

Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public, at its Assembly Meeting dated 15 December 2022 adopted the following

## **FAKTOGRAF - ASSOCIATION FOR THE INFORMED PUBLIC CODE OF ETHICS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public was founded for the purpose of promoting, developing, and advancing professional and ethical journalism in the public space, fact-checking and combating disinformation in the public space, verifying claims made in the public space by digital media and social media users, ensuring the public's rights to information about issues from the spheres of politics, culture, social science, civil society, independence of the journalist profession.

Faktograf – Association for the Informed Public adopts this Code of Ethics for the purpose of achieving the association's goals in line with the principles of good management and work transparency, as well as professional journalism ethical standards and audience relationship. This Code of Ethics also includes clearly defined advocacy interests of the association that contribute to the realisation of the association's founding goals.

The Code of Ethics in its contents adopts the principles, guidelines and obligations therein and is based on:

- International Fact-Checking Network's code of principles (<https://ifcncodeofprinciples.poynter.org/>)

- European Code of Standards for Independent Fact-Checking Organisations of the European Fact-Checking Standards Network (<https://eufactcheckingproject.com/>)
- Journalism Trust Initiative (<https://www.journalismtrustinitiative.org/>)
- Croatian Journalists Code of Honour (<https://www.hnd.hr/kodeks-casti-hrvatskih-novinara1>)
- EU Transparency Register Code of Conduct ([https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=CODE\\_OF\\_CONDUCT](https://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/staticPage/displayStaticPage.do?locale=en&reference=CODE_OF_CONDUCT)).

This Code of Ethics is adopted by the Association General Assembly with the approval of the Publishing Council.

All Association workers are obliged to withhold the Code of Ethics regardless of whether they are employed at organisational or journalism positions. This Code of Ethics presents the basis for the editorial guidelines of the Faktograf.hr internet portal.

The common name for the association and the internet portal in the text of this Code of Ethics shall be Faktograf. Should certain provisions refer specifically to the association and/or to the portal, i.e. specifically to the journalists, this will be emphasized in the text.

## **VALUES AND WORKING PRINCIPLES**

**MISSION:** Faktograf is a non-profit media organisation for the development of good journalism, critical thinking and informed public. Good journalism places things in context, emphasises what is relevant and elaborates what is unclear.

**VISION:** To live in a society that shares a factual reality – an informed society is a resilient society.

Faktograf.hr wants to be a relevant non-profit media space where political life in Croatia will be covered in the manner of professional and ethical journalism, devoid of the influence of particular interests. In its work, Faktograf is focused on topics of public interest.

Faktograf's work is based on the principles of journalistic ethics, good management, self-regulation and an open relationship with the audience.

By the principles of ethical journalistic work, we understand the following basic principles:

- Accuracy and basis on facts and evidence
- Independence from political, corporative, or other centres of power
- Unbiasedness in reporting and editing



- Honest and just approach with the understanding and acknowledging the influence of journalism on the lives of others
- Work transparency with the goal of achieving responsibility and building public trust.

Good management means the principle of complete transparency in relation to the management structure of the organization, which is elected by the association's General Assembly at regular biannual election sessions and ensuring editorial independence in accordance with the medium's Statute or editorial acts. All information about the management of the organization and the editorial and newsroom structure is published via the association's website and within the Faktograf.hr internet portal.

Aware of the fact that building public trust requires active engagement, Faktograf continuously reflects on internal organizational and editorial work and procedures through internal processes and improves them with self-regulatory acts for the purpose of strengthening the achievement of the organization's goals and strengthening the ethical principles of work. This includes solving complaints and comments from the public, to which we regularly respond, and we particularly cherish the section of the portal called *Pitali ste*, through which we provide our audience with the opportunity to comment and suggest topics and thus participate in the editorial process. The Faktograf.hr internet portal will conduct a regular internal review of published corrections in order to determine the need for methodological and procedural changes in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes in the future.

## **CORRECTION POLICY**

The Faktograf.hr internet portal wishes to reduce mistakes in its work to a minimum. However, even with all precautions, mistakes can happen, and it then corrects them immediately upon learning of such mistakes, i.e. as soon as possible. The public can write to the e-mail address [info@faktograf.hr](mailto:info@faktograf.hr) with a request for correction or amendment of a published article. The Faktograf.hr internet portal responds to all e-mails containing requests for correction or amendment, which are explained and supported by relevant sources, as soon as possible. The Editor-in-Chief evaluates the requests for corrections or amendments and informs the journalist who worked on the article about their decision.

Depending on the type of mistake and other cases that require changing the published text, the corrections and amendments are made in the following manner:

### **1 Factual mistakes**

In the rare cases when it transpires that the originally published text contained factual mistakes, the Faktograf.hr internet portal will swiftly correct the mistakes within the text. The information regarding the corrections, as well as an explanation of the circumstances leading to the mistake will be added to the text, in order to provide the readers with a transparent

insight into which information was originally incorrect. The information regarding the correction of factual mistakes in the original text is published at the top of the text, in *italics*.

