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**PRESS CONFERENCE GUIDELINES
2018**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS ALBANIA

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Introduction

Press conferences are objective and reflect solely statistical findings. INSTAT organizes press conferences for indicators which are relevant to all media and when is judged appropriate to publicize statistical events or information. Regularly INSTAT, shall organize 6 press conferences in a year including 4 quarterly GDP publications, and 2 other press conferences for new publications, or other important events with impact on the industry and population at large.

Press conferences like press releases are exempt from comments on political statements. It is clearly defined in the Law “On Official Statistics” that statistical information follows fundamental principles of statistics.

The events organized for stakeholders, particularly for representatives of media, as a rule, form the basis of media relations. This experience is widely used in Albania, because of the large number of media wishing to have information and access to statistical data and interpretation.

Holding a press conference is a simple, effective way to communicate key messages to the media. Holding a successful press conference can generate news about the topic selected to communicate and raise awareness to the public. This type of event is especially popular in Albania. It should be noted that the press conference ought to be organized only when the topic would have public resonance. Once it is decided that the press conference should be held, it requires rather serious preparatory work. The efficiency of the press conference depends mostly on the organization and the chosen topic.

How to Organize a Press Conference

Several days before the press conference, the journalists should be surely informed through the special invitations or a press release. The last one is more applicable to the INSTAT case. The press release in addition to the standard text should have also the agenda, which would enable journalists to arrange their day, if they decided to participate.

It is necessary to prepare a special press kit for the press conference that will contain the conference's speakers name, surname, position, agenda, press release, brief description of the conference reason and other materials, if necessary. Also, some pictures could be provided in advance that could help journalists to prepare the material. Before the press conference, it would be desirable to call media or individual journalists and ask about their possible participation in the press conference. The preparatory work of the press conference also includes the list of invitees, if there are such.

Key steps to organizing a Press Conference

- Define the message
- Schedule the date and time
- Pick the site
- Select and train internal participants
- Contact the media
- Follow up with the media
- Develop a press kit

Press Conference Process

The best time to organize a press conference is considered from Tuesday to Thursday, between 10:00 – 13:00 o'clock. Mondays most media are occupied with participating in Parliamentary Commissions etc., while other media representatives prefer to deal with summarizing the previous week and weekend.

Press conferences organized on Fridays are not preferred, as they may appear in the press on Saturday, when the newspapers are mostly publishing culture topics, but it regards only printed outlets. In regards to the time, mid-day is preferred, when the electronic media journalists can refer to the topic several times during the day and printed media representatives will have time to prepare materials for the next day.

The press conference itself should not exceed one hour, except in the cases when the topic is extremely actual or of public interest.

When entering the conference hall the participants should be registered (in papers prepared in advance, which include the journalist's name and surname, media, contact information, etc.). The aim is to indefinitely know how many journalists have attended a press conference, whether they were the same journalists who attended the previous press conference, how many participants have reacted, etc. The participants' sheet of signature is also an excellent opportunity to create the database of the journalists.

It should be remembered that journalists tend to ask provocative questions and in order to avoid them, the answers to the questions should be short and neatly. The longer the answer, the higher the probability of more provocative questions that may arise.

If the number of participating journalists is high, it should be guided by the "one question to each media" principle. If the number of journalists is small, INSTAT representatives, which lead the conference, have to give opportunity to ask questions. And, if there are no questions at all, (it sometimes happens) it still doesn't mean that journalists are not interested in this topic. There are cases when the journalists need certain time to perceive well the topic. In this case, press conference main speaker has a serious task. He/she can ask the questions and get their answers, as well as answer the questions addressed to participants.

Before the press conference, interviews should not be given to any journalist. The purpose is to make the topic of the press conference more interesting. Besides, during a press conference it could be said more than during the preceding interview. For organization of a successful press conference, as well as to make appropriate arrangements minimum three participants from INSTAT should be present: public relations, IT and administration representatives. The purpose is to help to solve different issues, provide IT support, photography, recording, translation and other organizational and technical issues. It is impossible that one person could chair the conference, organize exclusive interviews, as well as to follow the technical part of the press conference.

After the Press Conference

Just, after the Press Conference, it would be desirable that INSTAT public relations representative should develop a post-press release with photos, references, etc. and send to all media whose representatives participated in the press conference. And the representatives of the media who were invited, but did not participate, should receive the press-folder that also includes the post-press release. In this way it would be possible to get the maximum feedback from the press conference.

Often the representatives of online media don't participate in the event being convinced that the press release is available on the official website of INSTAT and containing the information that meets the needs of their media format.

A Press Review and/or a Press Book should be prepared as a measurement of results. On the day of the press conference all the issues related to the press conference have to be observed and recorded, so that an effective review can be compiled and submitted. The press review will enable to check, or at least give preliminary conclusions on the impact of the press conference on the stakeholders such as reached audience, mentions, the way it was portrayed, etc.

In Albania there is a usual practice, when after the press conference the journalists would like to have an individual interview and to get exclusive information. For such interviews there is a need to be preliminarily prepared, and if the public relations representative is not sure that the interview will be efficient, you need to make an appointment with the journalist for another day to give an interview.

