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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers!

It took a long time for us appearing with the next issue of *deScripto*. The reason is very practical: for a magazine like this, done by volunteers and depending on sponsors, the conditions of surviving are not as stable as we would wish them to be. That means team changes but also it means the challenge to change the concept in order to meet the capacities of work and the interests of our addressees.



That was the reason to change the idea and the concept as it is described by the publisher Oliver Vujovic. We are starting this serial of *deScripto* on media landscapes of the SEE- countries with Turkey because of some plausible reasons: Turkey has within the European discourse a paradigmatic position. Coming closer to Europe, not only due to globalisation, but also due to the interests of the extension of the European Union also searching for models of good neighbourhood, the specific and different characters of identity surface more than ever before. The discourse on Turkey still is overloaded with lots of stereotypes and clichés due to lack of information.

Media structures and the media culture in Turkey is of course a wide ranging topic and can not be covered as a whole. But there is a possibility to give an overview by selecting paradigmatic topics, which, I think, could be achieved. The result of the work of a group of teachers and students of the Faculty of Communication of the Istanbul University brings to the surface the dynamic and multiplex landscape of media, media history and media culture in Turkey.

Thanks to the consequent management and leadership of Tonguc Ibrahim Sezen, who overtook the work as the local managing editor for this country-related issue of *deScripto*, the students, mostly now in the stages of diploma or doctoral theses in the area of media communication and journalism and for that trained in research and reporting, did reliable research and decided upon themes and reports that can give you a well argued insight to media and media development in Turkey.

We also have to thank Selma Koric, who is new in our team, for her editorial work, especially in managing the computation and layout preparation. We hope, you will benefit from our new concept and you will enjoy it.

Thomas A. Bauer
Editor in Chief
deScripto

Letter from the Publisher

Dear Readers!



With this number we start a new series of the *deScripto* magazine. The idea of the new concept is to work in greater cooperation with local universities, media centres and organisations, media groups and journalist schools in South East and Central Europe. This number was prepared in cooperation with the University of Istanbul.

We have also some changes in staff. Under the supervision of the Editor-in-Chief Thomas Bauer who has been, as you know, responsible for this publication from the beginning, the new Executive Editor is Selma Koric. That means, that the cooperation between SEEMO and the University of Vienna on this project continues. Zoran Spahic is now responsible for layout, with his team. Zoran is a person with whom SEEMO has had a great long-term cooperation with in producing different publications, and now he will cooperate with us also on the graphic design of *deScripto*. Responsible for organising the printing of the publication are Mirjana Zivanovic and Slobodan Polic.

deScripto hopes to continue to contribute to the media-related discussion in the SEEMO region and to help the development of media culture in South East and Central Europe. We will have also, as in the past, reviews of interesting new books and magazines, preview of events and also present what SEEMO is doing in its daily work. What is new is that we start with this edition to have also a presentation of a media company in the region, as also to publish an interview with a person active in the media field.

Oliver Vujovic,
Secretary General
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

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Mission Statement
deScripto is committed to the enhancement of a climate of critical reflection on media culture and communication, in and among the SEE countries. Published quarterly as a joint project of the University of Vienna and the University of Applied Sciences Vienna, under the auspices of The South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO), *deScripto* is an independent journal of analysis and opinion dedicated to the democratisation of the media and the development of civic society in the SEE Region.

The views expressed in *deScripto* are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of SEEMO/IPI.

An introduction to the *deScripto* Turkey Special

By Tonguc Ibrahim Sezen

Turkey is a country with many faces. Located between continents and cultures it is the door to the east and to the west depending from where you are coming. It reflects both cultures. Turkish people share customs with both sides. Politically and ideologically Turkey is unique in many aspects: A democratic, secular country with a dominant Muslim population; a member of the global society and global economics. Yet Turkey is not free from problems. The EU, wars in neighbor countries, ethnic and religious freedom and threats of radicalism are some of many discussions Turkish people face every day. Political awareness has become a major attitude of Turkish people in the recent years. Although they may be against each other; almost every Turk has an opinion on almost every issue related to the country. Opinions require knowledge and the main source of knowledge for Turkish people is the Turkish media.

About 30 years ago a military coup affected everything in the country including the media. The changes were expected at the beginning: Limits to freedom of expression, depoliticizing of media. But with the end of 1980s something unexpected happened. The monopoly of the state on TV and radio broadcasting has been lifted. In the following years the economic structure of the media started to change. Cartelization was the new threat on the independence of the media. But with the introduction of the Internet, opposition gained an ally. Today some of the problems from 30 years ago still affect the Turkish media. Also some new problems emerged during these years. On the other hand newspapers, TV and Internet sites play a much more major role in the politics. Thousands gather in demonstrations promoted by a TV channel or a funeral of an assassinated journalist. A newspaper openly criticizes state-within-a-state in Turkey. Ethnic and minority media is in scope more than ever before. Ordinary people write and film their opinions and share them on the Internet. There is hope and growing energy for the future of the Turkish media.

In this issue you will find different aspects of the Turkish media ecology. The articles were written by students of Istanbul University Communication Faculty. Some of our reporters had long journalism experiences behind them, some on the other hand wrote their first articles as reporters for this issue. All of

them worked with passion and spent hours to refine their articles. An Interview with Omer Madra and Jak Kohen from Acik Radio by Miray Caner will give you an interesting view on Turkish independent media. You will learn about media education in Turkey in Ozlem Baskent's and Basak Kalkan's articles. They will give you a wider perspective from elementary school to higher education. Democracy in Turkey has always been a big discussion topic. Bahar Muratoglu in her article about Turkey's own caricature crisis will share the story of a legal battle between caricaturists and the prime minister of Turkey. Digidem Sezen on the other hand will explain the background of YouTube banning by Turkish courts. In an other article on new media by Ipek Ozarmagan you will learn more about the most popular Turkish wiki. Asuman Kutlu writes about women's media in Turkey. Sinem Tuna looks into national newspapers and tries to find out what they say about Labor Day. Ayse Bihter Celik concentrates on television. She interviewed with Zahit Akman, the chairman of Turkish Radio Television Supreme Council. Another interview by Bahar Muratoglu tells the story of Agos Newspaper, the newspaper of the late Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. While our Moldavian reporter Olga Untila shares her experiences in Turkey, Merve Yilmaz asks foreign correspondents about their experiences. Sedat Ozel focused on local media in his hometown. In a round table discussion, Hakan Silahsizoglu spoke with experts about European Union and Turkish Media. We also have guest writers in this issue. Academicians from Istanbul University Communication Faculty contributed to our Turkish special with their articles. You can read articles of Pror.Dr.Suat Gezgin, the dean of the faculty, Assoc.Prof.Dr.Nese Kars the head of the Radio, Television, Film Department, Assoc.Prof.Dr.Ceyhan Kandemir and Assoc.Prof.Dr.Nilufer Timisi in this issue.

If you are reading these lines, this can mean four things: First, you are a dedicated *deScripto* reader; I hope this issue can match with the previous issues. Second, you are interested in Turkey and Turkish media; I hope you find our reporters' articles on Turkish media satisfying and objective. Third, you are both; well, as experts you might points to add, please write to our mailbox. Four, you find this issue in a lobby or waiting room and have nothing better to do; don't worry you are spending your time very effectively. ■

The Challenge of Transition and Globalisation

Journalism culture is the new challenge for Turkey as a country in transition and under pressure of globalisation, as it is a crucial factor for democratic culture elsewhere.

By Thomas A. Bauer

Analysing the impact of journalism on society always demands to consideration of conditions for journalism whether they be social, political, cultural, and/or the symbolic environment. With regard to this mutually influential relationship, there has always been the temptation to describe or to analyse structural networks in order to interpret the conditions of power - mostly through figures, dates and facts. Those descriptions and analyses follow the idea that quantities assert and reveal connections, causalities and correlations. Maybe they do, but they do it under the condition of a culturally (meaningful) hidden premise: any consideration is a cultural approximation to a phenomenon and is done in the interest of affirmation of culturally mandatory horizons. That's the reason why the analytical description of any considerable correlation demands the declaration in the interest of enlightenment: so even the description of structural phenomena is a cultural narration on the basis of interpreting consideration.

General Remarks:

This initial deliberation, done in respect of the challenging conditions for journalism development in new democratic countries such as Turkey, incites us to focus immediately on culture. This focus falls particularly on journalistic culture as a hybrid world, where political events, gestures, attitudes, patterns, and values meet public observation, and public observation comes across system structures and political conditions. Out of respect to that starting position it does not make much sense to re-analyse structures (e.g. organisational

structures of media, programme output, organisational input, law, legislation, economic situation etc.) but much more insight and understanding (in the sense of applied social studies) would be gained by focusing on the cultural components of media culture in transition countries.

The reason is: The challenging conditions for media development in transition societies (including journalism education and training) is not the development or the establishment of all the structures that are indispensable for the organisation of democracy, but shape up to be problems of culture and mind. There are enough sources and resources within these societies: knowledge, experience, external support and possibilities. The main question is how the administration, organisations, institutions, media companies, and public opinion deal with all those structural conditions. The same interpretation counts for journalism education. The challenging conditions, since they are cultural ones, do not touch the possibilities of developing structures for educational systems in the country. It would not be a problem to overtake or to copy successful systems from all over the world, but it is the right and also the responsibility of a society to develop its own structures in order to represent its own authentic culture, especially within the media system.

It is the cultural rationality of communication that serves as the source (the 'reservoir of diversity') to manage conflicts and crises. That seems generally to be an important point of reference in han-

dling transition and dealing with the multiplex conflicts within and between the countries in South East Europe. Crises usually come up in processes, when it is not clear enough which criteria are the deciding lines to be followed, often when there are different interests to be realised or served. In that situation it is helpful to have a background-culture which is wider and its leading criteria more integrative than the actual interests. There is no other legitimised direction for operation of communication potentials in case of conflict and crisis but cultural programmes, which keeps the archive of values of mutual understanding. But it works only if it is in general use. Culture, which if not in everyday use is not culture, it is just a decoration in a case of need. A decoration, taken to service the case of need, does not represent enough depth, not enough credibility, not enough objectivity, in order to compensate for uncertainty.

Since Turkey is going through a transitional passage, crises are, as a matter of course, issues of communication. They depict, what communication is like: a re-construction of sense, negotiated by exchange of information and by sharing a decision. This is not a mechanism which just has to be helped along it is a subjective performance of competence in differentiation and decision, and of being able to pay attention to the other out of a clear (and transparent) starting position of one's own. The panic, which often comes up in critical or decisive situations, often happens because of the fact, that the hidden interest or hidden agenda is not compatible to the cultural

Continued on page 6

background or is somehow a separated interpretation of a common cultural programme. Decisive communication demands cultural background and only gets solved in relation to a common cultural programme. Communication competence in situations like that is cultural competence: ability, preparedness, authority, and responsibility to decide the performance (rhetoric) of communication and to balance the options both of common sense of cultural behaviour and of challenge of overcoming the crisis by the authentic expression of a critical situation. The cultural rationality of communication is to decide to give the crises, the challenge, the complexity a position (performance) of communication.

The Challenge of Globalisation:

Globalisation is a factor in global development and social change that greatly affects and influences concepts of cultural neighbourhood all over the world. This factor is easy to name but difficult to be brought into a comprehensive model, since it contains a mixture of experiences, notions and myths. It needs a blanket and theoretical in depth analysis of this complex phenomenon, summarised by the term of globalisation, in order to prove that this process can not be just valued between the antagonism of good and bad. In reality globalisation is not just a process which is observed but it is a concept that deals with the conception of man in an environment of modernity and of modernisation. It is a process of a universal social change that is culturally natural and necessary and that necessarily provokes changes, even in form of contradictions. Globalisation is a process with wide ranging propositions and affects give the streamlining of the economic and organisational systems in order to achieve transmissibility and penetrability of markets. Meanwhile, with strong ties and deeply anchored structures of interchange and interdependency exist. It really can not be surprising that the economic process converges with the cultural one – especial-

ly within the media environment - since cultural (also media) changes express themselves through economic terms.

Culture, taken by itself, is a system of meaning, socially structured, that directs the execution of everyday life and contains frames of reference for identity, belongingness and normative orientation. Culture steers the everyday use of values. It is a cybernetic circle that reflects itself, also by reflecting other cultures somehow in a way of fight for meanings. The production of cultural goods emerges from the need of self-representation and representation against others. This process claims territories (nations, communities, societies) and stresses borders between one and the other. It is exactly this quality of segregation through cultural borders, which is criticised by theoretical concepts of intercultural communication. These criticisms state, that communication across cultures and among cultures is better conceptualised as a trans-cultural communication, which says: by communication (only) one culture can be recognised as an conclusive entity by another culture, which itself is already recognised as a cultural entity by another culture. The difference between cultures is a difference made by communication about meanings and by creating meanings. Insofar as only communication is what makes differentiation between cultures possible, the difference becomes real by construction and not by ontology. So there is no obstacle to change the circumstances of the relationship between cultures through communication. Where the circumstances of communication do not get changed, there the circumstances of problems will not be changed.

It was not really expected that globalisation would cause the rise of national, religious and cultural sectionalism. But looking back, it is understandable and to certain extent reasonable. Globalisation all in all stands for the experience that the universe of products, the techniques of exe-

cution of everyday life, and the world of services get increasingly organised by globally working markets, systems, and concerns. Since it is an economy driven process that equalises differences for the benefit of large and big systems but at the expense of smallness, singularity, and idiosyncrasy, globalisation is taken, of course, as a reference of loss of variety and difference. But then variety and difference build the frames of reference for identity, authenticity and autonomy. The theoretical concept for that fact is found in the term “diversity”. Obviously the term diversity becomes a paradigmatic position in understanding and explaining the problem of social togetherness, it becomes even a cultural and political term and gets used in contexts of conceptualising new horizons of societies. There is no other more enlightening concept of reference than the one of communication. This is because communication is the instance to unify difference and to make diversity understood as a challenge of culture.

Shaping Journalism Culture:

Generally, spoken culture is a social practice in generating meaning and in referring to generalised meaning. It is the social constructive expression of a socially and collectively developed programme on values and orientations of sense, which fulfil the notion of an “own territory”, of identity and togetherness of all people experiencing itself being connected by that programme in significant media: language, common social institutions, common history, common narrations and common traditions. In this interpretation, culture always may be taken as a framework, legitimacy and justification of social control. However, the origin is not the only point of reference for a definition of culture (and here already an open minded theory of culture needs to break the routine of everyday use of the category) but also ideas of never realised notions, horizons and room to move, options of being otherwise, and, of course, the future.

Journalism Culture is, in relation to the general definition of culture, the everyday usage of values of relations between journalism and politics, audience, media company and so on. Journalism culture is a culture of relations, it does not exist for itself and by itself, but emerges out of the communicative and medial use of the social (political) environment. It always and everywhere reflects the social and the political culture and mirrors the collective mind of (the) society. This relationship between journalism and society is mediated by media and represents to some extent a system of societal trust. Public trust in a system theoretical view can be understood as a cultural mechanism that reduces public (communicational) complexity. It is also the mechanism through which all those categories act a part in public communication that usually frame the public (generalised) consciousness of a society in relation to internal cohesion, external differentiation, identity, and identification. In a practical sense, journalism culture is the way how and with what intention journalists act within the context of political (public) communication.

As communication is the framework of constructing a (the) society, it is and will be a crucial question for Turkey to find a way of shaping a media culture of public communication and conversation that links the new media related styles of communication with the traditional rituals and habits of conversation. It does not make sense to a society just to copy other cultural models. As a society is the composition and the construction of communication, it is challenged to find its own way and character. That’s why a big step in constructing and developing the Turkish society has to be taken and that there are efforts going on all over the country to develop the communication culture – now on the side of journalism. The side of the public hopefully will follow soon by broadening people’s media literacy. ■



The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is a regional non-governmental, non-profit network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, news agencies and new media in South East Europe (SEE). With its committees, SEEMO aims to create a bridge between international media activities and media developments in the region (South East, but also Central and East Europe).

SEEMO was founded in October 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia, by a group of leading editors-in-chief, media executives, and professors of journalism and communications from South East Europe, in the presence of representatives of international institutions and with the financial support of the International Press Institute (IPI). SEEMO has local partners, members and coordinators in all countries and territories in SEE.

One of SEEMO’s main activities is protecting press freedom by helping journalists and media outlets in South East Europe. Over 60% of SEEMO’s press releases and letters of protest to governmental and other officials have had positive results in the past. Every SEEMO protest is distributed to leading regional and international media, national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, politicians, and public persons and institutions. In the past, SEEMO has provided direct help to journalists in the region by giving them technical equipment and other assistance. SEEMO has also provided necessary aid to journalists who have received death threats. SEEMO has over 500 editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe as individual members, and over 100 media outlets and institutions as corporate members.

During the last seven years, SEEMO has brought together in various meetings over 6,800 editors-in-chief, media executives, leading journalists and public persons from the region. Some of these meetings, like the meeting of editors-in-chief and media executives from Belgrade (Serbs) and Pristina /Prishtinë/Priština (Kosovo-Albanians), were the first of their kind in history. No one before SEEMO had managed to gather such high-level media representatives from Belgrade and Pristina in a meeting. Between 2002 and 2004, SEEMO organised 14 dialogue meetings between editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe.

In October 2005, SEEMO organised the SEEMO Dialogue Conference between editors-in-chief and media executives from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia/Montenegro in Opatija. One month later, in November 2005, a SEEMO Dialogue Conference between editors-in-chief and media executives from Albania, Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia-FYROM), and Serbia/Montenegro/Kosovo was held in Tirana.

SEEMO also organised the first meeting of leading media representatives of all important private news agencies in the region in June 2005, and as a result of the meeting the agencies founded a regional organisation of private news agencies (APNA).

SEEMO actively cooperates with international, regional and national governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions. SEEMO also actively cooperates with other international press freedom and media organisations, and it supports and participates in joint regional and international projects and activities.

