

RULES FOR THE ELECTION AND WORK OF THE COUNCIL OF HONOR OF AJM

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

These Rules regulate the functioning of the Council of Honor of the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (hereinafter referred to as the Council of Honor) and the procedures for performing the following competences:

- Determination of unethical conduct by an AJM member or a potential member;
- Monitoring compliance with the principles and provisions of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia;
- Reviewing cases and initiating proceedings involving AJM members and issuing decisions on such proceedings;
- Independent public reactions and expressing value judgments in cases of violations of the principles and provisions of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia;
- Initiating proceedings for violations of the Code of Ethics and/or proposing discussions within other AJM bodies regarding violations in public communication;
- Proposing initiatives to the AJM Management Board for changes to laws or regulations that hinder or violate the principles of the Code of Journalists of Macedonia;
- Engaging external experts and consultants for operational needs, as well as utilizing the AJM Secretariat for preparing decisions.

Article 2

The Council of Honor comprises five members elected by AJM members during an electoral assembly. The election process is governed by the Rules of Procedure of the AJM Assembly.

Eligibility for Council membership requires compliance with the following nomination principles:

- Self-nomination supported by five regular members; or
- Nomination proposed by at least five regular members.

Nominations must be submitted in writing or electronically no later than three days before the electoral assembly. Within 15 days of its election, the Council must hold a constitutive session to elect its President.

The Council is led by a President elected by its members. Sessions are convened by the President through invitations sent via the AJM Secretariat. Sessions are typically held at the AJM headquarters but may also take place outside the headquarters or online if urgent.

Council members must be regular AJM members with at least five years of professional experience, up-to-date with their AJM obligations, and possess relevant expertise and understanding of contemporary journalistic standards. Council members cannot be held personally liable for

opinions expressed within their duties, except in cases of criminal conduct as defined by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Macedonia.

In the event of prolonged absence (over three months) or unjustified non-participation, the President may notify the AJM Management Board to appoint a new member temporarily or permanently from the candidates listed during the last election.

Article 3

Proceedings before the Council of Honor may be initiated by the AJM Assembly, the President of the Assembly, the Management Board, any Management Board member, at least ten AJM members, or any Council of Honor member. The Council decides with a simple majority if at least three members are present.

Sessions are not public, but implicated members may attend. Minutes are kept by an AJM Secretariat staff member. Voting is public unless a majority of members propose and agree to secret voting, following procedures identical to those of the AJM Assembly.

If quorum requirements are unmet, electronic voting via email may be conducted as an exception. The President decides whether to proceed with electronic voting or reconvene the session.

Article 4

The Council's functions are:

- Decisive;
- Advisory.

Article 5

The Council submits its decisions to the Management Board in the form of recommendations. Accepted recommendations are binding for the involved parties.

Article 6

Complaints submitted to the Council aim to:

- Determine unethical conduct by an AJM member;
- Provide opinions on adherence to ethical standards.

Article 7

During a preliminary session, the Council decides whether to initiate proceedings based on complaints received. If formal and factual grounds are established, proceedings are initiated within seven days.

II. REQUEST FOR INITIATING PROCEEDINGS

Article 8

Proceedings are initiated upon requests submitted by the entities specified in Article 3. Such requests must include reasons and supporting evidence for initiating proceedings.

Article 9

Requests are recorded and registered as cases by the Council of Honor.

III. PRELIMINARY PROCEEDINGS**Article 10**

The Council may forward the request to the implicated member, who has eight days to respond in writing or verbally, providing evidence refuting the allegations.

Article 11

The Council gathers additional data and evidence relevant to the case.

Article 12

Based on the collected data, the Council decides whether to proceed with evaluating the member's conduct.

IV. PROCEEDINGS**Article 13**

If proceedings are initiated, the Council schedules a session to discuss the case. Decisions require a majority of at least three members present.

Article 14

The decision is communicated to the complainant and the member. The Council forwards the case with all documentation to the Management Board.

Article 15

The Council may temporarily suspend the implicated member's AJM membership during proceedings.

Article 16

The complainant and the member are invited to the hearing. If absent without justification, the session proceeds in their absence.

Article 17

Evidence from all parties is presented during the hearing, allowing the implicated member to respond.

Article 18

Minutes of the hearing include detailed records of statements, evidence, and session outcomes. Participants and the minutes' keeper must sign the record.

Article 19

Within five days of concluding the hearing, the Council submits its report to the Management Board, recommending one of the following:

- Case dismissal;

- A formal warning for unethical conduct;
 - Membership exclusion.
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V. DECISION-MAKING

Article 21

The Management Board, based on the Council's report, may:

- Dismiss the case;
- Issue a warning;
- Exclude the member from AJM.
Repeated offenses within a year may result in public reprimand or exclusion for at least two years.

Article 22

Decisions for exclusion are formalized and signed by the Management Board President or authorized member.

Article 23

Decisions are issued in writing within three days and delivered to all parties.

Article 24

Excluded members may appeal to the AJM President within eight days.

VI. PUBLIC REACTIONS

Article 25

The Council may independently issue public statements on violations of journalistic principles. Statements must align with AJM's reputation and ethical standards.

VII. AMENDMENTS

Article 26

Amendments to these Rules follow the same procedure as their adoption.

Article 27

These Rules come into effect on the date of adoption.

Skopje, November 30, 2024

Mladen Chadikovski, President