Orav: We are proud to fund independent, quality journalism.

“We will continue to closely monitor Montenegro’s efforts in this area, which I very much hope will result in a better assessment in our next annual report in 2019,” said the EU Ambassador to Montenegro, Aivo Orav, at the presentation of six new projects within the Media Professionalism Programme.

Orav said that World Press Freedom Day serves to highlight how the EU is supporting the Montenegrin media in strengthening its professionalism and independence. He reminded that the EU had already financed four grants within this programme, with one of the grants leading to the creation of an investigative desk in RTCG and the relaunch of the award-winning TV show “Mehanizam”.

“All EU-funded grants under the Media Professionalism Programme are meant to make the media more independent and professional. I have good trust in the professionalism of all implementing partners we have assembled here today and believe that the funds we provide are being used in a responsible way,” said Orav.

He added that the EU is proud to fund independent quality journalism.

Olivera Nikolić, from the Montenegrin Media Institute, said that she was particularly pleased that the topic of ethics in the media has been opened up.

“Dealing with ethics seems more challenging and more important than ever because ethics is in crisis. We believe that ethics and respect for ethical standards are the key to the recovery and the future of the media,” Nikolic said.

Dejan Milovac from MANS pointed out that there is no investigative journalism without a free and objective media.

“Our goal is to establish a service hub in ​​Montenegro that would serve both investigative journalists and journalists who report on current affairs. There, journalists would be able to get information about people and companies that are the subject of their research, not only in Montenegro, but also abroad,” Milovac explained.

Milka Tadić Mijović, from the Montenegrin Centre for Investigative Reporting (CIN-CG), said that media freedom is still a problematic issue in Montenegro and that there are still many challenges ahead for the media scene.

“The stories that we will be investigating concerning Chapter 27 of negotiations will not be carried out only by us and our partners, but by Montenegrin journalists from various media companies. We have already held a training session with interested journalists and they will have foreign mentors for all the topics they will be investigating, because these stories are not meant only for the Montenegrin public, but for a wider audience,” said Tadić Mijović.

The editor of Vijesti’s web portal, Srdan Kosović, said that their project will be multidimensional and developed on several levels, and that he is glad to hear that together with other projects they will have a synergistic effect on the media scene.

“I am glad to hear that our investigative journalists will be able to use the MANS database and research material related to media ethics from the Media Institute,” said Kosovic.

Kristina Cetkovic from the NGO 35mm said she was glad that the EU Delegation had recognised the media as a pillar of democracy and had decided to support them.

“We want to promote media products that are in line with the code of ethics, and raise the awareness of the public that reporting can be done in accordance with the best ethical standards. We want all the news that the other media outlets take from MINA agency, the project implementer, to be in line with the highest standards and thus improve the quality of the entire media scene,” said Cetkovic.

The representative of the Centre for Civic Education (CGO), Damir Nikocevic, said that the goal of their project is to improve the professional capacities of journalists, especially the public broadcaster, RTCG. He pointed out that the CGO was not influencing, nor would influence any editorial decisions in the public broadcaster, and that the CGO’s role is exclusively related to project coordination and organisation.

The director of TVCG, Vladan Micunovic, said that the most important aspect is the quality of the stories and that he is certain that any analysis would show that RTCG is working in the best interests of citizens. He pointed out that, due to certain public speculations, an annex has been added to the agreement between the CGO and RTCG, which emphasises that the CGO provides only technical support in the project.