Together with partners, SEEMO has organised seminars and conferences promoting European values and ideas (2003, 2004, 2005), ecological philosophy – environment and better transport possibilities in the region (Belgrade 2002, 2004 and 2005, Athens 2003 and 2004, Trieste 2004, Sarajevo 2004 - all conferences in cooperation with City of Vienna and Bohmann publishing group); a regional conference on investigative reporting (2002); a regional conference on minorities (2002); elections (Media and Elections in 2007, together with Radio 101, Hrvatsko novinsko društvo and Guardian Foundation); two conferences for editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists of Roma media in the region (2003); two conferences of editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists of Vlachian-Aromanian media in South East Europe (2004); several conferences on press freedom, the legal situation of media, relations between media and politicians, the public role of parliamentarians, access to information, the right to secrecy of information sources, tolerance (Media and Tolerance Conference in 2004, together with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ)), as well as teaching public relations and communications for governmental officials, etc.

Helping journalists also means furthering their education. Several workshops and seminars were organised in the field of education, especially for investigative reporters (in Opatija in Croatia (2006), in Babe in Serbia (2006), in Tirana in Albania (2007), in Bucharest in Romania (2007), in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007) and in Sofia in Bulgaria (2007)) and also workshops for representatives of minority media. Some of the minority media workshops and seminars took place at the SEEMO Media Minority Centre (MMC) in Opatija, Croatia.

In June 2008, SEEMO organised the conference Media, Marketing and Business, as well as the regular meeting of the private news agencies in South East Europe. In December 2008, SEEMO will organise the conference Public Broadcasting in South East Europe in cooperation with RTV Slovenija.

SEEMO has several international and national governmental organisations and institutions as project partners, like the Austrian Development Agency – Austrian Development Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and the Central European Initiative (CEI). SEEMO has an ongoing project-cooperation with a number of foundations, universities, media schools and media companies. Over the past few years, SEEMO has coordinated several media monitoring projects in South East and Central Europe, and has also organised several pieces of media research.

SEEMO started, together with the German WAZ Medien Gruppe and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) – South East and Central Europe Media Forum (SECEMF). The first SEEMF was organised in Zagreb in 2007, under the patronage of the President of Croatia H.E. Stjepan Mesić, and in cooperation with local media partners: Europapress Holding (EPH), HINA, HRT, Mediaservis, Obiteljski radio and NCL (National) Media Group. The topic of the II SEEMF is “Media and Democracy in South East Europe: Professional Standards and Education of Journalists.” The II SEEMF will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 5-6 November 2008. This II SEEMF is organised by the WAZ Medien Gruppe, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), and SEEMO, with local partners Newspaper Group Bulgaria and the Media Development Centre, Sofia

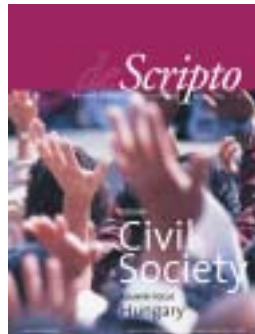
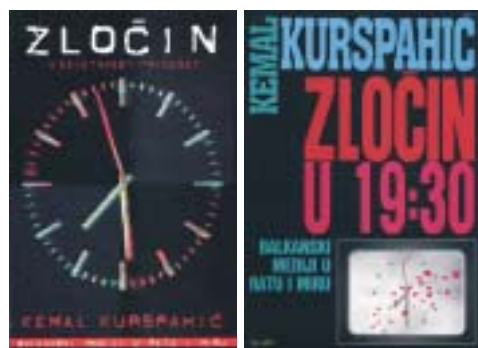
In cooperation with the University of Vienna, since 2004 SEEMO has regularly published a quarterly media magazine for South East Europe called *De Scripto*.

Since 2003, the *South East Europe Media Handbook (SMH)*, an annual publication covering media developments in SEE, which includes selected media contacts, has also been published. From 2008, the book is published under the name “*South East and Central Europe Media Handbook* (well known to everyone as the *SEEMO Media Handbook* (or SMH) in October 2008. The Media Handbook includes media reports and contact details of selected radio and TV stations, newspapers, magazines, media organisations, media schools, journalists’ organisations, and internet ser-

vice providers and other new media from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Bulgaria. SEEMO publishes this book annually in cooperation with its partners, and since 2008 the partners are the Central European Initiative (CEI), the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and the ERSTE Foundation from Vienna.

Next to these publications, SEEMO has published some other books in the English language, such as *Media and Minorities in South East Europe* or the *Handbook for Investigative Reporters in South East Europe*. But SEEMO also publishes in local languages from the region, for example, the publication *Istraživačko novinarstvo u JIE* or the editions of SEEMO Media Handbook in Albanian language and in Serbian language. SEEMO is also co-publisher of different books covering media topics. Book on “Media and PR” and a book on *Media, Marketing and Business in South East Europe*. Furthermore, publications on *Public Broadcasting in South East Europe* and *Women, Men and Media* are in planning. SEEMO started also a regional research about Women, Men and Media.

SEEMO awards prizes for outstanding achievements in the field of media. The recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in 2002 was Croatian journalist Denis Latin, for his TV-show ‘Latinica’ (HTV). The 2003 Award was given to Kemal Kurspahić, former Editor-in-Chief of the Bosnian daily *Oslobođenje*. He and his team managed to publish during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina *Oslobođenje*, every day in the besieged city of Sarajevo. In 2005 this award was given to Brankica Petković from the Ljubljana-based Peace Institute. In 2006 Danko Plevnik, international relations columnist for the Croatian daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* from Split, received the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding. Plevnik is also the author of several books analysing media, such as *Information is Communication* (1986), *Towards the Civilisation of Mobile Text* (1988) and *The Practice of Ethical Journalism* (2004). Plevnik has also published a number of books on politics, the European Union, and the Balkans amongst others. Soon his two new books, *The Right to Self-Meaning* and *The Fortune of Reading* will be available. In 2007, after careful deliberation, the jury has chosen Milena Dimitrova, com-



mentator for the Bulgarian daily newspaper *Trud* from Sofia, as the 2007 Winner of the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding. Dimitrova holds a PhD in Journalism and is also the author of several books, such as: *Pictures from Japan* (1992), *Parliament and Journalism* (2000), and *Frangzhipani i Farangi: Two Bulgarians with the “Giraffe” Women of Burma* (2005), written together with Magdalena Gigova. Dimitrova also teaches Press Journalism and Investigative Reporting at Sofia University “Sv. Kliment Ohridski”. She is the President of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists’ Investigative Journalism Section. The recipient of the Award for Better Understanding in 2008 is Brankica Stankovic from RTV B92 in Belgrade (Insajder TV show).

The SEEMO Human Rights Award SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe is traditionally awarded on 10 December, International Human Rights Day. In 2002, the award was given to Christine von Kohl, a fighter for human rights in the Balkan region, and Editor-in-Chief and founder of the Vienna magazine *Balkan - Südosteuropäischer Dialog - Balkan anders*. In 2003, the award was given to Nebojša Popov, a leading Serbian human rights fighter and founder of the Belgrade magazine *Republika*. In 2004, the award



was given to Fatos Lubonja, a leading Albanian writer, journalist and fighter for human rights. In 2006 SEEMO Board Members chose Abdulhalim Dede, a journalist and a member of the Turkish-Muslim minority living and working in Western Thrace, Greece, for the SEEMO Human Rights Award. In 2007 the SEEMO Board named the journalist, writer and fighter for human rights Šeki Radončić from Montenegro, who lives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as the recipient of the 2007 SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe.

In 2007 SEEMO decided together with CEI to start, as of 2008, the CEI Award for Outstanding Merits in Investigative Journalism with a prize of 5,000 EUR. This Award was given in 2007 to Drago Hedl from Croatia. The jury based its decision on the integrity and personal courage demonstrated by Hedl in carrying out his work on war crimes committed against civilians in the eastern city of Osijek in 1991. According to the jury, “writing about war crimes is not something that makes a journalist popular.”

Since 2008 SEEMO has also the Award for the Best Photograph in the Human Rights Field. The first win-

ner of this award (2008) was Maja Zlatevska (*Dnevnik*, Skopje), for the photograph „Zatvor“ („Prison“), her contribution to the human rights struggle in the region. A certificate of distinction was given to Marko Djurica (*Blic*, Beograd/Reuters), for his photograph „Liturgija“ („Lithurgy“).

SEEMO also nominated several leading journalists from the region for important international awards. In May 2002, Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalist Željko Kopanja from *Nezavisne novine*, Banja Luka, received the Concordia Award in Austria after being nominated by SEEMO.

SEEMO Board members (since 2007): Radomir Ličina (Senior Editor *Danas* daily, Belgrade), Agron Bajrami (Editor-in-Chief *Koha Ditore* daily, Pristina), Boris Bergant (Deputy Director RTV Slovenia, Ljubljana, and EBU Vice-President), Pavol Mudry (Co-founder and Board Member SITA news agency, Bratislava), Marta Palics (Editor, RTV Novi Sad, Novi Sad), Jorgos Papadakis (Journalist, Athens) and Zrinka Vrabec Mojžes (Editor, Radio 101, Zagreb). Former SEEMO Board (2002-2006): Radomir Ličina -President, Samra Lučkin (Director, Boram Network, Sarajevo), Stjepan Malović (Director, ICEJ, Opatija), Risto Popovski (Director, Makfax, Skopje), Remzi Lani (Director, Albanian Media Institute, Tirana), Jorgos Papadakis/Mircea Toma (Director, Media Monitoring Agency, Bucharest) and Ognian Zlatev (Director, Media Development Center, Sofia). SEEMO Ethical Committee is represented by Danko Plevnik (commentator for *Slobodna Dalmacija* daily, Split). SEEMO Coordinators are: Albania - Frrok Cupi (director, *Agon* newspaper, Tirana), Bulgaria - Ognian Zlatev (director, Media Development Center, Sofia), Bosnia Herzegovina - Samra Lučkin (director, BORAM, Sarajevo), Croatia - Ante Gavranović (former president of the Croatian Journalists Association (HND), Zagreb and of Croatian Publishers Association, Zagreb), Greece - Jorgos Papadakis, Moldova - Alina Radu (director, *Ziarul de Garda* newspaper, Chisinau), Romania - Marina Constantinoiu (editor-in-chief, *Jurnalul National*, Bucharest), Serbia - Veran Matić (Radio TV B92, Belgrade), Montenegro - Željko Ivanović (director, *Vijesti* daily, Podgorica), Kosovo - Haqif Mulliqi (RTV Kosovo, Pristina), Ukraine - Aleksey Soldatenko (Programmes Director, International Institute for Regional Media and Information, Kharkiv).

SEEMO Advisers: Hari Štajner (former Director of Media Center, Belgrade), Boro Kontić (Director, Media Centar, Sarajevo), Donika Shahini and Shpresa Mulliqi (OSCE Media Department, Pristina) and Mitja Meršol (former Editor-in-Chief, *Delo* daily, Ljubljana).

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EU: To Be or Not To Be - Turkish Media and The European Union

Our reporter Hakan Silahsizoglu talked with the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper Editor-in-Chief Mehmet Sucu, European studies researcher Melih Ozsoz, writer of the book “European Lie” Tamer Cerçi and Zeynep Ozler from the Economic Development Foundation about the EU and Turkish media in a round table discussion.



By Hakan Silahsizoglu

opposition of West and East, and the opinions about orientalism that came in the 18th Century and commonly spread to European intellectuals and colleagues. Second of all, nobody is innocent, neither the Turkish Media nor the European Media. There are certain things that we say, which otherwise we don't want to judge without any reason. Most of the countries are passing through

Hakan Silahsizoglu (HS): *For a start I would like ask you your opinions on the EU's media politics on Turkey?*

that process so financial capital and globalization are drawing the route for press now. Maybe we will come to that later on but the European Press has no clue on some certain issues.

Mehmet Sucu (MS): European media, actually we should call it Western Media, is the only source that we get news from. Because of that I sometimes have doubts about their authenticity. As far as I know there is no big difference between Turkish Media and European Media in terms of the structure of it. The only difference could be the number of newspapers that has opinion journalism. But I also believe that we are far ahead in terms of technology. We started to work with computers before they did. Actually I have known couple of my friends who work at different newspapers and they have been to England and Germany to train their colleagues about the technology we use today. We are always one step ahead on technology. I also would like to mention some other information about Turkish media. The very first newspaper in the world which was printed in two different locations at the same time was in Turkey. Again the very first offset printing in Europe happened in Turkey. The first newspaper which was published by computers was in Turkey and surprisingly that was a local newspaper. We have something in common though, we are all under the pressure of holding companies. On top of that in Turkey, we the journalists have more duty to do because we have different headline stories everyday and it can change up to 4-5 times in a day. But for example Swedish journalists could go on a story for a month. There it is one of the important differences to my belief.

We could count “new poverty” on that which is brought about by Western culture. Our sociologists carried out some research on that subject too. However we can not see any news about new poverty in Turkish Media or the Western Media. When those people are on the news? When they burn Paris streets or when three Germans have a connection with El – Kaide... Because our only source is the Western Media therefore that goes to “we” and “them”, orientalism, othering, some people's heathen mentality... Societies carry genetic codes, we have that too, and it could be traced back to the Crusades. It is always the same. That's why there is no information flow between EU citizens and EU candidate countries' citizens. No doubt that helps politicians in Turkey and abroad and gives them an open cheque. I was born in Berlin. I assure you that you can not see the style of today's foreign news on any newspaper of the 1970's and 1980's. There is extreme chauvinism. We are observing that as journalists. In every 6 months we are trapped by the European Summits as it was organised for the first and last time. I have come across that since 1989 from Istanbul, via the Economic Development Foundation (IKV), we have followed it together, it's not the end of the world. Even if there is good news it's not like we won our independence in the war. We still live in the same apartments, pull and push each other and love each other. There is a structure like that and we also have a traumatic approach to the subject. Honestly I could tolerate because of the things we have been through. This country had 5 wars from 1911 to 1923; First and Second Balkan Wars, First World War, Dardanelles War, Independence War... They may seem already history but it affects the society. On top of that I have to say there is no difference between Turkish or Western Media. I would like to stop therefore now for this question.

Tamer Cerçi (TC): I would like to add something to that. On the one hand the European media made their process all the way in the history, especially after WW2, the UN's active role and then the EU's constitution. On the other hand, we are going ahead of Europe in technology. Even opinion journalism has made a great move in Turkey. If we look at the past, what we have been talking for the last five years we could surely see that Turkish Press has made a great improvement on different opinions and voices. I would like to tell you about some of the matters that keep suspense to EU. The first is the

MS: I think all the newspapers are supporting the EU in Turkey, from *Cumhuriyet* Newspaper to *Zaman* newspaper, all are sup-

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porting Turkey joining the club. I think the problem comes from the EU and its view towards Turkey. How they see us, that is the problem. They see us like a third world country, which is not real. I am actually repeating your words (to Mr. Cerci). Not belongs to Europe or othering etc. What is more I would like to give you an example. This summer we have seen a group of people who came from Holland. They told us they want to make a meeting with us with the title 'media ethics' and asked if we would come? I said I would definitely come and later on I learned that they came here to teach us media ethics. That is not acceptable at all! I asked them if they have any book or even brochure about media ethics which is made by their union or community? No... I said, "well we have two". Our Turkish Journalists Rights and Freedom Manifesto is the second one in the world. We must count that. The journalism in your country is so easy. You have got a matter and go on with that a month. We as Turkish journalists change the newspaper headline at least 5 times a day and therefore our job is more difficult. What is more we have to fight for our thoughts. If you like we could change the course, so we could come and give you a lesson. Our experience is so much different then yours. I see that as Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. If you remember, it was said that there should be a referendum and Turks accepted. According to results Turks said yes and Greeks said no.

Zeynep Ozler (ZO): I would also like to add something for how EU sees Turkey. We have joined a meeting which was done for 16th time by the European Delegation for the EU – Turkish Journalists Union. There we have seen many editors from abroad and the subject of the meeting was Turkish perceptions on and about the EU. The interesting point was that Turkey still seems to be foreign news for European journalists. There was an Austrian journalist who said there are 8 million people in Austria in which there are 250 thousand Turks. Having thought of many migrants in Europe, Turkey's EU membership journey and how it will affect the EU is still a good subject to discuss but on the other hand Turkey is still seen as a foreign news and mostly shown negatively. How we actually want to see Turkey is as domestic news in Europe. In Europe, Austria is one of the most gingerly countries about Turkey's membership. I think media's support to Turkey is playing a critical role on the matter.

Melih Ozsoz (MO): I think there is a benefit for us if we look from both sides. I am not a journalist but from the communication point of view I would like to say something. Turkey's journey on the way to the EU is going on for years and that is absolutely lamentable. In 2001, when we had the economic crisis, support to the EU in Turkey was 70% and in 2008 that came down to 49% and we should really pay attention to that. I also brought here the Eurobarometer survey. If we look at the 2008 Eurobarometer survey, the EU's image in Turkey is three times worse than in previous years, going from 7% to 25%. So we must think about Turkish Media on that matter as well as European

Media. The Survey also shows that 8% of Austrian citizens support Turkey. Even though Turkey would do whatever the EU asked them to do, the support of the Austrians only would be 16%. On top of that, the situation towards Turkey in France and Germany is not much different. So this is a two sided problem and it's not easy to break down this image. It has been going on for 16 years and we can see that actually this supposed to be image breaking meetings actually still doesn't do much good on the matter.

TC: I would like to add something to that. If we ask EU citizens about their future and what they think about it there wouldn't be an answer. In 1960-70's there was a perfect social government idea. Now, there is none and everything is left to the markets. That is brought to us by globalisation.

MS: Social government understanding is used in the EU constitution almost 20 times. However, financial politics words are used for 300 or 400 times.

