

UPF Bratislava, Slovakia's Engaging lecture on political journalism

Barbara Grabner

June 19, 2023



On Monday, UPF Slovakia held the last event before the summer holidays. The guest enjoyed the pleasantly cool hall of our Peace Embassy in contrast to the heat on the street. Of course, a drink was immediately offered for refreshment.

Mgr. Barbara Grabner has worked as a journalist for some 30 years. Hence her lecture provided deep insights into the complicated relationship between politics and the media: 'Ethical journalism demands that journalists must not go after an ideological enemy or refuse to report a balanced report, pro and con. The reality is different - unfair reporting is common. For example, the media use labeling as a method of discrediting. When a politician or expert is labeled 'conservative' or 'right-wing,' it means: watch out!

She showed a copy of The Washington Times and quoted former CBS anchor Bernard Goldberg who mentioned ten times The Washington Times as an example of fair and balanced reporting.

Journalists inform and educate the public on political issues and act as watchdogs: They might force the government to stop activities that harm society, for example, by investigating and reporting on the harmful practices of a company or an authority. In the 1970s, journalists increasingly resorted to campaigning instead of mere reporting. "Journalists nowadays are like attack dogs, primarily hunting conservative politicians or playing the role of extra-parliamentary opposition. But who controls the controller? What qualifications and virtues must journalists have when they have such power?" she asked.

Ultimately, the large audience got precious advice: 'Learn about the philosophy of a journalist, editor, or publisher! Get information from different sources, and read more educational magazines and factual books!' An attending journalist from a private radio channel got so inspired that he plans to produce a radio interview and podcast based on the lecture.