## **2 Typographic, grammatical, or orthographical mistakes**

When correcting mistakes such as a typo, or other types of orthographical or grammatical mistakes, there is no note added to the text stating the subsequent change.

## **3 Amendments**

Sometimes, texts are amended with information considered to be relevant for the article, with the purpose of informing the readers about them. Such practice is used, for example, in relation to answers to an inquiry which were obtained only after the publication of the article or in relation to information that, for other reasons, was not available or known at the moment of publishing the article. The information on the amendment which does not influence the conclusion of the original fact-check, i.e. the article, is published at the bottom of the text, in *italics*.

Should information appear subsequently, which would significantly influence the conclusion of the original fact-check, i.e. the article on whether a claim was true or untrue, such amendments are published at the top of the text, also in *italics*.

## **4 Subsequent clarifications**

Sometimes, changes are added to the text with the purpose of clarifying the article's conclusions more precisely. These can, for example, be changes to an insufficiently clear title or sentence construction. The information of such clarifications of claims from the original article is published at the bottom of the article, in *italics*.

In exceptional cases, if the original content in which the mistake was made can no longer be edited, the Faktograf.hr internet portal will transmit the correction in the same format and in the same place as the original, so that as many readers of the original as possible can see the error and the corrected version.

The public has the opportunity to submit a complaint related to Faktograf's work if they believe that the Faktograf.hr internet portal in its work violates the provisions of the IFCN Code of Principles, by means of a form whose link is published on the Faktograf.hr internet portal. The public also has the option of submitting a complaint to the EFCSN, whose link to the complaint submission form is also publicly published on the Faktograf.hr internet portal.

## **FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the principles of good management and transparency, Faktograf publicly publishes all annual financial statements, which include the disclosure of the sources of income, goods and services it receives from external sources, as well as the disclosure and explanation of the purpose or nature of the work for which the funds were obtained. The



Faktograf.hr internet portal does not publish covert, i.e. the so-called native advertising on the portal.

The editorial independence of the Faktograf.hr internet portal is guaranteed by the medium's Statute.

A conflict of interest occurs when the private interests of any person working for Faktograf come into conflict with the principles of ethical journalism, editorial integrity, and the reputation and interests of the organization.

No worker, whether working organizational or editorial jobs, as well as external collaborators, may use their position in Faktograf to gain personal benefit for themselves or their family members and related business entities. A family member means a spouse or common-law partner, a life partner and an informal life partner, their blood relatives in the direct line, brothers and sisters, and the adopter or adoptee of the obligee.

Any receipt of financial and/or material gifts and services from persons or legal entities, which are the subject of work or in a business relationship with Faktograf, must be publicly declared, whereby workers are prohibited from accepting personal gifts or services with benefits that are more than common decency. If a worker or external associate has worked for persons or business entities in the previous 2 years and received a gift or service from them, he/she may not participate in research, writing, editing or decision-making related to the persons or business entities in question, and if this cannot be avoided for justified organizational and editorial reasons, it is necessary to adequately publicly declare this connection. In cases of particularly pronounced public interest, it is necessary to declare all potential conflicts of interest of the worker and external collaborators, regardless of whether or not they participate in research, writing, editing or decision-making related to persons or business entities that are the subject of the work or in a business relationship with Faktograf.

In processing topics, it is necessary to declare the relevant interests of the sources used, in cases when the reader could reasonably conclude that these interests could affect the accuracy of the statements and evidence provided. The journalist should not write about or cite members of their family in an article, even if they are experts in a given area. Should an exception be made for any reason, the stated family connection should be clear.

No worker should support and/or participate in the advertising of commercial products except with the express permission of the Executive Director and/or Editor-in-Chief, and only if it is a socially beneficial campaign.

A worker may work for third parties only with the written permission of the Editor-in-Chief or the Executive Director on tasks that fall within the ASSOCIATION's business or may harm the ASSOCIATION's reputation and interests. The worker shall inform the Executive Director and/or Editor-in-Chief about volunteer work and interests that could be, actually or perceived, in conflict with their professional work or harm the reputation of the organization.

Faktograf will establish an internal register of potential or actual conflicts of interest and connections with politically exposed persons<sup>1</sup> for all workers, which will include ownership in business entities and ownership of shares, both by the worker personally and by their family members, membership in civil society organizations and the list of employers going back two years.

If the Worker is not sure whether he/she is in a business relationship or enters into a business relationship and/or receives a gift or service that could be perceived as a conflict of interest, it is recommended to consult with the Executive Director and/or Editor-in-Chief.