TC: If I take you to Kronsberg, Germany, and ask unemployed or middle aged people about what they think about Turkey's EU journey you can not get over prejudgement about Turkey or the Middle East. Before there were unions and political parties from different sights. They were balancing the society somehow. It is tried to be shown like there is no problem in Europe now but actually there are some social problems in the EU too. Therefore if you ask a black immigrant in Warsaw what Turkey means for EU what he could say...the EU is also having a trauma and worse than what everybody thinks.

MS: There are also others there.

MO: Let's suppose Turkey has done everything on the way to EU membership and get prepared very well on technical issues too. In the end, one morning we will see EU citizens going to vote YES or NO for Turkey. Therefore however good the process you have done is you still have to make every individual EU citizen happy too. I don't mean the press should be the only actor but definitely we have to have a communication strategy to introduce Turkey better. All the sides, NGOs, press, universities, the public, and private sector must work hard. Obviously the press is the one which is the closest to the public. On the same survey the EU asks to the public in Austria that what is the most trusted foundation and answer to that is The Press with 60%. Justice follows that with 54% but let's remind ourselves that support for Turkey is only 8%. In this case it is obvious that The Press is making up people's mind.

MS: I would like to ask a question. Europeans will vote for it for Turkey's membership. Will we also have a right to vote whether we want to join in? Democracy should have two sides not only one! I believe that is the biggest problem in Turkey. Turkish media is giving a great support to the EU. Being in opposition to the EU is a

sin. I would like to tell the things which I was planning to say in the end of our meeting here. The newspaper I work for is giving a good support to EU. However that should happen without loosing our honour. We have written 3 leading articles about that. Therefore my newspaper bound itself on the matter. So I want to ask 3 questions: a) If we process good on improvements we will be reaching almost Switzerland's life standards. So do we need to join EU then? b) In 1979 I was jailed for 9 months. I was beaten badly and tortured in prison. In that period things were like that. They are all passed now but why I had this punishment is because I expressed my feelings as a journalist and said there should be no more than 5% difference between West and East of Turkey, there should be education rights for all as well as health rights for free and no difference between the regions. I was jailed for what I said as I mentioned here. However we still have the same mentality in the Government even Ministers. So I don't find their words convincing at all. But when I say these things I go to jail but when the EU says them the government says "we should do it immediately". These are the two concrete lameness that I see. c) The third one is peculiar to me. Me, as a citizen of a country which had the first and biggest fight with imperialism and war of independence. How come now I would be willing to join to a club which has imperialism in its heart and demand to trade on others. What if I go to the streets and say this out loud, who would hear me? If the press is to be fed from the EU and democracy work for one side only there wouldn't be any other voices in media.

MO: I surely agree on that matter. We actually don't know what will happen while we are on the progress. However we have to tell everything about EU to Turkish citizens so that they could have an idea about EU.

MS: But what kind of things we could say to Turkish citizens. That is a relative subject. We have to go for a referendum too. Should we join EU or not? Personally I have told you my 3 subjects on the matter. However, in my newspaper I can't write about these because my newspaper has bound itself on the Turkey – EU issues.

TC: Actually when an ordinary Turkish citizen has the right to vote for EU, we will then have less problems and everything will get easier. I think Mr. Sucu is talking about that. I always say that today's complex EU is not a cheap matter to be left to the politicians only. We have to be very careful. There was a good expression which IKV announced for Customs Union: "EU is a community project". It's not only about two ministers going back and forth or the meetings between the Commission. So we have to leave that to society. We may join EU 30 years later than the normal process or even 50 years later, we could. It may be so important for persons individually to join EU as early as we could but time is not that important for society if you think about its future. Why are we acting like we are in a hurry, why should we join so soon? Let's argue about the matters within the society including globalisation and imperialism. There is

also something missing. Turkey is making some progress on economic performance, maybe not practically but at least on the documents, where is my free travel right within EU? There are many European companies and citizens coming and living in Turkey, why should I not have a right to travel freely as a journalist? Also on the Cyprus matter, people who were born in 1974 are now in their 30s. If the EU keeps trying to bring Cyprus to the table for Turkey what they would think when Cyprus War Veterans are still around us?

ZO: I would like to add something to Mr. Çerçi's words. We as IKV always said that EU is a community project. What is more free from the Administrations, since Ataturk, we think that the EU is the government's goal to reach. Turkey has always looked towards the West, so free from all the political correctness it is indeed a government goal. When we talk about society's transformation, that should come down to micro level, which means the ordinary citizen on the street should be aware what the EU will bring to her/him. At least there should be an image in their heads but it always stays on a macro level. There are 35 subjects for the negotiations but only 3 or 4 of them brought to the society to discuss so far.

MS: I think on some matters the EU is not fair. Istanbul is the capital of culture for Europe in 2010. I wish you had seen what the press agency sent to their countries to introduce Turkey. You would be shocked. Including Reuters, Associated Press used unbelievable pictures, showing head scarfed women, dirty sea and valleys. Is that the only Istanbul? I believe that was done on purpose.

MO: I think that is kind of learning and teaching process. We have to tell Turkish citizens about what they will benefit from and what they have to stop doing when they join the EU. Because of that as IKV we have started to work with kids, and what they think about the EU. We never worked one sided, just wanted to make sure they are aware of things.

HS: *I would like to move on to a new question. Since the EU started as the European Coal and Steel Community and moved onto European Economic Community (EEC), or 'Common Market' and with its latest structure as European Union, do you think that Turkish media was able to give the process by step by step and understand and tell Turkish citizen what was going on?*

MS: We can say that dialectically Turkish Media did the best it could. It is very interesting that Turkish people are interested in foreign news, including diplomacy news. That's why I always think that we have really good diplomacy journalists in Turkey. I have to remember Ismet Inonu's speech about the EU. He said that there is a new world and Turkey will take its place there.

TC: Decision makers in the EU know the importance of Turkey. They knew us as the sick man during the Ottoman Empire. It is in-

interesting that there were many journalists from abroad during the Independence War in Turkey and had interviews with Atatürk. Of course we have to mention the Anadolu Agency for working really hard to introduce modern Turkey to the world. There were even women journalists who came and talked to Atatürk during the war. I have to remind you that we are talking about 1920s. After 1945, with the threat of Russia, Turkey moved to the West. In 1974, on the Cyprus issue Turkey was at the same table with European countries but against the West. Our Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, went to London to negotiate and again diplomacy was working really hard and so did the journalists. Petrol crises and the change in Russia after 1980s, there were Turkish newspapers' offices in Europe and Russia. Then we had the real source for our media. Turkish media had a big success on Turkey – EU relations on economically and socially. Again, it was said that the EU is a community project. We have seen the arguments about cotton quotas with the Customs Union for the first time through the media. Earlier on we had only 1 or 1.5 page economy news in newspapers but that has come up to 10 pages now. Of course, the foreign news department is also playing a crucial role and within those years not only the number of diplomacy journalists increased but we also had economy journalists to work alongside diplomacy journalists. So we had news from different sectors, starting from 1986, including textile, leather, automotive, iron and steel and in ten years there were journalists who become experts on those sectors.

MO: Can I ask something? You say there has been a good process on the press but how about the quality and trueness of the news?

TC: There is a significant change in the quality of the news. The labour market's structure let students work for newspapers whilst studying. It is really hard to take on so many things as an intellectual. For example there is a 60 years old journalist who specialised on BMW in Germany. Most of our young journalists want to work as a columnist nowadays. Colleagues of mine have had both worked and learnt about the EU. It had to be this way. You must have a rhythm at a newspaper. But even within sectoral journalism it has improved so much. They have started to give some sectoral news. The other thing is the Customs Union was discussed - what would it bring and take from Turkey. In the end of the 1990s the media was left to four big media companies.

MS: Columnists become reporters nowadays.

TC: Then we can talk about the quality of the reporters.

ZO: I think it's not perfect anywhere else in Europe either. There is Italy, for example. All the media belongs to Berlusconi. In fact, that's an argument within the EU nowadays. For instance there was a meeting with French journalists on that matter in France. Because there is also a media monopoly so they are trying to find a solution for a better me-

dia on the whole. I think soon we may see some changes in Turkey too, some of the government organisations, especially RTÜK, in terms of freedom of the TV channels and the penalties given by RTÜK to the TV channels. The other thing is that even though Turkey is a member of the media programme we don't get any benefit because of some changes we have to make and haven't completed yet.

MS: Even though we have to make some changes, each country lives with its own background. Our media has had some breaking points in its history. One of them was the coup in 1980. When we woke up on 13 September 1980, half of the newspapers were already gone and most of them were never published again. That was a big trauma and then everything was forbidden for writers. We have passed that period when there was the *Tan* newspaper which didn't pay any attention to any problems, and sold a lot. They used pictures of beautiful women on the front pages and couple of other newspapers followed them. Then there were the others which were closed for some days or a period. After the coup was over then we had this second breaking point where the *Sabah* newspaper said we are moving to İkitelli because the mayor of Istanbul at that time promised some land to the newspaper owners. Everybody left Çagaloglu where the newspapers working in the heart of Istanbul and so close to the public. They had to quit the Union too. Therefore now we have journalists receiving mails and putting them onto their laptop and not moving anywhere for anything. The first one is over now but to solve the problem on the second one they have to come back to the heart of Istanbul.

HS: *Do you think that EU news is taking a place on the front pages of Turkish newspapers? Is the EU a good subject?*

MS: If it is something related to Turkey then yes it takes place. However news about the EU itself is not in Turkish newspapers mostly. They refused the constitution but that wasn't on the front page of any Turkish newspaper. So I can say that we only want to show the good sides of the EU. What I don't like is that the EU puts Turkey's nose in it. When it's only our business we should warn the EU, we should say; according to our acts you cannot do that. But they did that for the AKP trial on a party closing matter and nobody said anything to the EU.

TC: I believe that there is a manipulation from Istanbul or the capital city Ankara on the news regarding the EU. In 1995, after we joined the Customs Union there was a feeling that we had a celebration here. To manipulate that they used TV techniques, sharp words etc.

MS: I don't think we need to introduce the EU, we should introduce Turkey to EU. I think the problem comes from there.

MO: We have İKV, TOBB; TÜSİAD, İTO and İSO in Brussels. We have all these offices there but the thing is we don't have is coordi-

nation. We could present ourselves better with better coordination. On top of that we, should never expect a Belgian citizen to read a book about Turkey. That would be a luxury but if we are presentable there and show what we look like then it could be different.

ZO: We are organising some seminars in Brussels as İKV, they are called Windows to Turkey. There are participants from the EU Commission. At the end of each one we are giving away a set of books which have been written by historians about Turkey as well as novels. We have a huge demand for these. Sometimes we run out of books even.

MO: For instance we put two books of Orhan Pamuk. We could even say that they like this idea so much they may even only come for the books.

MS: We do need to promote Turkey. They still think that we are all wearing shalwars. We need to show our cultural and scientific sides also.

HS: *If we look at the relations between the EU and Turkey, sometimes we see up and down type situations between politicians and strategies. While all this is happening do you think the press is neutral or effective?*

MS: I think we are not objective on that matter. There are up and downs but in the best newspapers you don't see that really, there is a limit for this news.

ZO: There is a busy time in October when the progress report is about to be published. There is always rumour going on about what is in the report and what is not. Firstly, newspapers look at the first draft. This first draft somehow is excluded from circulation to the newspapers which normally we can't reach. Then this means that the front pages will go with different statements.

MS: That's interesting. Who give this to the press and why? First the draft and then the final report. They shouldn't do that at all. The same happens here for the trials. This is a trick. They want to know what public thinks about the report.

ZO: What terms are used on Armenian issue? Did they say South East problem or minorities? Some journalists pick up some words to which the public is sensitive. However, in the end, those words are not use but people still remember those from the newspapers. We are having some meetings with parliamentarians for dialogue. They come to Istanbul and meet journalists here. There was a parliamentarian who said that not everybody is against Turkey's membership in Europe. However, it is obvious that people who don't want Turkey to join have a louder voice. Turkey is not very interesting for media he said.

MS: So then we need to change the policy.

HS: *How do you find the EU's presentation in Turkey in terms of TV programmes and other activities?*

TC: There are some programmes on TV about the EU. On the one hand, there is an advantage to talk about projects etc. On the other hand we have to be careful. For instance agriculture is an important subject which has been open to manipulation in recent years. So we should tell the consumers what the new regulations will bring them. Fishing, environment, iron and steel are so important for us. If we are planning to discuss something about economic and social life we should definitely bring together the economic and social council. There are 35 subjects which will be opened and discussed. That is good. However there are some dangers too. We must be aware of that. I don't mean we have to refuse all the changes the EU asks for. If we know what we are doing and strong then we could give them a hard time also. This is how diplomacy works. If you think about the manipulations which have been made on agriculture it's creepy.

ZO: As İKV we have published some documents on five different sectors. What the people demand in Turkey or what rules will change, etc.

TC: I think what we need to do is we should leave that trauma situation. We should be ready with a good preparation and it could change at negotiations.

ZO: We don't have to be fully ready before we get the full membership but because Turkish companies export goods to the EU and they have to keep being in the competition.

HS: *Do you think there are different views in the media for the EU? If the subject is the EU is the Turkish media fair-minded?*

MS: I believe there is no such thing. Some writers may have a different opinion on the matter. As I said before, all the newspapers are supporting Turkey's EU journey. Also people see themselves outside of Europe, remember any football match with European teams. People shout as "Europe Europe hear us". That's also a kind of protest here too.

HS: *What happens if Turkey becomes a member of the EU? What kind of changes, negative or positive may happen?*

MS: I don't think there would be any change.

ZO: I believe some rules would change. Diversity, European values are important.

HS: *When do you think Turkey is going to join the EU? How much time would it take for Turkey to join the club?*

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MS: I think it will take about 15 - 20 years. However, if we were that good why should we join. We would be as prosperous as Switzerland. They are not in the EU.

TC: I would say this question is same as when will we have a big earthquake in Istanbul? We know that there will be one in the next 30 years. I think when we stop asking this question to ourselves we will be able to join the EU. Let's also leave it to them to make it their problem, not ours. What we will come across in the end of this process we don't know, but there is always a solution in diplomacy. I think 2023 would be a very good timing to join EU. If we are well motivated towards 2023 and even to not become a member in the end of that period we would be more comfortable, relaxed and spontaneously go into the EU. There are some things which I would like to mention here and those needed to be questioned. a) If I have no right to talk about defence and security in the EU, it's no use for me. It should work for both sides. b) The economic and social council should take a step and with a professional communications strategy it could do a great job. Also we should have our artists and sportsman and women on Belgian streets. If we forget about prejudice nations will come closer.

MO: When I started university the EU had 15+1 Member States. We always have that +1 syndrome. Then the EU was 25+1 and now 27+1. We are always on the other side of the equation. We haven't been able to pass to the other side yet. In any case I support Turkey for EU membership. That's why we should present ourselves really well as well as giving as much as information out as we can for Turkish citizens too. We could actually use the internet for that because the internet is very common here.

MS: We have to introduce ourselves very well. Turkish people and Turkey too.

ZO: Maybe now its time to take advantage of Turkey among other member countries.

MS: We should tell people about ourselves honestly and simply. We should tell people about kebab, yoghurt drink, whatever we have - good or bad. We should tell Europeans, the immigrants were afraid to learn the language, if they don't understand you then you don't speak the same language.

ZO: We should want that first.

MS: Maybe there wont' be an EU in 2023.

TC: What kind of EU will we see in the future, that's one of the key points. It could be 51+ 1 so then it would be of no use to join.

HS: Thank you so much for joining us today. ■

Turkish Media in their Eyes

Foreign Correspondents in Turkey tell their Stories

deScripto reporter Merve Yilmaz talked with four foreign correspondents living in Istanbul. She asked questions about their profession, lives and experiences in Turkey. Here are their answers.



> **Guillaume PERRIER**
(LE MONDE, LA RADIO EUROPE 1 - FRANCE)
Cihangir Kaktüs Café, ISTANBUL

I don't have any family bounds with Turkey. I've never visited Turkey before. I started to work here by chance. I was curious. I wanted to work in the Middle-East. There was an opportunity to work here. Before I moved here I came here for six months and I fell in love with Istanbul. Then I went back to France and I met with professors, artists and writers who had good knowledge about Turkey. It's been three and a half years since I've started working here.

I write about everything. I write about football, politics, archaeology, etc. I write about all of the sections in a newspaper.

They don't have the same journalism culture in Turkey. There are big media groups. Newspapers are very polarised and they make political campaigns. They are very subjective. In France even though there is a big difference between *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, you can't differ them on foreign political subjects; especially on Turkey.

Even though there is a progress, there are still lots of problems about freedom of press in Turkey. It is now better than ten years ago, but there are a lot of journalists who have legal problems. I had problems also last year while I was working there.

I try to read different types of newspapers to see different opinions. I like to read "*Taraf*". I appreciate their work. They try to work freely and they are doing something in Turkey that has never been done before. There aren't much to read for foreigners because you can't read every Turkish newspaper in a foreign language. You can only read *Turkish Daily News* and *Zaman* in English.

I'm comfortable with working in Istanbul. Istanbul is my home now. When I go to Paris for a visit, I feel like a tourist. People are easier to communicate with. It's easy to work here. I don't feel any pressure in Istanbul. I write freely but I can't work freely in every region of Turkey. There is still a lot to do.

Le Monde has offered me a blog on their website. That's how I started to write in every subject to represent Turkey as a foreign online correspondent. Turkish people are not well known in France. They have prejudices about Turkey since it is a Muslim country. Even though they have historical bound, it has been forgotten. They don't know Turkish people well enough. I find both Turkish people and French people very nationalist. That's why I write in every subject about Turkey to break this wall between two countries. I work for *l'Hebdomadaire*, *Le Point* and *LCI* as well.



