

UPF Prague, Czechia's Rhetoric and a Crisis Communication with the Media

Juraj Lajda
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Prague, Czechia - A longtime Czech journalist took the guests at a UPF gathering behind the scenes of the world of media.

"Rhetoric and a Crisis Communication with the Media" was the title of a presentation given by Martin Severa at the UPF Peace Embassy on May 23, 2023.



Mr. Severa is a journalist, writer and TV moderator. Several years ago he was a moderator at TV NOVA, the biggest commercial TV station in the country. Now, among other activities, he teaches media communication.

The speaker described the work of a journalist and the world of media - which is different from our usual world.

We need to understand how a journalist thinks, he said.

"The information or some piece of news is a commodity with which you trade," he said, shocking the audience. The media want to get more listeners or readers in order to have good ratings and earn more money through advertisements.



Ninety percent of the news comes from negative stories or reports. He reminded the audience of the motto: "Good news is no news."

Mr. Severa named five areas that are interesting for a journalist:

1. Conflict
2. Difficulties
3. Arrogance
4. Scandal
5. Individualism

People are mostly interested in one of these categories, he said.

There is no objective truth or half-truth in media, he said, but it is the interpretation of reality that counts. If we want to influence society, we need to focus on media and on presenting our message in a way that the audience receives it as we want them to.

Many politicians do not want to be advised by a media expert and think they can do it better. Often the result is that they appear less than persuasive.

If there is an interview, it is not a casual talk or dialogue. The journalist wants to find out the weak point of the person who is being interviewed. If we are interviewed, it is difficult to avoid some questions we do not want to answer.

It is important to keep our temper in front of a journalist. Never be angry, nervous or confused.

On the other hand, if the person is skilled, he/she can dominate the journalist. The speaker mentioned so-called "hooking," in which the politician enforces a question he wants to answer.

It is not good to speak on behalf of somebody else and to refuse hypothetical situations. Better to say: When the situation comes, I will tell you. ...

It is recommended to speak briefly, only as much as is necessary. Sometimes it is good just to keep silent.

The lecture was very vivid and dynamic, with many examples from real-life situations in the realm of media. The more than 20 participants asked many questions and enjoyed the authentic lecture concerning the media.