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**Bio & Policy Statement from
A Nominee for Associate Member Governor
Board of Governors 2020-2021**



Olga BOLTENKO

Affiliation: Fangda Partners and The University of Hong Kong

- **An investment and trade lawyer based in Hong Kong**
- **Contributor to The Hong Kong Lawyer and Asian Dispute Review**
- **Views expressed in this policy statement are my own**

Policy Statement

There is an alarming drift in the journalistic community: the support network for independent journalists seems to have fallen victim to the pandemic. Freelancers, independent and retired journalists, those who undertake academic activities while also reporting on an ad hoc basis – they have been left behind in the flurry of the COVID-19 containment measures. Support failings lead to tragic loss of journalistic experience that could have otherwise continued to serve the world and to foster the new generations of talent.

Freedom of press is also about those who exercise that freedom. With the outbreak containment measures imposed worldwide, many outstanding members of the journalistic community are no longer in a state where they can meaningfully exercise that freedom - freelancers, those who are forced to leave Hong Kong in search of an affordable home, those who aren't heard simply because they do not belong to a powerful news outlet. There isn't much freedom of press when such freedom is reserved for the few privileged ones who are gainfully employed by powerful media corporations and can ride out the storm rather comfortably. The hardships of the independent journalists and their forced silence result in the pained reporting that we see now in the mainstream media, where the "reality" of confinement is often shown through the prism of employed professionals who are having "a great difficulty" staying in their homes with bookshelves full of leather bound books in the Zoom background, being paid for catching up on their sleep, in complete disregard of the majority of the world that has been cast to the edges of misery.

Journalism is in a challenging position at the time of broken conventions and dramatic changes. It is incumbent upon the FCC to provide guidance and to ensure support from which many – including the vulnerable - may act at this historical moment. If independent journalists are not helped and leveraged by institutions like the FCC, if the new generation of journalists does not benefit from the wisdom, the humility, the skill and mastery of those members who have been on the frontlines of the past tribulations and have since then gone independent, then we are throwing the future of journalism and free society to the whims of chance and to the actions of the few who are privileged enough to have the resources to be heard.

If elected, I commit to pursuing the following policy goals:

- **Develop and institute a support network for independent and freelancing members**
- **Identify those members who are overseas and independent but have unique journalistic experience that matches the topics of importance, and ensure that they are included in the conferencing activities**
- **Consider organizing zoom sessions and webinars, as well as journalism-specific sessions by independent members, such as on feature writing, investigative reporting, creative writing, and others, akin to masterclass.com**
- **Consider a possibility of mentorship programmes linking the younger members with the more experienced journalists within the membership**
- **Consider “freelancer Fridays” where freelancing members will be offered drinks over a themed debate/seminar/event**

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