> **Jan P. KEETMAN**
(BASLER ZEITUNG- SWITZERLAND)
Şişli, ISTANBUL

I've been living in Turkey for ten years. I work for *Die Presse* Vienna, a Zurich newspaper and *Basler Zeitung* for Switzerland. I write about everything. Politics and economics, cultural events and sports, etc. But in general I write about politics and economy.

I'm a German citizen. But I represent Switzerland as a journalist as well. In Switzerland, there are more local newspapers than in Turkey. I find more columnists in Turkey than in Switzerland. For example in *Milliyet* there are a lot of columnists. In Turkey they think that a journalist should take a side. We always read opinions, not the exact facts. In Germany and in Austria I face the columnist fact like in Turkey too. There are some columnists that I like to read in Turkey.

I find freedom of press in Turkey better than few years ago. I know some of journalists who have been assassinated. I am aware of organised crime's pressure on journalists in Turkey. Article 301 is an obstacle for freedom of press. Of course, there has to be a limit between criticism and insult. Government uses the official ideology as a pressure device. The other danger besides that is monopolisation of media in Turkey. Some of them are against the government, some of them are pro-government. It is as simple as that.

I find *Milliyet* better than before. I read *Radikal*, sometimes *Vatan* and *Hurriyet* as well. I glance over *Taraf* and *Birgün*. I speak Turkish so it is easy for me to follow Turkish press. But for the other foreign correspondents there are not enough sources to follow Turkish press in any other language. *Turkish Daily News* is late. Sometimes I read *Today's Zaman* but I find it problematic. They don't write about the subjects that Turkey should discuss. There should be more Turkish press in other languages or correspondents should learn Turkish!

Working in Turkey is comfortable for me, but it is still hard to work in the South-East of Turkey, I know that. A few years ago, I stayed in a police station for a day. It wasn't a probation. I was there for a report. Other than that I didn't face any major problems.



> **Robert Stewart TAIT**
(THE GUARDIAN- ENGLAND)
Cihangir Mavi Kum Bookstore, ISTANBUL

I was working in Iran before I came here. I faced a lot of pressure. Renewing my visa was difficult so I had to leave because of the government. Ten years ago C. Morris was working in Turkey for the BBC. I came to Turkey because of its strategic location.

I write about culture and politics. It has been 7 week since I started to work in Istanbul. I wrote about smoking bans in Turkey, the closure case of AKP, alcohol restriction. I visited Kayseri and Kapadokya as well. I like to search social trends lying behind of all of these subjects that I have searched.

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If I compare Turkish media with British media I find the Turkish press aggressive, and partisan. Turkish press is relatively free. I observed two distinct camps. There are secularist newspapers and there are religious newspapers. Media in Turkey is polarised because of secularism discussions. Ideology is still strong in Turkey. However, ideology is broken down in England. Australian-American global media mogul Rupert Murdoch has a big power in England. I observed the same strategies with Dogan Media Group in Turkey.

I can't read Turkish Press so I try to follow news in English by Turkish Media. But I know *Taraf* newspaper is a courageous journalism example. I read *Turkish Daily News*, *Today's Zaman*. I had gone through really hard times in Iran, so now I'm relieved in Turkey.

Turkey is easy to work in. The English language is easy to use and you have access to English language press everywhere. Turkey has a relatively open society. So that is enabling my job. I've been here only for seven weeks but Istanbul is easy to live in.



> **Delphine NERBOLLIER**
(LE SOIR, LE CROIX, LE TEMPS – BELGIUM
AND SWITZERLAND)
Taksim Kaktüs Café, ISTANBUL

I started to work in Turkey a little by chance. *Actualité Européenne* had offered me to work in Turkey about four years ago. That was the time when European Union negotiations had started. I worked here for one month then two, three... Now it has been four years since I started to work in Istanbul. I have no bounds with Turkey. There are a lot of francophone actualities in Turkey that I can write.

In general, I write about internal politics. I write about the Kurd issues, because there a lot of Kurdish people in Belgium and in Switzerland. Also in Europe, people are really interested about Turkish people's opinion towards the European Union. I write for France as well. Since there are a lot of Armenian people in France, I write about Armenian issues in Turkey. AKP, DTP, role

of the army in Turkey; these are my main subjects. Besides, I work for Radio Union Paris. It's based in Lebanon. There, I discuss Turkey's role in the Middle-East. There are not many things to write about arts and culture. They don't pay that much attention to subjects which is related to arts and culture. Sometimes I write about economics.

I'm a French citizen. I work for Swiss and Belgium media as well. If I compare Turkish media with French media of course, there are major differences. In Turkey, there are a lot of national newspapers. I see them as newspapers of opinions. You can reach every kind of opinion. But they all have the exact information. But in France there are fewer newspapers but you learn different information. I appreciate visual media in Turkey. You reach information from the source live by channels like NTV and CNN TURK. I find *Radikal* and *Milliyet* moderately balanced. But there is no equivalent of *Le Monde* in Turkey.

Basically you can write about everything in Turkey. However, there are limits in political and economical subjects. Journalists feel the pressure. There are taboos. In France or in Belgium the army isn't a big part of the country. In Turkey, even a caricaturist might be accused. National service is a very sensitive issue in Turkey. As everybody knows, there is a big difference on freedom of press between Turkey and Europe. A country should protect their institutions, but in Turkey I find them over-protected by the government.

I read *Milliyet*, *Radikal*, *Taraf*, *Zaman* and sometimes *Cumhuriyet*. I don't buy newspapers everyday so I follow them via the internet. Freedom of the press in Turkey relies on big media groups and they see press as it is commerce. It is hard to be independent as a journalist.

I had no problems in Turkey while I was working. It was easy to have work permit. Also, I had nice relationships with the Turkish people that I met. They like to talk to me. I always work alone. Last year, I went to Sırnak and I had smooth conversations with the local people. I've visited Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Ceyhan, Samsun and Trabzon for different reasons. They were really nice experiences for me. It takes a lot of time to have a permit to talk with administrative organisations in France. However, Turkish deputies are easy to talk to if you don't have a language problem. Journalists are more accessible to make interviews according to people who work for television. Therefore, I find myself lucky. Besides, I can speak Turkish so it's an advantage for me while talking with local people. I have a friend who works in Moscow and my friend says that it's hard to communicate with the people there because they are really reclusive. I'm planning to continue my work in Turkey. ■

Names you should know in Turkish media

By *deScripto*

32nd Day (32. Gun): Turkish news & politics show running on different TV channels since 1985. Currently on Kanal D, 32.Gun is produced by journalist Mehmet Ali Birand and his team.

Acik Radio (Acik Radyo): *You can read about Acik Radio in Miray Caner's article.*

AGB Nielsen Media Research (AGB Anadolu): AGB Nielsen is an international the company doing rating measurements in Turkey. It is the designated TAM data producer in Turkey since 1992. The AGB Nielsen panel represents urban Turkish population with 2500 households.

Agos Newspaper: *You can read about Agos Newspaper in Bahar Muradoglu's article.*

Anadolu Agency (Anadolu Ajansi), AA: Founded in 1920, AA is the biggest news agency of Turkey. Has 28 regional offices in Turkey and 22 bureaus in foreign countries. AA offers photography, special bulletin and provincial bulletin services and delivers around 700 – 800 news stories and around 200 photographs daily.

Arena: Popular investigative news show running since 1992 on Turkish TV. Produced by journalist Ugur Dundar and his team.

Cumhuriyet Newspaper: The oldest newspaper in Turkey. An advocate of secularism and Kemalism.

Dogan Group: Dogan Group is a conglomerate active in energy, media, industry, trade, tourism and insurance sectors. As a media and entertainment conglomerate it operates in TV and radio broadcasting and print and online media. Dogan Group owns newspapers, magazines, book publishers, TV channels, radio stations, Internet companies and a music company. Besides six other newspapers Dogan Group publishes Turkish Daily News, one of the few English-language

newspapers in Turkey. Kanal D is the leading TV channel of the Dogan Group. It also owns new channel CNN Turk a joint venture with Time Warner. "The Young Communications Experts Competition" is also organized by Aydin Dogan Foundation established by the Dogan Group.

Journalists Association of Turkey (Turkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyeti), TGC: Founded in 1946, the association aims to raise the quality of the media, support freedom of expression and promote media ethics. TGC owns a press museum and collection of historical newspapers. Only owners of the official yellow press cards can be members of the association.

Journalists Union of Turkey (Turkiye Gazeteciler Sendikasi): Founded as Istanbul Journalists Union in 1952 Journalists Union of Turkey tries to summon journalists in the press and audio-visual media under a workers-union.

National Newspapers in Turkey: Aksam, Birgun, Cumhuriyet, Bugun, Dunya, Evrensel, Fanatik, Fotomac, Fotospor, Gunes, Halka ve Oylara Tercuman, Halkin Sesi, Hurriyet, Milli Gazete, Radikal, Referans, Sabah, Star, Sozcu, Taraf, Turkiye, Vakit, Vatan, Yeni Asya, Yenicag, Yeni Safak, Zaman

NTV: Founded in 1996 and started to broadcasting in 1997, NTV was one of the first thematic television channels in Turkey and the first private news channel.

Radio Television Supreme Council (Radyo Televizyon Ust Kurulu), RTUK: *You can read about RTUK in Bihter Celik's article.*

Star TV: The first private television channel in Turkey. Star TV started as Magic Box channel to broadcast to Turkey from Germany in 1990. Owned by businessman Cem Uzan and Ahmet Ozal, son of 8th President of Turkey Turgut Ozal, Star TV created need for legal basis for private broadcasting and opened way to other private television channels. Star TV is currently owned by Dogan Group.

The Sublime Porte (Bab-i Ali): The residence of the Ottoman grand viziers in Istanbul. The area where the residence is located was also called Bab-i Ali and was the center of many Turkish newspapers. The term Bab-i Ali Press is used to describe traditional Turkish media. In 1990s while many newspapers were moving to other districts especially to newly constructed plazas in Ikitelli, critiques used the term to describe so-

cially and politically responsible publication policies against commercial interests in media.

Politics Forum (Siyaset Meydani): Popular news - discussion show on Turkish television running since 1994. Produced by journalist Ali Kirca and his team.

Television Broadcasters Association (Televizyon Yayıncıları Derneği), TVYD: Founded in 1999, TVYD aims to solve problems and raise quality of the television broadcasters. Only national, regional, local and satellite and cable broadcasters are accepted as members to TVYD. Almost every national and important regional and satellite channels are members of TVYD. Governmental institutions accept TVYD as representative of Turkish televisions.

Turkish Newspapers in English: The New Anatolian, Today's Zaman, Turkish Daily News.

Turkish Press Council (Basin Konseyi): Founded in 1988, Turkish Press Council is a self-regulation NGO platform created by journalists. It aims to support the freedom of expression in the media by promoting responsibility in freedom or self-regulation principles.

Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (Turkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu), TRT: TRT was founded 1964 and is the national public broadcaster of Turkey. TRT is funded by taxes, government funds and advertising. Until 1990 TRT held a monopoly on broadcasting in Turkey. There are four national and two international television channels in TRT network. TRT also broadcasts since 2004 programs in languages other than Turkish, such as Kurdish and Arabic.

Turkish Universities with Communication Faculties: Akdeniz University, Anadolu University, Ankara University, Atatürk University, Bahcesehir University, Baskent University, Cumhuriyet University, Ege University, Erciyes University, Firat University, Galatasaray University, Gazi University, Hacettepe University, Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul Ticaret University, Istanbul University, Izmir Economy University, Kadir Has University, Karadeniz Technical University, Kocaeli University, Maltepe University, Marmara University, Mersin University, Selcuk University, Yasar University, Yeditepe University.

The Women's Media Monitoring Group (Medya İzleme Grubu), MEDİZ: *You can read about MEDİZ in Asuman Kutlu's article.*

Language Policy in the Turkish Media

By Nilüfer Timisi

Associate Prof.Dr. İstanbul University Communications Faculty

In the constitution of collective identities, the role of means of communication is as significant as formal education. Benedict Anderson, when he said “nation is an imagined community,” certainly had in his mind the idea means of communication such as the printing press, as one of the prime factors in the creation of a national consciousness. According to him, what makes new types of communities imaginable is closely related with the common meta-language and the state of commonness built around the narrative of that meta-language. Newspapers have created communities who have no chance to come together but feel moving in the same direction and lead parallel lives. In this respect, the perception that makes up the collectivity of “we” is not intrinsic to the group but to the narrative of the group. We can say that our sense of identity does not originate from us defining ourselves through a particular group but from the way in which we perceive the definition of group. Clearly, this perception is a dynamic one under the influence of peoples’ experiences through time and space.

In the history of Turkish modernisation broadcasting institutions have contributed significantly to the construction of a national culture. In this context, TRT, Turkish Radio and Television organisation, is usually taken to be the central actor for the identification and definition of national culture. It can be argued that TRT is the cement of the mosaic which is frequently referred to as the main metaphor describing the way in which Turkish national identity integrate the differences. In fact, TRT has functioned as a kind of latent categoriser in the hands of the state describing and acting on cultural and identity differences that exist in the Turkish society. TRT

has also shouldered the ideological function to disseminate the official ideology of the state besides its overt roles of modernisation and development. Setting aside the changing political stance depending on the current government’s status and consequent changes in the content of programming, TRT has always sided with the dominant ideology prevailing in society and thus structured its broadcasting policies. The dominant ideology can be identified with the Turkish state’s motto “one state, one nation, one homeland,” and TRT’s expected function is shaped as that of socially responsible public broadcasting. Such a policy does not only aim at educating and furthering the culture of its audience, but also aims to turn them into good (loyal) citizens. In this picture it would be reasonable to imagine the state as the symbolic totality of a giant community designed and constituted from top to down. Citizen, on the other hand, is understood as the special type of subject of the state who, in his public and private lives, distances himself from the traditions, oldness, Easternness, etc. and adopts the definition of secular, modern, Western individual. This same subject is also considered to have left racial and ethnic differences, and differences originating from social classes completely behind. TRT addressing this imaginary and mostly utopian subject defines itself inside a *meta-status* embracing all differences originating from religion, language, religious sect, gender, etc. citing “Atatürk’s principles” in its entire legal documents, i.e., laws, by-laws as well as in its programmes as subtexts. It is true that in the construction of national identity TRT has taken on a significant role, yet this role precisely due to it being “*meta*” cannot be considered today as natural—neither correct nor incorrect.

Process of Privatisation

Turkey’s integration to the globalised world has brought to the agenda the meeting of cultural differences among many things since the 1980s. One might call this situation a traumatic state of realisation of the fact that Turkey is not composed of a single identity as the motto of “one nation” stated. It would be absurd to think that the field of broadcasting would remain immune to this situation. In this field major structural changes have taken place. The trauma had many faces like decentralisation, free-market economy, freedom of expression and it had found its counterpart in the field of jurisdiction since Turkey’s passage to private broadcasting has been a traumatic experience as well.

The first private channel aired its programmes in 1990 illegally and the law makers had to adjust country’s legal (constitutional) structure after the event in 1993. As if this was not enough, the owner of the pirate television channel was the son of the then Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal. It was only after a year following the constitutional change that took place in 1993 that the parliament was able to pass a law regulating the establishment and broadcasting of radio and television institutions (Law no. 3984). This legal arrangement instituted the Radio and Television Supreme Council (*RTUK*) which was assigned the role to issue by-laws, regulations and control of broadcasting content and the distribution of frequencies. The new legislation has abolished TRT’s broadcasting monopoly and privatised the broadcasting sector. Now the media market is a profitable field open to investors.

It is possible to read privatisation as a pluralising decision leading to the emergence of broadcast institutions with different ideo-

logical positions. In fact, following privatisation act, there emerged numerous broadcasting companies who identify themselves with various political positions. Among these one can count liberal, conservative, nationalist, and leftist ones as well as Islamist channels which attract particular attention. The presence of a pluralist communication structure has proven very important for the audiences. This change meant leaving behind the notion of a monolithic audience who were, as it is widely referred, “imprisoned” to TRT. The new audience of pluralist broadcasting structure is thoroughly fragmented on the basis of the political and cultural preferences of the audiences themselves.

Besides the national channels and stations a great number of local and regional broadcasting institutions constitute an important parameter toward understanding the transformation experienced in Turkey’s communication history. Because their emergence had impacts felt not only in the broadcasting policies but also on the social and political agenda of the country. Regional and local realities and the sub-cultures that attach themselves to these have become very major actors of the new identity politics in the changing conjuncture of the globalising world. To be precise, one might very well illustrate the situation by contrasting TRT’s definition of a unifying “we” with that of “other” defined as an outcome of the new global politics and the cultural encounters it generates. The so-called others in this framework, those who remained in the “periphery” of a given hegemonic discourse or those who constitute “local cultures,” etc., have increasingly become more demanding than ever before for their rights, cultural or otherwise, which have been curiously absent in the dominant culture. Such demands led to the liberation of the limits of negotiation for all the actors involved in the overall reorganisation of the field of culture. For instance, religious, ethnic, and sectarian identities caused the existing regulatory structure of the field of communication to be questioned and challenged very stringently. On top of all these,

the process of accession to the European Union has become another force field with regard to the recognition of the local identities in Turkey. As the colloquial jargon constantly reiterates, the “conditions” of EU membership like “the protection of cultural diversity” is forcing the governments in the areas of rights of education and broadcasting in one’s mother tongue. Such internal dynamics and external forces can be seen as factors contributing to the policy making process involving the recognition of local identities in Turkey.

Changing Language Policy in Broadcasting

The language policy of Republic of Turkey relies on the recognition of Turkish as the official language. There is no doubt that the domination of Turkish over the public sphere has a lot to do with the definition of nation involving language as one of the prime criteria. While on the one hand the notion of nation is taken as the totality diminishing ethnic and linguistic differences, Turkish on the other hand is still privileged by being the official language and mother tongue.