Timeline of a Press Conference

The ideal press conference is when you anticipate everything:

4 Weeks Prior

- Establish Date, Time, And Location
- Attempt to host press conference in morning or early afternoon to allow media ample time for editing and producing before the next news hour is published (especially TV outlets)

3 Weeks Prior

- Determine Program/Speakers
- Anticipate questions from media and practice responses

2 Weeks Prior

- Confirm media contact list is current and accurate
- Send media advisory/save the date
- Determine room layout (allow for ample space for TV cameras near electricity outlets and entrance/exit should be at rear of room)

1 Week Prior

- Compose press release to accompany announcement made at press conference
- Prepare a Powerpoint, if necessary, to be used at press conference
- Promote on Social Media, if necessary

3 Days Prior

- Assemble media kits (copy of press release, fact sheet, Powerpoint, brochure, appropriate business cards, etc.)
- Promote on Social Media, if necessary
- Designate a staff member to take notes/record questions for follow up
- Designate a staff person to take photos/video

Day Before

- Arrange room for press conference (consider photo options - use signage on podium or in background)
- Send reminder to media partners via email
- Verify camera and video cameras are operating
- Reminders through Social Media, if necessary

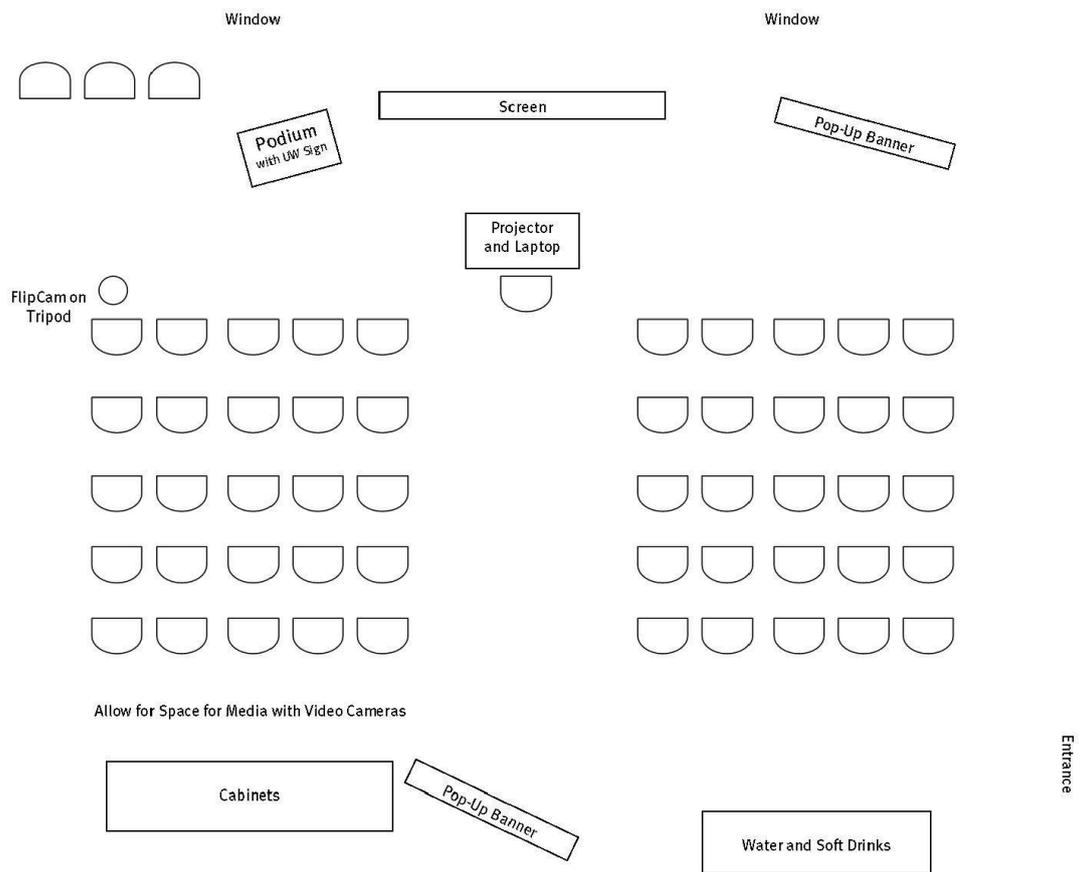
Sample Agenda & Event Flow

- 10:00 – 10:15 Registration
- 10:15 – 10:20 A brief presentation of the topic
- 10:20 – 10:35 Representative of INSTAT to read the statement (prepared as above)
- 10:35 – 10:50 Questions & Answers

NOTE: Immediately Following Press Conference

Send press release for those not able to attend (share the link of press release to social media)

Sample Room Layout



Annex 1. Equipment

- Background (Banner or Logo)
- Podium and Podium Sign
- Microphone
- Extension Cords (For Media Use)
- Surge Protector (For Media Use)
- Video camera and/or audio recorder (INSTAT Public Relations representative)
- Chairs
- Media kits for distribution at completion of Press Conference
- Screen, Projector, Laptop (If utilizing a Powerpoint presentation)
- Refreshments (Water/Soft Drinks) if possible