## **ADVOCACY TRANSPARENCY**

In its advocacy work, Faktograf is guided by the organization's goals and available evidence, and advocates only those topics that are relevant to the organization's mission. Faktograf has advocacy interests in the field of public policies related to misinformation and disinformation, transparency and availability of data and knowledge, good governance and democracy, and a stimulating environment for sustainable journalism in the public interest. Faktograf's advocacy activities respect the principles of independence, impartiality, transparency and consistency in presented positions in formal and informal environments.

Faktograf will publicly publish all its advocacy positions, as well as the analytical basis behind the advocacy positions, within a reasonable period of time. If Faktograf advocates positions that can directly affect the market or other position of organizations and business entities with which it has business cooperation, it will publicly report on this business cooperation as part of its advocacy activities.

Faktograf fully complies with the requirements of the Transparency Register of the European Union. Faktograf will update any possible changes related to advocacy interests within its data on the Transparency Register platform and publicly through its websites.

In its advocacy work, Faktograf will address state institutions, elected officials and other relevant actors. For the purpose of advocacy, Faktograf will participate in working groups and commissions for the adoption of public policies. Faktograf publishes information about formal meetings with political actors or elected officials on public policy issues and participation in working groups or commissions through the Association's Annual Report.

Only authorized persons of the association and other authorized persons participate in Faktograf's advocacy activities. The professional background and past relevant engagements of those representing Faktograf in advocacy activities will be publicly available on the website.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the definition of politically exposed persons from the Anti Money-Laundering and Terrorism Financing Act (OG 108/17, 39/19).



## **POLITICAL UNBIASEDNESS AND NEUTRALITY**

Faktograf is politically independent as an organisation and as a medium. Faktograf does not advocate voting for any political party, coalition, or candidate in elections for all levels of government and does not enter into agreements or partnerships with political parties or foundations connected to them.

Through its work, the Faktograf.hr internet portal ensures impartiality and multiple sources of information and does not unjustifiably focus on individual political parties and candidates on the political spectrum. The Faktograf.hr internet portal will directly address, in published articles and/or in other ways, any reasonable conflict of interest or political bias, including those of cited experts or organizations.

Faktograf workers may not hold positions in political parties or hold positions at any level of government. Journalists of the Faktograf.hr internet portal who are active in civil society organizations and civic initiatives, with the exception of professional journalistic organizations, are obliged to inform the Executive Director and/or Editor-in-Chief about this and to exempt themselves from reporting about them. All workers in their private civic activities shall take care that their possible statements are not perceived as the position of Faktograf and do not damage the organization's reputation as being impartial and independent. In the event that the worker does not take appropriate measures in this regard in public appearances, he/she will be considered to have violated the Code of Ethics and the worker will be treated in accordance with the Labour Regulation.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND GENDER EQUALITY**

In its activities, Faktograf respects, protects and promotes fundamental human rights and freedoms. When reporting, the Faktograf.hr internet portal focuses special attention and responsibility on the rights, needs, problems and demands of minority social groups, and mentions information on race, skin colour, religious or national affiliation, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, marital status, any physical or mental trait or disease, lifestyle, social position, property status or level of education in the text only if it is extremely relevant in the context in which it is presented. In its texts, Faktograf does not use stereotypes, pejorative expressions, humiliating portrayals, or any other form of direct or indirect encouragement or support of discrimination.

Faktograf's policy of prohibiting discrimination against workers is defined in the Labour Regulation, and any discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment of workers constitutes a serious violation of the obligations from the employment relationship and is the basis for extraordinary dismissal.

## PRIVACY AND SAFETY PROTECTION

The Faktograf.hr internet portal protects the individual's rights to privacy and security, and in evaluating the disclosure of private data, it is guided solely by the public interest.

The Faktograf.hr internet portal places special attention to the protection of minors and other socially vulnerable groups. Journalists will inform each legal or natural person who is the source of the information of the way in which that information will be published and the context in which it will be published, and they must not distort the meaning of statements and interviews, either directly or by taking it out of context.

The Faktograf.hr internet portal publishes all the sources it uses for its articles, and exceptionally, if there is an assessment that the publication would put the source in danger, it provides anonymity, which will be clearly explained in the text. The anonymity of the source is proposed by the journalist and approved by the Editor-in-Chief. When adding illustrations and photographs to the article, care will be taken to protect the privacy and safety of the subjects of the articles, especially if they are victims of violence and other criminal acts.

## FINAL PROVISIONS

In all cases that are not regulated by this Code of Ethics, the principles, and guidelines of codes which Faktograf is a signatory of, which are stated in the introduction of this Code of Ethics, apply.

The issue of the violation of the provisions of the Code of Ethics by Faktograf workers is regulated by the Labour Regulation.

This Code of Ethics will be published on Faktograf's website.

*In Zagreb, 15 December 2022*

Faktograf's Publishing Council:

Gabrijela Galić, Representative of the journalists

Ana Brakus, Executive director



Ana Brakus  
Executive director