The situation of the minorities and minority languages deserve special attention within this context. There are two types of minorities in Turkey. Firstly, there are the minorities whose status is officially recognised under the Lausanne Treaty. Greek (Rum), Armenian, and Jewish people fall in this category and their rights to receive education and broadcast programmes in their mother tongue as well as fulfil religious duties are guaranteed by the Lausanne Treaty. Second, there are those groups of people who belong to an ethnic/linguistic identity other than Turkish but are Muslims and do not fall into the official minority status. This situation forbids this latter type of minorities to use their mother tongue in the public sphere (in courtrooms for instance), receive education or broadcast in their language. Although the second type of “unofficial minorities” was forbidden to enjoy the rights pertaining to their mother tongue for a long time, the sit-

uation is slowly turning around with an indication that there will be more rights in the coming years. This new situation is the direct result of Turkey’s accession negotiations with the European Union, marked by the declaration of Turkish National Programme on the Adoption of European Union Legislation on March 19, 2001. Within this framework, Turkish governments began to pass a series legislations commonly known as “adaptation laws.” The third reform package which was passed on August 3, 2002 is of particular significance with regard to national broadcasting policies.

The third reform package involves legislation implementing changes in RTUK law by the addition to the Article 4 reading “...broadcasting in traditional languages and dialects used in the daily lives of Turkish citizens is permitted...” The detailed regulations via by-laws and the function of control are left to RTUK, the Radio and Television Supreme Council. In the beginning the broadcasting in the so-called “traditional languages and dialects” were going to be done by TRT only. As the result of reactions to this limitation, the right to broadcast in these languages was broadened and private radio and television businesses were also allowed to run their programmes since 2003. After the preparation of necessary by-laws by RTUK, in January 2004 broadcasting in languages other than Turkish has become legally possible. Parties who would like to enjoy this freedom must receive permission from RTUK prior to actual broadcasting.

It was the state television’s “third channel” (TRT-3) and TRT Radio’s first station which began the first non-Turkish broadcasting on June 7, 2004, roughly six months after the issuing of the by-law. The television broadcasts were arranged to run between 10:30 and 11:00 every morning and the radio was to air non-Turkish programmes everyday at 6:10 a.m. lasting 35 minutes. These broadcasts involved Bosnian, Arabic, Circassian and in two dialects of Kurdish, Kirmanci and Zaza and the programmes are called “Our Cultural

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Richness.” As of 2008, there exists no national radio and a television broadcasting institution with an application to run a business. In the Eastern and South Eastern regions where the Kurdish population is the majority, however, very few television and radio corporations applied for permission to make regional broadcasting. One amongst them have received license to make Kurdish broadcasting. The AKP government passed a new legislation from the parliament implementing changes in TRT law extending the broadcasting hours and letting the state corporation to establish a new channel devoted to non-Turkish Broadcasting on June 11, 2008. As expected, the preparations are still underway and being waited by the public with some curiosity.

Challenging the Official Policy

The events described above reflect a serious breaking point in the history of Republic of Turkey on cultural rights and language policy. As it will be remembered, such policy was to define Turkish as the main language for all citizens while confining other (ethnic) languages to within the private sphere. Nevertheless it would be somewhat misleading to reach the conclusion that this transformation is a change in the overall policy regarding the ethnic and linguistic communities. In other words, the reform packages passed as part of the process of Turkey’s accession to the European Union cannot be read as a policy change toward the recognition of ethnic and linguistic minorities. A careful analysis would reveal that the ban on languages other than Turkish such as Kurdish could become a legitimate analytical tool for ethnic separatist discourses. As a matter of fact, an armed separatist group, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has succeeded in utilising the argument that the ban on the rights of broadcasting and education in Kurdish legitimised armed struggle and terroristic acts. Behind this success one can find irresponsible declarations by various state officials like “Kurdish is not an independent language, it is merely distorted/corrupted Turkish”.

To disregard a language, deny its very existence, and apply limitations on its free usage are certainly matters of political resistance for at least three important reasons. First and foremost, such policies mean establishing hierarchies between the groups of citizens living in the same country on the basis of their ethnic and linguistic identities. A state could decide on an official language to facilitate and sustain public life when there is a multiplicity of linguistic communities in a country. But such a decision should not be extended to the domains of education and culture. The contrary policy based on recognition and facilitation of educational and cultural rights on the part of ethnic and linguistic groups would strengthen such groups’ commitments to that country’s citizenship. Secondly, obstructions regarding the use of a language would mean a serious offence against human rights. As it is very well known, free access and use of language is a fundamental human right since language is not a value adopted at one’s will nor it is a commodity to be owned. Lastly, languages are considered as the common cultural heritage of all humanity. Protection of this heritage is sanctioned by the international community, in various documents issued by the UN and the EU. For these reasons protecting languages and ethnic groups who speak these languages must be removed from the agenda of a narrow political struggle and imagery, and located in their due context, after, of course, the fundamental rights issue is resolved for good.

The Main Framework of the Regulation for Broadcasting in Mother Tongue in Turkey

Above it was stated that the by-law allowing and regulating broadcasting in mother tongues was issued on the basis of RTUK Law. The implementation of the legal framework has generated a heated debate amongst Turkish public opinion and it would be a fair prediction to say that such a debate will last for quite some time. It is possible to classify these discussions under two main headings. The first type of dis-

ussions is political. As it is indicated above, the language in question is Kurdish as the ethnic people who speak various dialects of this language are Kurds. Clearly, it is this very group who became subject of political discussions pertaining to the broadcasting languages and due to their population density in the eastern and south eastern Turkey, it was again some Kurdish groups who put forth political demands. For more than 20 years Turkey has struggled with ethnicity-based separatist PKK terror. It is a known fact that PKK interprets limitations on the use of Kurdish language as a sign of disregard for the Kurdish people. In such a context, regulations on the broadcasting of local and regional languages is perceived in terms of “national identity,” “national sovereignty,” and, most importantly, “national security” issue. Obviously, parties joining in the discussion are offering arguments in lieu with their general ideological positions. Therefore, the placement of Kurdish within the field of broadcasting institutionally is read by some actors as a tool for the registering of Kurdish unity from democratic ways. On the other extreme, there are those radical nationalist groups and political parties who think that broadcasting and education in Kurdish would contribute to Kurdish nationalism and provide PKK with a legitimate network of communication which would ultimately mean propaganda. The ethnic group legitimised through the Kurdish language would either ask to be officially recognised as a minority or else implement pressure to separate from the mainland and become an independent state. In either situation the Turkish nation and state will be partitioned. What might be named as “separation fear,” therefore, always leads the groups carrying it in their minds and discourses to position themselves against the cultural rights of Kurds, in fact, against any group who spell the phrase “cultural rights.”

A second focus of discussion emerges at exactly the point where one might question the relationship between state and languages. If and when the state institution

begins broadcasting in a language other than the official language then this would mean the breaching of impartiality principle of the state. In such a case the groups whose language is not represented in the broadcasting institution will have their ties to their state weakened. This argument is usually put forth by social democrat parties and circles. As a matter of fact, within the national borders of Turkey 36 languages are spoken in various intensities and those who speak them are not considered as a minority according to the Turkish legal system. According to the view that emphasises the impartiality principle of the state with regard to broadcast languages, preferring one of these languages to another would simply mean discrimination. The solution is thus to leave broadcasting in these languages to private enterprise and leave the state out of this debate.

A second type of discussions or a second level of criticisms has to do with the technical quality of the by-law regulating the broadcasting. These criticisms are usually raised by liberal and leftist circles but also supported by conservative and Islamist critics who have problems with the official discourse of the state. According to this view, broadcasting in ethnic languages is a policy which must be supported but what is actually happening in Turkey does not show any parallels with procedures approved by the European Union. Although there are numerous references in the form of suggestions and reports as well as texts approved by the European Parliament, one of the most significant documents that must be taken seriously is “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages” dated October 5, 1992. Another and more recent document is “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities” dated February 1, 1995. Both documents contain general principles pertaining to broadcasting in regional, local, and ethnic languages. The fact is that Turkey has signed none of these important documents so far. It is claimed that both texts involve liberating

policies supported by special measures regarding broadcasting languages while the regulation in Turkey is based on an understanding of control and limited-freedom. To understand the limits, one needs to review the restrictions brought by the regulations for the broadcasting in “traditional languages and dialects”.

There are some formal restrictions in the regulations. The most evident examples of this are the restrictions in programmes with regard to the targeted mass of people, and the kinds of content, in both regulations. Under the expression “programmes of news, music and the promotion of traditional culture targeting only adults can be broadcast in these languages and dialects”, the regulation states that “programmes cannot be broadcast to teach these languages and dialects.” These expressions imply that the freedom brought forth by the regulations was, in fact, a kind of “freedom” that was brought onto agenda out of necessity but controlled through the strongest possible restrictions and sanctions. When we examine these formal restrictions carefully, we observe that unnecessary and questionable implications are determined in the use of time and cultural symbols. The duration of the programmes is set as five hours per week for radio channels with not more than 60 minutes per day, and four hours per week for TV channels with not more than 45 minutes per day. According to the regulation, Turkish subtitles would be used in programmes or all sentences would be translated into Turkish. Broadcasting organisations are obliged not to use propagandist symbols aside from logos of producers, broadcaster logos, voice effects and promoting voices during the programme.

Conclusion

In Turkey even a superficial gaze would reveal that the issue of broadcasting in languages other than the official language is a complex phenomenon. Besides being a major historical breakthrough toward the recognition of the other, the problems of

native languages pose a binary opposition. On the one pole we have the gradual approach to the European ideal of multicultural society. On the other pole there is a very strong fear of splitting into pieces, to some, the paranoia of separatism. The tension that is expressed by these two poles is, in fact, a pseudo tension. Because, despite the positions represented by the extreme poles involve elements of truth, on the whole, neither of them can account for a realistic and substantial prediction concordant with the historical reality of Turkey.

There is no doubt that Turkey has a lot to learn from the European policies on local languages. On the whole, the worst situation is to imprison oneself into the wrong belief of uniqueness. As it is very well known, Europe has a wide variety of examples illuminating a wide variety of strategies of handling local language problem. Obviously there are good cases and there are bad ones and the point is to try to understand each one of them in order to make the best out of it. What is important, though, is not to idealise an imaginary “European way,” for there simply is no such a thing. It is vital to emphasise this last point for everyday Turkish politics since the signifier of Europe has become a yardstick to compare different political positions against one another even on issues which do not have any direct relevance to Europe. Language policies can be regarded as one such case. Although full EU membership negotiations have a direct relevance to Turkey’s language policies, the ultimate benefit of the Turkish society is simply beyond being a mere negotiation item. As it has been stressed many times, Turkey should take care of its own problems for itself and to the benefit of the largest possible group of citizens. Such an approach would naturally carry the issue beyond narrow concerns and fears. There is no doubt that broadcasting in languages other than Turkish cannot be taken as a political gesture to Europe, nor can it be seen as the first step towards splitting up. The state television at this juncture has a vital role to play.

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TRT, as mentioned above, seems to be caught up between the binary opposition due to the heavy task put on its agenda. On the one hand, there is Turkey's ages old "Kurdish problem" and on the other, there is the new understanding of liberal language (and cultural) policies. Here, TRT is being criticised heavily for handling the task of broadcasting in languages other than Turkish with a second agenda in its mind, namely, controlling the process of liberalisation. It is, without doubt, true that as a state organ, TRT cannot be expected to act like a private channel. The problem is, however, that there is not a large enough number of private channels with a satisfying technical capacity to handle the task on national level. So, TRT has to carry it along by itself at least for the time being. The good thing is that broadcasting in languages other than Turkish is a cultural act and therefore it is out in the open for anyone to see and criticise. What this means is that no matter how satisfactory TRT's broadcasting policies have been, by the very fact that they are in effect, they can be modified toward a more functional state. In other words, it is better to have TRT to carry out this task rather than not!

What can be taken as an optimistic side in all these conflicting situations involving ethnic violence is that language is not an ordinary political issue. It cannot be generated or destroyed at will. Currently we observe a negative tendency shaping TRT policies. Policy makers seem to think that by allowing broadcasting in, say, Kurdish, they will have a higher hand in controlling the ethnic situation in Turkey. Nevertheless, this narrow political thinking cannot hinder the cultural potential of a language in terms of its capacity to turn itself into a universal cultural heritage. In other words, the top-to-bottom approach of the nation-state can prove to be the first step toward a fuller self-realization of a culture in the future. We have a case to be optimistic. Because it seems that Turkish state's position is open to further reforms since what it does by its involvement in language policies is a subtle acceptance of the fact that a politics made up of pure violence is absolutely futile. ■

Journalism 'à la Turca'

By Olga Untila

To understand how the journalistic system functions in Turkey, it is enough to have a look imagine looking down on a city you're about to land in: An architectural mixture, extremely colourful and absolutely impressive to the European eye. The Turkish press is as expressive as it is provocative, so that for an ordinary reader it is difficult to find one's way in the multitude of messages. In the mornings, joining big groups of travellers, you find yourself suddenly with two newspapers in your hand: giveaways. While the number of those who read is growing in front of your eyes, you feel a strong desire to buy another newspaper from a kiosk, and you do it. If you are waiting to receive a "thin" newspaper, like the ones sold in the ex-soviets countries, you will be surprised to get a national daily newspaper spiced up with some supplements on sport, beauty, career, technology and books. You get the feeling that Turkish society is greedy for information. In fact, 38 national newspapers sell about five million copies daily. Moreover, over one million free newspapers are distributed in Istanbul daily. The first impression gets somehow distorted when you pay attention to the statistics. The literacy rate of the country is about 80%. The country was shocked about the reports of one million illiterate children in 2007. These data justify several literacy campaigns in the press and ones organised by the government. Further on, such campaigns are supported by the press to increase the number of potential readers. Looking at the giveaway newspapers you receive, you feel that the Turkish press have taken a European model. However, the quality of these newspapers is questionable. The first one, *Gaste*, is printed and distributed by a private company. Although the newspaper itself seems to be neutral in its news policy, there are rumours about government involvement in its finance. The second one *20'd*, or *20 minutes*, is distributed by the Dogan Media Group and it is similar to English tabloids.

Lots of photos and news about violence creates a psychic discomfort in the morning. From discussions, I understood that free newspapers are generally well accepted and supported by their readers. They are also seen as an important factor in raising regular reading habits among the population. However, although they clearly contribute to the growth of the socialisation and intellectual level of the society, there is the risk that people who read these kinds of newspapers get used to them and stop reading other newspapers.

In order to give you an image of the quality of the Turkish journalism I want first share some opinions of Turkish journalists with you. According to Hasan Taskin from News Reporters Association, there is a need for free and independent journalism in the media. (Taskin, 2008) At the same time, journalist Alper Turgut talks about the death of the *news agent*, "some news you don't write, other news you cannot write" he says. (Kocabay, 2008) Journalist Ragip Duran complains that journalism has become a job. He says what today's journalists are doing is only a simple quotation, copying, sometimes exaggerating, but often misleading and hiding of facts. (Duran, 2002) In addition to these native critiques, EU pressure on Turkey about full guarantee of freedom of expression and freedom of press is also a well-known fact among Turkish people. However this pressure changes constantly depending on new law reforms in Turkey. Other critiques I encountered are the claims about close relations between the current government and the media and on the opposite site claims



about the relations between a state-within-a-state and the media. As I said before, like the architecture, the claims are also extremely colourful here in Turkey!

After all this, if you are still confused about the question, what it means to be a journalist in Turkey, there is a simple answer which every journalist answers alike: To have a yellow press pass! This card is issued by the state and gives some privileges to its owner. Some of the privileges are very old fashioned for our electronic time, like a cheaper postal service. But access to official press conferences or crime scenes can help a reporter. Moreover, some media institutions or NGOs require a yellow press pass for membership. Press cards are not uncommon around the world. But the fact that the state has the authority to define whom to call a journalist or not can breed discontent and can be understood as a control measure over journalists. Yet the policy is widely accepted here and there is an increasing of numbers of journalists obtaining the yellow press pass.

My dear readers, without going deeply in to the reports, statistics and numbers I tried to draw a picture of media in Turkey, a country which is constantly criticised from outside and discusses issues like freedom of speech and independence of press on the inside. Yet, Turkey manages to grow its media ecology and its importance. There is one more small detail that caught my attention, which is important to understand this country and its traditions: In Istanbul alone, there are five press museums and almost all national media companies and newspapers have their headquarters here! I believe it is one of the few cities in the world which preserves the tradition and history of journalism so carefully and at same time runs towards the future. Regarding freedom, well journalists all around the world have to run against obstacles when it comes to freedom. In Turkey, obstacles are just a bit larger and journalists are a bit bolder... ■



By Ayşe
Bihter Çelik

An Eye on the Turkish TV and Radio Channels

Radio Television Supreme Council

In the 1980s, as it was the world over, privatisation in Turkey started to grow, thus competition between companies grew. Advertising became important. Both capitalism has become stronger and the effects of media have been understood. The other important event which occurred was changes of media owners. Until that date, media owners were journalists who also owned their newspapers but since then many businessmen from other sectors bought those media companies and media started changing and getting away from its traditional content and structure.

After the military coup in 1980, Turkish media suffered a period of oppression and became largely depoliticised. Many media companies choose a lighter tone and competition for limited advertisements sources supported this decision. In 1983, the Radio Television Council was founded to protect and preserve media ethics in Turkish Radio and Television, which meant at that time only a few state controlled public broadcasters. In the early 1990s, private radio and television channels were founded. First illegally broadcast from foreign countries, these channels forced laws for private media institutions in Turkey. To regulate broadcast frequencies and protect media ethics, the Radio Television Council was rearranged in 1994, the council took the name of "Radio Television Supreme Council".

The council's rights and responsibilities are declared in The Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasts, No. 3984 and international protocols. The members of Radio Television Supreme Council are elected by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for 6 years. The members select a chairman and an assignee from themselves. The chairmanship duration is 2 years. The members can not be a partner or a director of media companies. The Radio Television Supreme Council has the authority to regulate TV and radio frequencies. This means every TV or Radio channel needs to get permission from the Supreme Council to broadcast in Turkey. The Supreme Council is also responsible for preserving ethics on TV and radio. Law No. 3984 describes a series of ethical broadcasting standards. The Supreme Council is also responsible for advertisement regulations. The council has the authority to warn, impose a monetary penalty, force institutions to broadcast certain content

as penalty, stop broadcasting for a certain time up to one year, and take back broadcasting licenses. Regular Supreme Council monitoring and complaints from viewers create data for possible penalties.

The Radio Television Supreme Council is also actively involved in academic research projects on Turkish media, education projects such as media literacy courses for schools and international representation of Turkish media in general.

We spoke with Zahit Akman, the current Chairman of the Supreme Council.

- How effective is the Radio Television Supreme Council on ethics and public good?

Akman: Ethics is really an important topic that has to be thought about, for both broadcasters and the listeners and viewers. The Radio Television Supreme Council and Television Broadcasters Association worked on this together and prepared "Ethic Principles of Broadcasting", so broadcasters can agree on common ethical approaches. It was signed on 3rd July 2007 and became valid. Also we are preparing a media ethics guide with sector representatives and academics from communication faculties. At the same time, we keep this topic on the public agenda with some seminars, conferences etc.

- What is your position towards self control of TV and radios?

Akman: Because of Law No: 3984, the Radio Television Supreme Council has an incumbency, obligation of controlling TV and radio broadcasting. Apart from that legal incumbency, we consider something else; self-control. We are doing some studies to generalise the self-control, like the "Television Viewer Representative" system. Many television channels have determined their television viewer representatives. Those representatives are like a bridge between broadcasters and television viewers. We share viewer complaints coming to our telephone line, with those television viewer representatives and meet with them to share ideas. In Western countries non-governmental organisa-



tions are very effective on broadcasting institutions. We also care about the NGOs and try to see broadcastings from their side. We make suggestions to them so they can provide better content to the public.

- What do you think of the relation between the Radio Television Supreme Council and advertisers?

Akman: Radio Television Supreme Council hasn't got a legal obligation to provide data to advertisers. But ratings are one of the most important problems for us. Broadcasters, advertisers and advertisement agencies work together on rating data. Especially, advertisers want to know which programmes are mostly watched by the viewers. We don't do rating measurements. However, in the results we acquire from our public opinion researches, there are some points that concern advertisers. I think they use those results to a maximum profit.

- Your institutions works closely and mostly in collaboration with the government. What do you think about that relationship? What are the negative and positive sides of that situation?

Akman: All over the world there are institutions like the Radio Television Supreme Council, but all of them have different infrastructures. The Radio Television Supreme Council has its own infrastructure. Members of the Radio Television Supreme

Council are selected by the Grand National Assembly but the structure of the Supreme Council is autonomous and self governing. Consequently, it is not connected to government but related to the government. The members implement their responsibilities independently, from the moment they were chosen, they would never be forced or directed for something.

- How do the process for content work, which contradicts with the Turkish Constitution and Supreme Council regulations?

Akman: Radio and televisions are monitored by the Supreme Council very carefully. For content which contradicts the Constitution some reports are written, after that we evaluate those reports and broadcasting copies and if it's necessary apply some sanctions according to the laws. The Radio Television Supreme Council's decisions are open to court. So, broadcasters can challenge the result and bring them to the court. After the decision of the court, the sanctions are applied or not.

- What do you think about the future of Turkish media?

Akman: The media sector in our country really has a dynamic structure and is developing very fast. This gives responsibilities to both the Radio Television Supreme Council and broadcasters. The quantity, supported by quality, will both contribute to democracy and the social and cultural needs of our citizens. ■

Shareholding Structures and Current Situations of Television Channels in Turkey

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Part from the ones in USA and their affiliations in Central and South America, radio stations and TV channels around the world were organised as state owned institutions before the 1980s. Radio and television broadcasting is accepted as being more influential than written media. For this reason, their organisation and operation were not left to free market conditions. Radio and TV have always been the focus of governments and other forces due to their power of reaching and affecting masses of people. Freedom in the written media has flourished in parallel to the developments in press technology whereas radio and TV have been treated differently and become devices that are monitored and manipulated by governments.

Radio and TV's power of influencing and manipulating people make the ownership of these institutions an important issue. Most countries accept the fact that radio and TV broadcasting should be in the hands of governments. In countries where private ownership is allowed, radio and TV broadcasting is specifically regulated and monitored. Official approval, which is not needed for written media, is sought for radio and TV broadcasting.

Global changes in the 1980s have radically changed media of communication and raised the issues of privatisation of state owned media institutions and/or making regulations that would allow private and commercial institutions to broadcast. These formations are generally referred to as "deregulations". In Turkey, until 1990, radio and TV broadcasting were monopolised

by the state, with an understanding of Statist and socialist state principles. Private commercial broadcasting started as 'de facto' in 1990 along with similar developments in the rest of the world and was regulated later on. The 1990s could be described as the time when private entrepreneurs set up radio stations and TV channels, which afterwards turned into media corporations that formed an oligopolistic structure.

Having been supported by the deregulating pressures of global capitalism and free market philosophy of liberalism, big capital owners developed an interest in TV broadcasting and competed with each other to set up new stations in order to be pioneers in adapting the whole society to the new world order. In the beginning, radio and TV broadcasting attracted attention from entrepreneurs who had previous experience in written media and wished to transfer this experience to audio-visual media, however along with capitalist society, it formed its own structure and institutionalised. Written media organisations gradually started radio and TV broadcasting and became integrated with the world of finance. In Turkey, despite an increase in media companies, news sources are quite limited because these companies are owned by a few big capital groups. As a result, although newspaper readers and TV watchers obtain news through a variety of channels, the message in the news they get is not varied.

Mass media communication plays a special role in social systems, economic and political formations. Within the past 18 years, Turkey has got used to multi-channel TV

and radio broadcasting, and the images which pass onto us from magnificent plazas of media corporations have become an indispensable part of our lives. Restructuring of media of communication has brought up another phenomenon: broadcasting organisations are no longer monopolised by governments, instead they are monopolised by private commercial corporations.

In Turkey, mass media is organised around two different ways of thinking; namely liberal and pro-globalisation and nationalist-religious (Islam) ways of thinking. Capital owner groups manipulate them in accordance with their commercial and political interests and/or benefit from them with the purpose of spreading their philosophies to society.

This study claims that TV corporations' capital and ownership structures are reflected in their editorial content and have the biggest share in stipulating general and fundamental messages to be given to society.

Analysing which TV broadcasting company is linked to which capital groups and other commercial activities will provide us with an insight into understanding the fact that capital groups have turned into monopolies. To this aim, the first part of the study consists of monopolisation terminology and elements, the second part, capital structures of TV broadcasting corporations in Turkey and the third part, discourse analysis of the editorial content of these corporations.

Monopolisation involves expansion, enlargement and merging in order to increase

efficiency. In the past, merging took place when financially stricken companies were taken over by strong companies, however today strong companies with no financial constraints merge, indicating a monopolisation tendency. Merging has always been a method of expansion for organisations, however the number and scale of company merging has peaked in the globalisation era.

The communication sector is powerful and that is why the loci of power try to intensify their monopolistic activities in this area. G. Burton asserts that the dominant characteristics of the media sector are monopolisation, enlargement, vertical merging, incorporations, variety, multi-nationalism, cooperation, production and freedom in distribution (Burton, 1995: 85).

Because the majority of advertising shares are owned by holding companies which also own broadcasting activities, small scale and independent TV stations struggle to survive and finally withdraw from the sector or are taken over by big capital groups. This tendency has started stifling pluralistic and democratic media.

The communications industry relies on high and sophisticated technology. Therefore it is a high cost business. N. Cost says media economy is in contrast with the principles of pluralism and continues explaining why this is so: preliminary costs, high risks, advertising markets, delay of profits and losses necessitate entrepreneurs to depend on big capital groups (Cost, 1992:184). Financial strains caused by external factors make suitable conditions for monopolistic tendencies.

In 2008, there are 18 holding companies owning TV channels in Turkey, eight of which have close relations with the party in government (AKP) and two of which belong to foreign capital groups. All of these companies have commercial activities in construction, tourism, banking and finance as well as TV broadcasting. From among TV stations, those who are operating with-

in big holding companies with a liberalist and pro-globalisation way of thinking have the biggest advertising shares and ratings.

■ **ALBAYRAK GROUP:** Besides their construction, industry, and tourism investments, they own a newspaper, a TV station (TVNET News Channel) and an internet news site.

■ **EUROPE, AMERICA HOLDING:** Besides banking, construction and services sector, they own four TV channels (CINE 5, Gala TV, Viva TV, Supersport) and four radio stations (Radyo 5, Radyo Viva, Radyo Nostalji, Show Radyo),

■ **BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY:** Besides hospital, spa hotel, food and oil industry they own a radio (Başkent Radyo) and a TV channel (Kanal B).

■ **CANWEST:** Canadian based international media group owns 28 newspapers, 5 magazines and 24 TV channels worldwide. In Turkey they own six radio stations, namely Super FM, Metro FM, Joy FM and Joy Turk. Canwest also has investments in advertising, software and news services.

■ **CİNER GROUP:** Having started their commercial activities with automobile spare part production, sales and import, Ciner Group today operates in three sectors: Ciner Energy and Mining, Ciner Media and Ciner Commerce, Industry and Services. In the media sector, Ciner Pres Holding, Ciner Media Investments, Kanal 1, Haber Türk TV and Radio Broadcasting, GD Newspaper & Magazine (Marie Claire, Marie Claire Masion, Rolling Stones, Arena, Seventeen, EGM, PC, Empire, Süper Alışveriş, FHM, OK), C Film Production, Ciner Publishing, Ciner Newspaper & Magazine.

■ **ÇALIK HOLDİNG:** They are involved in commercial activities such as construction, energy, textile, finance and trade-logistics. The company which has developed with the AKP government and channelled their investments to media sector after 2007

December is run by the Prime Minister's son-in-law. **Media:** Turkuaz Radyo Television Communications and Broadcasting, ATV, Radyo City, Sabah, Takvim, Günaydın, Yeni Asır, Pas, Fotomaç (newspapers), Bebeğim ve Biz, Sinema, Sofra, Home Art, Şamdan Plus, Yeni Aktüel, Para, Global Enerji, Transport and Hukuki Perspektifler (magazines), Merkez Distribution.

■ **ÇUKUROVA HOLDING:** It owns a company that has direct and indirect investments in finance companies and other companies operating in industry, construction, trade, media, communication, IT technology, energy, transportation and services sectors. **IT Technologies:** Turkcell, Kuzey Kıbrıs Turkcell, Geocell, Kcell, AzerCell, MoldCell, Life, GlobalBilgi, SuperOnline, eStore, TeICom, K.VK., Inta SpaceTurk, Milleni Com, European Telecommunication Holding, Atel, Topaz, İnteltek (İddaa), Hobim, AloVatan, bilyoner.com. **Media:** Akşam, Güneş, Tercüman, Alem, Stuff, Platin & World Business, FourFourTwo, AutoCar, Total Film, Maxim, Eve, Digitürk (Comedy Max, Gold Max, Gold Max 2, Dizi Max, Mymax, Movie Max, Movie Max 2, Action Max, Emlax, Show Max, Türk Max, JOJO, S'nek, Akıllı TV, TJK TV, İz TV, Lig TV, Intimacy, Touch), Show, Show Türk, Show Plus, SKY Türk, Lig Radyo, Alem FM, Mepaş Media Marketing, Zedpaş Media Marketing.

■ **DOĞAN HOLDİNG:** Doğan Group companies act in energy, media, industry, trade, tourism and insurance sector. Doğan Group has large investments in media with seven daily newspapers, three national, one international and two cable TV channels. Besides these, they have international partnerships in factoring, distribution companies and various other sectors. Doğan Media owns the following: **Media:** Newspapers published by Doğan Media Holding (DYH) (Hürriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Posta, Fanatik, Fanatik Basket, Referans, Turkish Daily News), magazines (Chip, PC Net, Level, Elle Decor, Evim, Masion Française, Atlas, Güncel Hukuk,

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Yacht Türkiye, Ev&Bahçe, Auto Show, Tempo, Capital, Ekonomist, Blue Jean, Hey Girl, Istanbul Life, Hafta Sonu, Hello, Burda, Elele, Elle, Formsante, Seda, Dr. Kuşhan'la Diyet, Seninle, Lezzet), TC Channels (Kanal D, CNN Türk, BJK TV, Fenerbahçe TV, Star TV, Euro D, Movie Smart, Movies 24, Comedy Smart, D Plus, D Yeşilçam, D Max, D Çocuk, Luli TV, Türkiye At Yarışları TV, D Spor, Dream TV, DreamTürk, D Shopping, Passion TV, Fantasy TV, Loca 1, Loca 2, Loca 3, Emlak TV, Movies 24 Erotica), digital platform (D-Smart), Radio Stations (Radyo D, Slow Türk, CNN Türk Radyo).

■ **DOĞUŞ GROUP:** Garanti Bank is one of the biggest companies of Doğuş Group which has commercial activities in finance, automotive, construction, tourism, media, property and energy with its companies over 70. **Media:** NTV, CNBCe, e2, NBA TV, NTVM-SNBC, NTV RADYO, Radyo Eksen, Radio N101, Rokket FM, National Geographic, National Geographic Kids, CNBC-e Business, Billboard, Slam, F1 Racing and Evo.

■ **GÖKTUĞ INVESTMENT:** Foreign trade, construction, textile factory and a TV channel (Flash TV).

■ **İHLAS HOLDING:** İhlas acts in media, construction, property, marketing sectors and has investments in education, health, household appliances. **Media:** TGRT News, TGRT Marketing, TGRT FM, Türkiye Newspaper, İhlas News Agency (İHA), TGRT Digital TV Services CO., Magazine Group (Yemek Zevki, Türkiye Çocuk, Tekstil & Teknik, Ofis Partner, Toyuncak, Made in Turkey Economic Newspaper, Home Textile Exports, Automotive Exports, Furniture Exports)

■ **KOZA İPEK HOLDING:** The company which has good relations with the AKP Government operates in the production and sale of invitations, postcards, notebooks, calendars diaries etc. In recent years the company has made more serious investments in mining and construction sectors. In 12 May

2008, by buying 99.99% shares of Yaşam TV Broadcasting Services which is the main shareholder of Kanaltürk TV, Kanaltürk Radyo ve kanalturk.com.tr website, the company started acting in media sector.

■ **MNG GROUP OF COMPANIES:** The company has activities in construction, banking, finance, tourism, airlines, courier services, media and defence sectors. They own a TV channel (MNG TV (TV8)) and a news agency (MNG Haber Ajansı).

■ **NEWS CORPORATION:** News Corporation is owned by Rupert Murdoch and has vast investments worldwide. In December, 2006, they bought TGRT TV Channel and started broadcasting as FOX TV.

■ **PROPERTY INTERNATIONAL:** Owned by a Northern Cypriot businessman, Ali Özmen Safa who is known to be close to AKP, this group of companies has commercial activities in diverse sectors. Safa who bought the *Star* newspaper in 2006 and thus stepped into the media world is also the owner of Kanal (Channel) 24 and the newspaper, *Star Kıbrıs* (Cyprus). Safa is also planning to launch a TV channel (Starhaber) in Cyprus to broadcast via satellite and some radio stations.

■ **SAMANYOLU BROADCASTING GROUP AND FEZA PRESS CO.:** This group which is closely linked with Fethullah Gülen has assembled written media such as newspapers, magazines and books under Feza Press Co. Samanyolu TV was set up in 13 January 1993 and acts under the name of Samanyolu Broadcasting Group. This group has a multinational structure with broadcasting activities in Asia, Europe, America and Africa. The group owns the following: **Samanyolu Broadcasting Group; National Channels:** Samanyolu TV, Samanyolu Haber TV, Mehtap TV, Yumurcak TV, **International Kanallar:** Ebru TV, Samanyolu Avrupa TV, Hazar TV, **Internet:** Samanyoluhaber.com, **Radios:** Burç FM, Dünya Radyo, **News Agencies:** Cihan Haber Ajansı.

■ **TERMİKEL GROUP:** Termikel Group started its commercial life with Termo Pressure Cooker Factory in Kayseri. Currently their commercial activities range from construction to the electronics sector. Termikel owns a TV channel (Kanal A) and an advertising agency.

■ **YENİ DÜNYA COMMUNICATIONS-BEYAZ HOLDING:** Set up by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as Municipality TV when he was the Mayor of Istanbul, is owned by Yenidünya Communications-Beyaz Holding. They act in the media sector through companies named Nokta Elektronical Media CO. and White Communications CO. **Channels broadcasting within Yeni Dünya Communications CO:** Kanal 7, Kanal 7 INT, Radyo 7, TVT. **Nokta Elektronical Media CO:** Haber7.com, rotahaber.com, cafesiyaset.com, newstime7.com, tumspor.com. **Beyaz Communications CO:** Ülke TV (Kanal 7 Haber TV), 91.8 Radio İstanbul'un Sesi.

With big capital entering the world of TV broadcasting, the format and the content of TV programmes have gone through a transformation.

As big capital owners launched commercial activities in a variety of sectors and bought magazines, newspapers, TV channels and production companies, editorial contents have become almost uniform. As a consequence of monopolisation, conflicting interests of communication holding companies, mutual allegations and accusations have been reflected in the programmes and the news they present.

Since the AKP government, there has been an increase in the number of nationalist-religious TV channels. It could be concluded that, for big capital owners, media activities have ceased to be the main field of activity but have become a locus of power to be held whilst carrying out other commercial activities in different sectors. ■



Turkish ambassador H.E. Selim Yenel congratulates Nedim Hazar in Vienna

European Media Award goes to Nedim Hazar

By SEEMO

For his, so far, six-part serial “Turkey on the Move“ Nedim Hazar, Director and Producer at NTV, receives the 2008 Erasmus EuroMedia Special Award.

The Erasmus EuroMedia Award is a well-known and desired award that is given in Vienna every year to outstanding media productions and programmes that deal with European society, culture, politics, science, and values. The awards have been given by the European Society for Education and Communication (ESEC) in cooperation with the City of Vienna. In this thematic context they are considered to be an educational contribution to the European identity and value discourse.

Through the work of the organiser of the event and the President of ESEC Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer, a total of 250 applications were sent this year and 50 media productions from 16 European countries (as well as Turkey and Russia) qualified for the finale. Subsequently, the jury of international experts made their decision on who the winners should be and the split-up of the donation. The winners of the Grand Award, Special Awards and Sponsorship Awards have been selected and presented in a ceremonial event in the City Hall of Vienna on October 10th, 2008.

The Grand Award went to a TV serial on ten Balkan countries, their history, society and culture, called “Balkan Express – Return to Europe“. The serial was produced by *pre tv*, an Austrian video production company with long experience in the South East European countries and broadcast by the Austrian Broadcaster ORF and 3SAT this year. One of the three Special Awards went to Nedim Hazar, for his outstanding TV production called “Turkey on the Move“, which was broadcast during summer 2008 by the private Turkish TV broadcasting company NTV and received a large response from the viewers. The Special Awards are given for media productions that concentrate on a delicate but exemplary topic. “Turkey on the Move“ does that, as the laudation of the international jury says:

“Turkey is a country in transition, socially, politically and culturally. That makes the country moving and changing. Turkey is a country, or even better, a society on the move, physically, socially and culturally and is doing its way in search of its identity not only between the two poles of Kemalism and Islamism, not only with the stream of East to West and not only from Anatolia to Germany and back to Turkey just for a family intermezzo, it is on the move also from traditional cultures to stations of modern civilization, from rural habits to urban attitudes and from elementary lifestyle to more sophisticated performances of individual life.”

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Nedim Hazar, the scriptwriter and director of the six-part documentary “Turkey on the Move”, followed the ways and the mobility of people that are always in motion and found unbelievable biographies to be told. He developed a way of telling a media story that is not only a story, but also at the same time a statement on current discourses: how can marriage be negotiated, how is life with and without head scarf, what is the chance for a joint life of gay people, what makes refugees from Eastern authoritarian countries feel being in Europe after having just arrived and staying in Turkey, how do migrants to Europe feel being back in Turkey for a short while, and what is the key parameter of understanding ones own life as a profession just being a Turk. It is the ethno-methodological and the cultural-anthropological approach of Nedim Hazar that makes it possible to involve the Turkish society into reflexive discourses on its own diverse roots, but also on its discrepancies and contradictions. It is done in a way so that Turkish people accept and say: Yes, it’s Turkey – this way and that way!

But it is also the media environment and the public engagement of NTV, the famous and successful Turkish private television broadcaster that gives Nedim Hazar the elbowroom to realise his creativity for public utility. *The Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, always engaged in cultural development, funded the project.

The ESEC jury came to the conclusion that this TV documentary should be selected and presented as a model of how to provoke a discourse in media on difficult issues and topics – especially as it is a most sympathetic way to bring to consciousness such difficult issues and as it makes a speech for the acceptance of cultural diversity. For that reason the jury decided to award Nedim Hazar and NTV with the Erasmus *EuroMedia Special Award* in respect to the thematic focus.

Asked about the reason for a Turkish production winning a European prize, the ESEC president, Prof. Thomas Bauer from University of Vienna, said: “*Culture, history and society of Turkey has to be considered as a part of Europe, especially because of its own special direction of historical development. The idea of Europe is to become a unity based on diversity. There is no other society in Europe that challenges the meaning of such a concept so strongly as Turkey does. Social, religious, and cultural rituals and habits in Turkey provoke Europe to reflect their privileged symbol systems in culture, religion, politics and society. That is always a cathartical process for a well-balanced identity concept.*” ■

The Most Open Place in Istanbul – Acik Radio



By Miray Caner

On a very hot and sunny Tuesday morning my photographer friend Alper and I set off to Acik Radio. I was very excited because not only it was going to be my first interview experience but also I was going to undertake an interview with some of the most important men in Turkish media. On top of that Omer Madra, the Director of Acik Radio, is also my all-time favourite book’s (Salinger’s *Franny and Zooey*) translator.

Acik Radio is located at the ERN Han Building in Taksim, the culture and entertainment centre of Istanbul and is composed of two floors: studio and management. We met Omer Madra on the management floor. He sincerely welcomed us. He did something that I wanted but was too embarrassed to ask and invited Jak Kohen to be with us in the interview. Jak Kohen is the programme coordinator of the radio but, as I guessed, titles didn’t matter that much, because in the anti-hierarchical structure of Acik Radio they’re all just radio programmers.

Before this wonderful conversation, I want to give you some information about Acik Radio: First of all “Acik” means in Turkish “open”; a name which also reflects the policy of the radio. It was founded on 13th November 1995 as a local non-profit radio station. It’s a collective with 92 partners with equal shares. All of the partners have a part of famous Turkish painter and sculptor Abidin Dino’s “Tugralar” lithograph series as a partnership certificate. Behind each certificate this sentence is written:

“This is to certify that the support you have provided for the founding of a free, independent, democratic, dignified, compassionate, and out-of-the-ordinary radio station would hopefully lead to the creation of other similar projects.”

The outstanding common characteristic of the whole bunch of Acik Radio programmers, producers, DJs, etc., is that they all “work” on a totally voluntary basis. That is to say, they are all



Acik Radio Station

Photo: Acik Radio

volunteers, working without any salary or remuneration whatsoever.

Currently, 194 programmers – ranging from age 10 to 75 – are contributing with more than 122 different programmes to Acik Radio each week and share their knowledge and individual interests with the audience. For example, one particular programmer made a 6.5 year long rerun after his death (with his family’s permission). Another programmer was a newborn baby who was on air during the first six months of her life (her permission was taken for granted).

Acik Radio is also one of the most important media channels in Turkey. First of all it is completely free and independent. Everyone who can prepare quality programmes on a weekly basis can get on the air. The radio is run by the donations of listeners, something which creates financial independence. Because of its democratic structure Acik Radio is place with many sounds, but is would be not wrong to call it an advocate of environmental politics. Turkey’s EU membership, democratisation requirements and human rights issues are also common topics in popular shows. With no political connections, programmers criticise every public and political body. But Acik Radio is not a political radio. You can listen to shows on military history, pets, game culture and folk music beside more political shows on union or insurance politics.

Well, here I was, terribly excited and scared; but it wouldn’t matter if i screwed everything up and got kicked out because I would have finally have met the man whose words I read as if they were Sallinger’s.

- What is Acik Radio? Alternative media, citizen media, independent media are names which are mistaken for one another nowadays; which one of these are you?

Omer Madra: Actually this only shows our society’s general confusion. Media exists to give the public ideas about where the world is headed and help people choose leaders who might get them there. Media is an integral part of democracy; it is also called the fourth force, following parliament, government and justice organs. Media makes it possible to carry out democracy in an open and transparent way. It must have social and cultural functions like exposing corruption or provoking cultural dialog thorough music.

But when a media network has an owner, it eventually gets reduced to his master’s voice. Things that aren’t beneficial to the owner can not find a place in this kind of a station. For example if the owner is in the oil business, the network wouldn’t promote green energy. It is worst when these networks are owned by interconnected cartels or oligopoly. These kinds of networks will eventually shape the society’s future.

This is where independence steps in. Acik Radio is a network without an owner and tries to stay in this way. It is a non-commercial, collective cooperation.

- To which extent does Acik Radio criticise media?

Omer Madra: Extensively. Mainly because mainstream media structure contradicts with our collective one. Media’s involve-

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ment with concurrent corruption issues like Ergenekon, the assassination of Hrant Dink and the Cumhuriyet bombings are somehow finding their way in to the news. It is obvious that some networks are bought and used. So, consequently we grow critical, try to keep our programmes objective and isolated from these processes.

- What is Acik Radio's take on public broadcasting? What are the differences between Acik Radio and TRT – Turkish national public broadcast corporation funded by taxes, government funds and advertising - which also claims to be a public broadcaster?

Omer Madra: TRT can not really make public broadcasting. It's changing now but you can see that TRT still carries the strict, strong, authoritarian mentality both on its TVs and radios. It is a network afraid of prosecution. It used to be the sole media network and there are still traces of this has-been monopoly. TRT is different from BBC in that, that it doesn't use its income from its independent programmes for its own behalf nor it is separated from the government. TRT is the public network but it is more government oriented than public. So what we need is private but independent radios.

Jak Kohen: TRT isn't independent. It has an owner in a sense. They need to be extra careful on some subjects and avoid some others completely.

Omer Madra: Yes, in a sense. It's non-commercial because it is government funded but it also serves the government's benefit.

Jak Kohen: It is the government's voice so it can't reflect the truth.

- Acik Radio was temporarily banned from broadcasting in 2002 because a part of a Bukowski novel was read. YouTube has been - and still is - banned in our country for some time. The public has simply forgotten this fact or is accessing it through illegal means. What is Acik Radio's view on censorship?

Omer Madra: The internet's primary benefit is free speech and free access to anyone; you can publish your own newspaper or release your own album, all without signing with a label or publisher. It also is a fitting medium for activist gathering. I think that this kind of censorship is insane. Some countries like Turkey still has internet censorship because of their old-fashioned laws. There surely are other ways of prohibiting insults to Kemal Atatürk or PKK propaganda. China and some other countries choose to censor although the effects are debatable like you said before. I think in the end we're making fools of ourselves.

Our station got temporarily shut down because of a Bukowski novel which had the word prostitute in it was read on a pro-

gramme. It was seen inappropriate for Turkish family structure and Turkish customs and usage. This, I believe, was insane and against freedom of speech. If we chose to take this to European Human Rights Court we would probably win the case against the state but we didn't. Ironically this incident made it to the news and put us on the spotlight.

- Your motto is "radio, open for all voices of the universe." but what would you do if someone with a contrasting political view to yours wanted to make a programme in your station?

Omer Madra: We are all for exposure of individual views, within reasonable extents. Our station was founded with helping the creation of new democratic organisations in mind but we're open for anything except totalitarianism and democratic party disbandment supporters. We don't plan on introducing religious programmes but our programmers are free to talk about religion. We wouldn't allow speeches on Islamic takeover nor military regime. The main idea here is supporting basic human rights and pluralist democracy.

- Do you have international connections? How do these affect your broadcasts?

Jak Kohen: Actually we have three: First is an American corporation by the name of Putumayo. It's a non-commercial world music corporation dealing in world music records and radio programmes. Every Monday, for some years now, we are broadcasting their programmes. We also make a world music programme for a German corporation by the name of Multikulti; the show is broadcast on several German and Swedish stations. The last one is called Radiyoyo and is a non-commercial kids station in Germany. We broadcast their programmes on world music made by kids of various ages, between three and thirteen, on a weekly basis. Two weeks ago we aired a show in which the kids interviewed Jon Baez. It was really fun to listen to. There is also Deutsche Welle, whose Turkish department prepares a 25-minute news bulletin for us that we broadcast every morning at 7:00 AM.

- There are many volunteer programmers on Acik Radio. Can we say that Acik Radio contributes to Turkish citizen media?

Omer Madra: Our main goal is being a citizen media station. For example the only way to battle global warming is to make everyone take a part in this resistance. Only activism can help to make this world a better place. As famous anthropologist Margret Mills said: "Only ordinary people can make the world a better place, there is no other way". We're trying to support the development of a responsible society as best as we can.

Jak Kohen: I don't know if we can call it citizen journalism but all of our 194 programmers are regular citizens. So are we. We've

been on air for many years now but we're not professional radio programmers. Most of our programmers are Acik Radio listeners who decided to take part.

- How does Acik Radio finance itself?

Jak Kohen: Legally the sources of a media station's income are only sponsors and advertisers. Acik Radio isn't in it for the ratings, we aren't mainstream and we're only a local station. So we don't get to have a big slice of the commercial pie which anyhow isn't big enough for the radios. We switched to a volunteer finance model, "Dinleyici Destek Projesi" - "Listener Support Project" - a few years ago. In this model our listeners sponsor the programme of their choice. This way we are mostly sponsored by individual listeners rather than corporations. According to the statistics of last 3 years, this covers our expenditures for four months a year. We also have commercial revenue, which fluctuates with the economy.

Omer Madra: Our listeners support project is an original adaptation of a finance model which is rare throughout the world. It also feels good. We thrive on our listeners' support, it really is something else.

- What kind of staff do you employ?

Jak Kohen: It's a small group of people. We have two programmes prepared by the staff: Acik Gazete (Open Newspaper) and Acik Dergi (Open Magazine). All the other programmes are prepared by volunteers. We also have a technical staff made up of 27 people. We plan and list every studio hour, therefore you can find someone at the radio any given hour. We try to do everything with our 27 people thanks to our 190+ volunteers.

Omer Madra: We have 194 volunteers to be precise.

Jak Kohen: We couldn't have prepared shows of this diversity even with a large staff. Our programmes cover a large area of interests thanks to our volunteers. I know everything about two genres of music but that's it.

- Thank you very much for your time, do you have something to add?

Omer Madra: There's one last thing I would like to add. Our website has grown to become a civil archive over the years. Some of the broadcast conversations are written up and uploaded to our site and then there are other articles which add up to a total of approximately 25 000 essays and translations. There are other sites which are far better but they don't have their radio channels like we do. ■

The Sound of Anatolia

Problems of Turkish Local Media



By Sedat Ozer

20 years have passed since the break down of the state monopoly on broadcasting. Today, there are more than 1,000 local radio and television enterprises in Turkey. It can be seen that the excitement and enthusiasm in the very first days of private radio and television broadcasting are now substituted with a series of problems and gridlocks. Local radio and televisions continue to make their own roadmaps in the diversity of problems, like the structure that lacks original legal and technical arrangements, the concern of television viewing, the pressure of advertisers, relationships based on self interest of political administration and of the capital, lack of a qualified work force and etc.

We discussed the point reached by local broadcasting in Turkey, its problems and solutions with Orhan Balci, Chief Editor of one of the first local televisions in Turkey, TV-41; Turgay Tuysuz, General Coordinator of Kocaeli TV, and with Mesut Yetkin, Chief Editor of Radyo Piramit, one of the first private radios in Turkey.

Orhan Balci described TV-41 as a local broadcasting enterprise and pointed out that they are creating a public service.

Orhan Balci: "We have formed our content with the news of the province in general and with discussion programmes that rely on the agenda of the province. In our work we are on our citizens' side and in our broadcasts we have assumed a kind of public duty. We are assuming a public duty by carrying the events that happen in this city on our news bulletins. We realised this fact clearly and concretely during the Marmara Earthquake in 1999. Both by our television and our radio we announced to people all the sentiments of the governorship and the disaster management. Our vision is to reflect the truth of the city, be on the side of the citizens and of the truth."

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Kocaeli TV 1

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Orhan Balci, links the cause of the rapid development of local broadcasting to the need of the local people to the local news. Turgay Tuysuz also favoured this view.

Turgay Tuysuz: “The most important reason behind why people watch local television is the news. People want to keep track of their environment first. The developments in a province are followed from local channels. They do not have the chance to see the provincial news on national channels unless the governor or the mayor had very important news. It gives us an advantage when we are making our broadcast flow; because, program editing, shooting of TV series are very expensive and should be done professionally. But the news traffic and politics of the city are much easier than these. And people really want these from us. Even if there is an expectation of TV series and big productions, a local enterprise cannot afford them. We plan the broadcast flow like that.”

Tuysuz is an administrator of a firm that made investments in local broadcasting subsequently and took over Kocaeli TV in order to realise this aim. We asked him why capital that has investments in different branches of business made investment in broadcasting:

Turgay Tuysuz: “To be frank this is not what we thought. There were constant proposals set to us to take the channel over during the period when Kocaeli TV had problems. At first, we did not keep a business prospect warm but at a certain point it stood to reason. We could say it is slightly a coincidence. Actually when we were setting our goals, the strength of local press in Kocaeli had affected us. We saw that when the correct actions were taken the acquisitions were many. Local press is generally perceived to be built on political benefits and goals. Some enterprises made broadcasts or publications with that

purpose in our province. We observed that, too. When we entered this business, we told ourselves to do this job not for political purposes, but to do it like we are used to, i.e. for commercial purposes. We thought beautiful things may appear when we set commercial goals. Our purpose is always carrying on commerce. When we get into the business, we have assimilated the public benefit alongside with the commerce in the two years time. Our very first goals when we establish this channel and our goals now changes in the course of time.”

According to Balci, while national broadcasts present news that interests larger masses in a certain order, the demand for learning about what is happening in the city caused local broadcasts to be supported by people. However, Orhan Balci notices a problem:

Orhan Balci: “One of the reasons of the emergence of the local broadcasting was that a television enterprise that broadcast national content was limited to the news of Ankara and Istanbul. But local broadcasting enterprises developed some relationships with the local administrations on the level of the city. Local televisions and local radios that work hand in hand with the local administration. And this brought adverse consequences. The first goal was to do something against the monophony of the national broadcasters on a local level. We can give another example. For example, there is an opening of a firm or an establishment and that firm or establishment called you. You go to that opening and broadcast it on your news bulletin. And you receive their advertisement in return. And you began to ignore negative news about that firm or establishment time to time, because you had good commercial relations with that firm. Unfortunately the business came to this point and quality drops. People, who make evaluations about TV-41, assert that we have very good relationships with



Radyo Primit

the local administrations. We pronounce, especially to our workers, that there is no such thing.

Turgay Tuysuz agreed with Mr. Balci to a certain extent. When we asked him his opinion about the relationship of the local broadcasters with the local administration, he responded that this situation is tied to a delicate equilibrium. According to Tuysuz, from the aspect of local broadcasters these relationships are related to maintaining a financial source.

