As part of the efforts to discuss and explore the role of the National Press Council in Morocco, the Media Diversity Institute (MDI) in collaboration with The National Syndicate of the Moroccan Press, organized a roundtable on 28 February 2014 in Rabat. Media experts and stakeholders, as well as journalists and editors, debated the violation of the journalistic ethics and to what extent it affects the freedom of expression.

Some of the questions raised at MDI roundtable in Rabat were the responsibility of media, how that responsibility is shared with the civil society and what is the best way for the Moroccan National Press Council to implement and regulate the code of ethics.

Yones Megahed, the director of the National Syndicate of the Moroccan press, highlighted the strong relationship between the importance of respecting media ethics and standards, and the necessity of providing a healthy environment that caters for a professional practice and full respect of the media actor’s rights.
Mohamed AL-Nashnash, the head of the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights, explained the importance of the regulation of the profession and the induction of the national press syndicate in accordance with a highly developed and open-minded law. He considered that discussing democracy remains insufficient without guaranteeing the freedom of speech and press, and guaranteeing a professional journalistic practice.

From his side, Noor EL-Deen Moftah, head of the Federal Publishers of Newspapers in Morocco, said that the goal from any discussion regarding journalism and publications in Morocco is an attempt to achieve "distinctive journalism" where media produce a high quality media content according to professional and ethical standards.

On the behalf of Adala Institute, Saeed Khamry focused on the activities that this Institute organized for journalists, and their participation in raising discussions that is related to journalism and publication. "Ethical journalism is considered to be the core of the Institute`s priorities," said Khamry.

Dominic Von Burg, the president of the National Press Council in Switzerland, presented the experience of the body he represents. Talking about the media law implemented in 1972, Von Burg said: "A number of politicians disagreed with the law at the beginning, but over certain period of time, the media environment benefited from it".

"Press Council should not be the court, but it has a moral authority," said Von Burg explaining that the Swiss Press Council is formed of publishers, editors in chief and other media professionals.

During the discussion, the audiences raised many questions related to the issues of ethical standards and the relationship between freedom, and responsibility, various possible roles of the Press Council, its structure and the nature of the tasks.

Many Moroccan media outlets reported on the debate at the MDI roundtable in Rabat, such as Maroc press, Tele-Express, 2M channel, Bayan Al Yom, Nabaa Press, Hegra press, Middle East newspaper, Anbaa Net, the Socialist Union, as well as the official website of the Ministry of Communication. The roundtable is a part of the MDI project "Promoting Freedom of Expression, Diversity and Inclusion in Morocco" supported by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation.