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Report from the 19ᵗʰ Media Ethics Conference "Safe Media — Safety in Media"

On May 14–15, 2025, the 19th Media Ethics Conference took place in Krakow, organized by the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Pontifical University of John Paul II. As a longstanding academic initiative, the conference is dedicated to exploring ethical questions in media and social communication. This report aims to provide a concise account of the event, to analyze selected contributions, and to summarize the principal discussions that unfolded during the proceedings.

The 2025 edition was held under the theme *Safe Media — Safety in the Media*. The event provided a platform for exchanging ideas on the ethical aspects of media and communication, while promoting responsible approaches to media creation and reception. The main topics included security threats, such as disinformation, the challenges of artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. The conference fostered interdisciplinary debates on matters of great social importance, encouraging the search for new solutions.

The organizers of the event included: the chair, Rev. Prof. Sławomir Soczyński, PhD, DLitt; the vice-chair, Prof. Olga Nadskakuła-Kaczmarczyk, DLitt; and the secretariat — Dr. Urszula Dyrcz and Dr. Joanna Urbaś. Also involved were Prof. Katarzyna Drąg, DLitt; Rev. Prof. Dariusz Raś, PhD, DLitt; Dr. Aleksandra Urzędowska; Rev. Dr. Paweł Kaszuba; Dr. Marta Woźniak; Joanna Dukalska-Hermut, MA; and the Doctoral and Student Conference Implementation Team led by Aleksandra Pisarska, MA, Karolina Zając, MA, and Faustyna Zaleśna, MA.

The event was held under the honorary patronage of His Magnificence Rev. Prof. Robert Tyrała, PhD, DLitt — Rector of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow — and under the scholarly patronage of the Polish Communication Association. Partners of the conference included St. Mary's Basilica in Krakow, the St. Jadwiga Foundation for the Pontifical University of John Paul II, and the Main Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow. Media partners were the Academic Media Center, JP2TV, Radio Bonus, Stacja7, TVP3 Kraków, Radio Kraków, and Vita Academica.

More than 70 participants from academic centres across Poland — including Kraków, Warsaw, Wrocław, Poznań, Gdańsk, Katowice, and Lublin — presented their contributions. The majority of speakers were affiliated with the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków, reflecting the Faculty of Communication Sciences' substantial involvement in organising the event. Participants represented not only academia but also the media and technology sectors, which ensured an interdisciplinary perspective.

Students actively contributed to the conference, delivering over a dozen presentations. This illustrated the commitment of young researchers to media studies while also providing them with an opportunity to develop their academic skills. Senior scholars particularly well received the student panel.

Opening and panel discussion

The ceremonial opening of the 19th Media Ethics Conference took place on May 14 at 9:30 a.m. in the Main Library of the Pontifical University of John Paul II, at 10 Bobrzyńskiego Street in Krakow. Rev. Prof. Robert Tyrała underscored the significance of responsible media in fostering a secure society. Welcoming the participants, the conference chair, Rev. Prof. Sławomir Soczyński, highlighted the urgent need for deeper reflection on the challenges of information security. The vice-chair, Prof. Olga Nadskakuła-Kaczmarczyk, emphasised the essential role of media in building social trust.

A highlight of this year's edition was the awarding of the medal Distinguished for the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow to Prof. Iwona Hofman. The laudatory address stressed her contribution to developing the academic community of media scholars and the longstanding cooperation between the Faculty of Communication Sciences at the Pontifical University of John Paul II and the Institute of Communication and Media Studies at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. In her response, Prof. Hofman remarked: "It is a deeply meaningful experience to create a community. And it is equally important that kindness guides us toward our goals. This medal is a testament to the respect with which we approach our joint endeavours."

Immediately after the opening, a panel discussion was held, chaired by Prof. Olga Nadskakuła-Kaczmarczyk. Panellists included Prof. Iwona Hofman, PhD, DLitt — President of the Polish Communication Association; Przemysław Häuser-Schönaich — Ambassador of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta to the islands of Antigua and Barbuda; and Jakub Śliż — President of the Board of the Pravda Association. Prof. Hofman highlighted responsibility for words as a fundamental ethical challenge in the media. Häuser-Schönaich discussed the global context of information, while Śliż provided practical perspectives on media security.

Structure of the conference and media coverage

The conference's two-day program combined ceremonial sessions, a plenary meeting, and a series of thematic panels. The plenary session, entitled "Contexts of (In)Security in the Media," introduced the main research questions and set the agenda for the debates. Throughout the conference, participants engaged in panels organized around diverse perspectives on media safety. Altogether, more than a dozen scholarly papers and interventions were presented, demonstrating the complexity of the issues discussed.

The event was widely documented and covered by the media. It was broadcast live by JP2TV, with selected interviews later published on institutional platforms. Information about the conference appeared on the official website of the Pontifical University of John Paul II, as well as on academic portals and professional media outlets focused on communication and journalism. This ensured that the debates reached a broad audience both within and outside the academic community.

Main themes and discussion panels

The thematic sessions reflected the multi-dimensional character of media safety. Key areas of discussion included:

- Advertising, PR, and ethical communication — analysis of risks of manipulation in persuasive communication and the need for transparency and professional standards.
- Safety of journalists and protection of sources — attention to the vulnerability of journalists, especially correspondents in conflict zones, and the importance of protecting confidentiality.
- Cybersecurity and privacy — technological aspects of securing media infrastructures and personal data, with emphasis on developing editorial safeguards against cyberattacks.
- Social media and public trust — reflections on the role of platforms in spreading disinformation, hate speech, and polarization; calls for resilience and trust-building.
- New technologies and AI — consideration of the benefits of artificial intelligence and blockchain for moderation and verification, alongside warnings about deepfakes and manipulation.

- Legal frameworks and freedom of expression — discussions on balancing safety measures with free speech, emphasizing the importance of regulatory dialogue with the media sector.
- Disinformation and propaganda — analysis of mechanisms of disinformation and strategies of resilience, including fact-checking, algorithmic tools, and civic education.
- Media education — focus on children and youth, highlighting media literacy as a safeguard against manipulation, online violence, and addiction.
- Media in times of crisis — examination of journalistic responsibilities during pandemics, wars, and natural disasters, stressing effective risk communication and institutional cooperation.

Across these sessions, recurring themes included the centrality of truth and reliability, the ethical responsibility of media professionals, and the importance of education in equipping society to respond critically to information dynamics.

Significance for the academic and media communities

The Media Ethics Conference reaffirmed its role as a forum for interdisciplinary dialogue, integrating scholars, practitioners, students, and institutional actors. For the academic community, it provided an opportunity to confront theoretical approaches with professional experience, opening avenues for further research collaboration. The involvement of young researchers and students highlighted the event's formative dimension.

For the media sector, the conference created space for professional self-reflection. Discussions sharpened the awareness of ethical obligations and underlined the importance of responsibility, particularly in times of crisis or technological disruption. The emphasis on accountability, education, and resilience reflected a consensus that addressing the challenges of safe media requires cooperation across communities.

Conclusion

The 19th Media Ethics Conference *Safe Media — Safety in the Media* demonstrated the urgent need for ongoing interdisciplinary debate on how to safeguard information ecosystems. It underscored that safe media are not only a technical or legal issue but also a civic responsibility, rooted in ethics, education, and cooperation. The event thus contributed to building a culture of responsible communication, indispensable for the functioning of a democratic and well-informed society.