



National Contest for Excellence in Journalism on Ethnic and Faith Tolerance

The National contest was initiated in 2003 as an efficient and appropriate form to single out professionals from Bulgarian print and electronic media who cover with erudition, understanding and tolerance the ethnic interrelations, diversity and coexistence of religious, cultural and other minorities. The founders and organizers of the Contest are the Multiethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation, the Representation of the United Nations Development Programme, the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency and the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication of Sofia University.

The Journalistic contest is named after Dimitar Peshev, the Member of the National Assembly of Bulgaria who helped for the salvation Bulgaria's Jews during the World War II – a symbol of civil courage in asserting the principles of multiethnic tolerance and cooperation. As Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Minister of Justice Dimitar Peshev rebelled against the cabinet's intention and prevented the deportation of Bulgaria's 48,000 Jews in 1943. The salvation of the Bulgarian Jews during the Second World War is an act of dignity that speaks about the tolerant multiethnic Bulgarian society.

The National contest has a media-monitoring component (conducted throughout the year) and an Awarding ceremony taking place on Human Rights Day – 10 December. As an exception, the Awarding ceremony of the fifth edition of the contest takes place on January 27th, the International Commemoration Day in Memory of the victims of the Holocaust. A Jury of distinguished Bulgarian journalists and media experts from different ethnic background hands out the Dimitar Peshev Awards for excellence in journalism on ethnic and faith tolerance.

The Dimitar Peshev Contest and Awards are included as Bulgarian best practice in the National Strategy and the Action Plan of the UN Alliance of Civilizations Initiative. At the First Annual meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations (Madrid, January 2008) information about the Dimitar Peshev contest and awards were shared amongst participants. Lessons learned were presented at the International Conference “The AoC and the Responsibility of the Media in Multicultural Societies” (Sofia, April 2008). Currently, national and international partners consider opportunities to transform the contest into a regional initiative.

