness and beauty. In this way, Christian philosophical anthropology is neglected, and in my opinion, it is an important value in the formation of future journalists and should constitute a common denominator for all regulations.

In my opinion, all the guidelines of daily newspapers, press agencies, and the international documents of UNESCO and the European Union on the profession of journalism should contain a clear and unambiguous reference to the obligations of journalists discussed in this article. Lack of reference to a given journalist obligation in editorial guidelines raises a question whether reference to the basic human and moral values, natural law and responsible presentation of information is really a significant part of the formation of those who inform the public and shape public opinion. I believe that neglecting these aspects of professional formation may challenge or even eliminate the relation between ethics and mission in journalism.

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<sup>61</sup> For instance: *"A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion once recognised must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and – where appropriate – an apology published"*. (*The Guardian*, Statuto, art. 1, 2).

<sup>62</sup> Council of Europe, *Resolution 1003 (1993) on the ethics of journalism*, p. 26 ("At the request of the persons concerned, the news media must correct, automatically and speedily, and with all relevant information provided, any news item or opinion conveyed by them which is false or erroneous. National legislation should provide for appropriate sanctions and, where applicable, compensation"), <http://assembly.coe.int/> [accessed: 16.03.2014].

There is no significant coherence between the regulations of press agencies and newspapers and the ethical codes of UNESCO and the EU. For instance, the obligation to publish corrections of wrong information is not mentioned in the Italian press agency *ANSA* nor the German daily newspapers *Die Tageszeitung*, *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*. When they refer to the subject of respect for human and moral values, *ANSA* and *EFE* do not relate to a perspective that reaches beyond *lex scripta*, and thus are silent about the role of the conscience in a journalist's work. The ethical codes of the EU and UNESCO do not omit any of the analysed basic obligations of journalists.

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**Profesjonalna formacja dziennikarska w przestrzeni europejskiej – analiza obowiązków dziennikarzy na podstawie reguł profesji zawartych w statutach agencji prasowych, statutach dzienników, w kodeksach etycznych UNESCO i Unii Europejskiej**

(Streszczenie)

Artykuł analizuje reguły zawodu dziennikarza zawarte w regulacjach agencji prasowych, dzienników oraz w kodeksach etycznych UNESCO i Unii Europejskiej. Przedmiotem badań stały się wybrane, reprezentatywne agencje oraz dzienniki następujących krajów europejskich: Włoch, Hiszpanii, Niemiec i Wielkiej Brytanii. Artykuł nie jest jedynie zwykłym opisem dokumentów regulacji zawodowych, ale raczej „dyskusją” wypracowaną w oparciu o te źródła *normatywne*, które umożliwiają wyciągnięcie stosownych wniosków na temat podstawowych obowiązków profesji dziennikarskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: mass media, statuty dziennikarskie, deontologia dziennikarska, wolność informacji, dzienniki, agencje prasowe.