Turgay Tuysuz: “This is a very delicate issue especially for local broadcasters. All media doubtless have this kind of relationships. This is a *sine qua non* situation in Izmit and in all other provinces including us. If there is an establishment that claims vice versa, I assure you, it is not a very plausible situation. But I want make a point here. If any political foundation or establishment wants to give any advertisement to my channel or want to do something that has a specified goal of advertising, I expect income in return. I expect a certain budget for this and try to realise what they want to do in my television or in my radio in relation to that budget. But aside from that we keep the same distance to all the political foundations in the sense of news. Of course, there is pressure in the sense of news, but when you look at it on the national level those channels also from suffer pressures too. These relations should not annihilate the balance of the news. Political foundations are one of the biggest sources of news for us. We follow their progress without separating them. We handle them in our news bulletins. Besides that we can hardly work with the political foundations unless they want to use the television for advertisement purposes and only in return for a budget, as I have said before. If that political foundation does not have an income or if that income is low, we cannot take them to television with

advertisement purposes. We can take them to television as a part of our news. But if they want to make advertisements, they cannot make it unfortunately. In this sense, we can speak of the political party in power, it, doubtlessly, has more economic power. And they seem to make use of the television in this sense. I cannot tell if it is biased or not, but, if they want to use it for advertising purposes, it requires a budget. Because especially for local broadcasters it is very important and very hard to figure out, plan and carry on the budget.”

Advertisements seemed to be most important source for both managers. Mr. Balci and Mr. Tuysuz, emphasised that for a broadcasting company ad revenues are of vital importance.

Orhan Balci: “In order to reach a certain quality your economy must be strong. Our only revenue is ads. You do not have any other source of income other than advertisements. Therefore, you need to have a strong advertising department. With the revenue that comes from your advertising department, you both have to manage your company and make investments in order to keep pace with the technology. We try to survive with a limited portfolio. In order to overcome this problem, we establish various partnerships. We established professional and advertising unions with local television stations from other provinces. For example, we have a union called Local and Regional Televisions. Approximately for three years, we are in this endeavour. When we look at this endeavour the panorama is this: it brings in certain advantages to us. For example, we made agreements with one or two political parties and air their news at certain time zones. We cannot receive any efficient turnouts form commercial ads because every province has its own pricing policy. In order to get over with this problem, we have a firm called

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MEDAS which is formed by television stations that broadcast in 20 different provinces. It is a very useful firm, in order to receive commercial ads from national companies.

Television managers which execute different attempts for providing financial resources seem to regard certain equilibrium in direct proportion with ad revenues. Both Mr. Balci and Mr. Tuysuz suggested that they regard neutrality in the news. However, they admitted the fact that there are orientations, pressures and other attempts related to the political ads and commercial ads. Television managers' point out that financial resource difficulties and hardship in the market of advertising caused difficulties in the flow of broadcasting and in the qualified work force.

Orhan Balci: "In the end, it all comes down to economic survival. It is very hard to broadcast a documentary, a Turkish movie, a foreign movie or a TV series that are on air at prime-time on a local television channel. It is around a million dollars to buy a finished TV series. In the same way, high quality foreign movies or Turkish movies had this problem, too. We sometimes broadcast old black and white movies. People sometimes criticised it and sometimes supported it. We do not have the chance to please everyone. But we have to work in order to please the majority. We sometimes miss some news. Sometimes we have problems with the content of the news. And this is because of the lack of man-power. We, unfortunately, still cannot give on-the-job training both on the national level and on the local level. As for me, each corporation must deliver on-the-job training."

Turgay Tuysuz: "The biggest problem of local media is the man-power. We have felt this problem since we took over the channel. People who are brought up here seek the way to work in the national media. Local press institutions cannot bring enough return to the workers, because they are not developed enough. As a result of this, people aim at the national broadcasters that may bring great financial income. If we are economically strong, we will be an institution that professional man-power will prefer."

Both representatives see financial hardship as the root of the problems. Relationships that are based on self-interest, neutrality in the news, diversity in flow of broadcast, the employment of qualified work force are among the problems that broadcasters have to overcome. Mesut Yetkin, the founder and the Chief Editor of Piramit FM which is one of the first private radio stations in Turkey, also agreed with these views. According to Mr. Yetkin, legal arrangements are also an important obstacle before the development of local broadcasting.

Mesut Yetkin: "The most important obstacle before us is the Higher Council cut that we pay to the Higher Council from

our ad revenues. This is a very pointless payment. They take 11% of every ad that a corporation airs. Local radio stations already hardly survive. We cannot receive official announcements. On the other hand, there is a frequency trouble. There are many radios that broadcast both in the national and local scale. This situation causes frequency contamination. Unmade frequency bid causes turmoil. We have problems with the musical organizations. I do not only mean MESAM and MUYAP. A new union emerges every other day that claim to protect the rights of the artists. Which artists are in these unions are unknown. Do we have to pay royalty to all of these unions? We want them to gather under one roof. We do not want to usurp the rights of anyone, but we end up in courts. And we had to pay each. We now pay to three or four musical unions."

According to Mr. Yetkin, the basis of the problems encountered in local broadcasting there are financial hardship as well as the quality of the capital that make investment in that sector. Local broadcasting corporations are perceived as commercial prestige and it is asserted that investors began to have radio stations but do not care about the quality of the business. But according to Mr. Yetkin, the only people who are responsible for that are the managers of the local broadcasting corporations.

Mesut Yetkin: "As for me, we are guilty. We experienced a hardship with one another. Everything began with the bringing down of the ad prices. There is not a standard ad price list in the sector. When radio stations do not earn money the quality drops. If you cannot earn, you cannot employ workers. When you cannot employ workers you cannot have good, serious programmes. There some radios that only employ 2 people. One of them airs the ads. The other provides the continuity of the programmes. They play music from a computer because they do not have any programmes."

The enthusiasm and objectives that dominate the very first years of private broadcasting are brought into disrepute when we consider the views of the sector representatives and the time past. Today the problems of local broadcasting are centred around financial dead ends, the problems in the ownership of capital, relationships based on self interest and the employment of qualified work force. The deficiencies and imbalance in the legal arrangements made it hard to overcome the problems that are before the local broadcasting corporations. However, local broadcasting is considered to be the future of broadcasting in the world as well as in Turkey. The experience of the local broadcasters should be considered in order to solve the problems of broadcasters in Turkey. It is important to form joint work platforms in order to make arrangements. The most important duty that fall on behalf of the local broadcasters is to show a powerful willpower for public benefit that is isolated from relationships based on self interest. ■



By Digidem
Sezen

Access Denied

YouTube Banning in Turkey

The web had no 1.0 in the back when it first came into our lives. The retronym "web 1.0" was read-only and referring to any website design before the advent of Web 2.0 which has a great impact upon economic, cultural and social structure of our lives, due to its read-write nature. It means internet users are not only consumers of the content, but they are also active producers of it. As for Web 3.0, experts say it's going to be read-write-execute. The long and short of it is that technological developments which promising more democracy keep changing and it's unavoidable.

Turkey celebrated on 12th April 2008 the 15th anniversary of connecting to the internet. In spite of its enormous potential, during this 15 year period, the internet has not been given as significant role in Turkey's agenda as it necessitates. If we see the glass half-full, Turkey has e-government projects, an information society action plan which is being implemented since 2006 and also educational projects containing to connect primary and secondary schools to the internet. Today, in Turkey, there are 20 million internet users, 2.5 million computers connected to the internet and also 150 thousand domestic and 700 thousand Turkish originated international domain names. These numbers are increasing. Until very recently, the most significant topics regarding Turkey's internet agenda were on the technical infrastructure. But today while experiencing website blockings and censorship implementations, a great need for developing legal and institutional perception regarding the internet have started to become more visible.

The most widely-known website blocking in Turkey was the banning of the world famous video sharing website YouTube. The videos uploaded by Greek and Turkish youngsters which included mutual blasphemies and insults to Ataturk, the founder of Turkish Republic, and to Makarios, the first President of Cyprus, lasted a couple of months and turned into a virtual war. Upon this a great deal of news which were given by various media channels plenty of times, the press prosecutor at the Republican Chief Prosecutor's Office asked to get the video materials and after watching sent them to magistrate to review the case. On 6 March 2007, YouTube was blocked by the Istanbul First Peace Criminal Court. Right after the court order was delivered to Turk Telecom, the users from Turkey visiting the YouTube website were confronted with the message below:

Access to www.youtube.com site has been suspended in accordance with decision no: 2007/384 dated 06.03.2007 of Istanbul First Criminal Peace Court.

Due to a single inappropriate content, banning of the website to the visitors using Turkish servers caused large-scale confusion and reaction both in Turkey and abroad. This first blocking ended after the YouTube team removed the material from the website on 9 March 2007.

After this relatively short time blockage, access to YouTube was banned for a second time on 17 January 2008 because of insulting Ataturk on the basis of the 8th section of the Act 5651. The act dated 4 May 2007 can decide to block access, if there is a situation raising doubt regarding the crimes mentioned in Turkish Penal Code including inciting suicide, obscenity and sexual abuse of children, facilitating the use of narcotics, prostitution, facilitating illegal gambling and the crimes also in the Act dated 25 July 1951 and numbered 5816 including the prohibition on insulting the memory of Ataturk. The blockage can be done by Telecommunications Institution with a court order or can be also done on its own initiative. In 2008, more than 300 websites including world known Goolge.groups and Geocities were blocked based on Act 5651. Because there are no specialised courts, the blockages can be done by any court in Turkey.

After that Sivas and Ankara Criminal Peace Courts' decisions on successively dated on 16 January 2008 and 17 January 2008; on 25 January 2008 with the removal of the related material by the YouTube team, the site was open to access again. After these on-off situations, YouTube was five times more banned with court order and five times re-opened with the removal of the contents. Since the last banning decision of the Ankara First Criminal Peace Court numbered 2008/402, more than three months passed. While this article is being written in August 2008, YouTube was still out of reach for the users from Turkey. Despite the fact that YouTube removed the related content from Turkish database, Turkish authorities continue the blockage because YouTube did not erase the content from the international database. Turkish authorities declare if YouTube applies for a license and authorises a representative in Turkey, they wouldn't be blocked that often. On

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the other hand, the time period that the Ministry of Transportation and Turk Telecommunication Institution had given to YouTube to apply for a license expired on 23 July 2008 and how the situation will progress is still foggy.

Regarding the site blockages, with the participation of judges, prosecutors, representatives from Ministry of Transportation, Radio Television Supreme Council (RTUK) and Turk Telecommunication Institution, a nationwide summit was organised in June 2008. In the summit, the definitional uncertainties and problems of the Act 5651 were discussed. The consequences of the summits included a greater emphasis on civic initiatives and voluntary activities on internet control and choosing filtration of the harmful content as a procedure instead of blocking the whole site. Blocking IP addresses was also emphasised to be seen as a final solution.

The civic movement “censor to censorship” started by Deniz Tan and Firat Yıldız spread to a wide public in a very short time using Facebook, Eksisozluk (one of the most popular wiki based sites in Turkey) and share videos on the internet. Until 20 August 2008 more than 350 websites shut themselves down to support the movement. After a while the websites of course re-opened themselves. The movement has its own website “sansure-sansur.org” now and contains a list of the supporter websites.

The banning of YouTube with a court order did not actually affect the daily usage of Turkish YouTubers that much in practice. After a few blockages, the users got experienced and found various methods to access to the site including changing proxy settings or using filter breaking sites. For these, you don’t have to be a hacker or computer bug. Everyone who googles “alternative ways to access YouTube” is presented with thousands of pages telling the tens of idiot-proof ways this can be achieved.

The most significant problems in this theory practice conflict arise from not to be able to interpret the nature of the internet properly and to treat the problems of new media with the tools of old media. According to the Act 5651, whether a website is harmful or not is judged by court considering citizen information, police reports, requests of prosecutor; a process which can be seen as censorship. However, most of video sharing websites including YouTube contain flagging, tagging options to inform the moderator about inappropriate content. Using these options users can keep their own safety. While looking at the overall picture of Turkey, the most profitable medium term and long term action plan would be to improve the concept of media literacy lessons which involve interpretation of media text and provide awareness regarding media landscape, to the extent which also include content making tools and self-control mechanisms for both children and adults. ■

The Sour Side of the Internet

The Story of a Turkish Wiki

By Ipek Ozarmagan

Eksi Sozluk (Sour Dictionary) is a website which holds definitions under titles like a regular dictionary but the difference is that this dictionary is filled with user contribution. Titles are opened by the writers and any kind of title with maximum limit of 50 characters can be opened. Burak Türkgülü, a Ph.D. student from SUNY Albany, who is also one of the writers of the dictionary, categorises these titles into seven groups in his work about the meaning creation process of Eksi Sozluk.¹ According to him the titles can be about **physical or abstract concepts, events, names, statements, actions and states** like “cutting your own hair” or “all philosophers being an atheist”, which can also be fictional like “bush being the head of socialist international”, and **surveys**, which are not liked by most of the users as they have the potential to corrupt the format of the dictionary. There can be numerous definitions and examples under each title. These are called entries and they are numbered in chronological order; the nickname of the writer and the time that the entry was written can be seen under each definition. There is no character limit for entries; they can be as short as one word or as long as five pages. But there are several rules for writing an

entry. The format of Eksi Sozluk distinguishes it from regular forums. According to the format, an entry should be a depersonalised definition of the title, an example or a hyperlink to another title. If the entry is irrelevant to the title, holds reference to other entries or a repetition of another entry, it will be deleted.

There are 32 rules listed by “ssg” under the title “subjects that should be adhered to while opening a title”. There is strict control over what is written in the dictionary, Türkgülü calls it a “despotic bureaucracy” as the owner of the website “ssg” has the absolute power and has control over everything. To protect the format, a group of “moderators” control if the entries and titles are written according to the rules. If a writer disregards the rules several times than he/she will be flung out or will be reduced to a lower grade and become a “rookie”, which is a temporary state in which the writer candidates are tested by the moderating staff.

There are two main uses of Eksi Sozluk that makes it one of the most popular websites in Turkey; the encyclopaedic definitions and personal views/experiences. Although according to the format the writers shouldn’t personalise their statements, definitions containing personal observation and experience can be accepted, which also gives the reader the pleasure of voyeurism. Writers usually try to show their intelligence through entries. One of the writers of Eksi Sozluk, nicknamed “bewitched”, states that she generally looks for an ironic way to approach a title, which will distinguish her definition from the others. The motive to write something “smart” encourages the writers to be critical and extremely observational. Writing smart entries equals to being a powerful individual in this community.

The fact that Eksi Sozluk is a social phenomenon shouldn’t be ruled out. TV personalities can cancel their shows regarding the entries under the show’s title in Eksi Sozluk or some celebrities can demand that the entries under their names should be deleted and threaten to take it to the court. In this case legal problems come on to the scene. There is a group of writers that deals with the legal problems of Eksi Sozluk called “praetors”. They are mostly lawyers and law students. They do not directly detect the entries like editors but moderators could consult them in the cases that they couldn’t solve or need legal advice. These lawyers also represent Eksi Sozluk in court when needed.

In 2006, Turk Telekom (The telecommunication firm in Turkey, which also holds the right to ban the reach to

internet from Turkey) restricted the DNS reach to the website because of the title “weed” and the entries under it as they encourage youth to use drugs. The DNS reach couldn’t be made for a couple of months until the lawyers of Eksi Sozluk (Praetors) appealed in court.

On April 17 2007, the reach to the website was restricted once again because the entries under the title Adnan Oktar (aka Adnan Hodja) contained insult for the bearer of the name. Although the lawyers tried to assure the court that all of the entries under the title will be erased and the title will be closed, the website stayed closed for some time. After the trial, reach to the website was possible again but the writers couldn’t write entries under the title Adnan Oktar. The title opened for entries very recently.

Today, when the URL www.eksisozluk.com is typed in, a website with a commercial theme pops up. The screen is divided in to two main frames. In the left frame the titles are listed in the order in which they are updated; the title with the latest entry shows up in the first place. On the right hand side, we see a commercial entry under the product’s title. At the top of the screen there are control buttons and the search tool. If we type in the title “eki sozluk”, the entry below shows up at the top;

“Eksi Sozluk
1. a magnum opus that fills in the hours,
that I spend alone because of the time
difference. state of the art.
(ssg, 19.02.1999)
...”

Eksi Sozluk started as “a time passer”, “a free time activity” for a little group of friends. Its code was written in one day and the first entry was under the first title “pick” (pena, in Turkish). Eksi Sozluk, was founded by Sedat Kapanoglu (nicknamed: ssg) in 1999. The first generation of writers, the writers who signed up in 1999, pretty much defined the format of the dictionary whilst writing in it. As the years passed and as the number of the writers increased, the format and the culture was adopted by the newcomers and the writers created their own community or their own “sub-culture.” Currently, Eksi Sozluk has 13850 writers, 175892 users, 1403436 titles and 7367777 entries (by 15 August 2008). ■

¹Türkgülü, Burak (2007) Creating the Meaning: An Ethnographic Study of an Online Community, Sour Dictionary, Class Project for PAD 636 Cultural Analysis of Organizations, University at Albany, SUNY.

Turkish Media History Timeline

By Ayşe Biber Çelik & Bahar Muratoglu

- 1727:** The first Turkish printing house.
- 1828:** Vakay-i Misriye, the first Turkish newspaper.
- 1831:** Takvim-i Vakayi, the first Turkish newspaper in Istanbul,
- 1840:** Ceride-i Havadis, the first private Turkish newspaper owned by foreigners.
- 1849:** Vekayi-i Tibbiye, the first Turkish magazine.
- 1860:** Tercuman-i Ahval, the first private and independent Turkish newspaper owned by Turks.
- 1862:** Tasvir-i Efkâr, the opponent and critical newspaper.
- 1869:** Mümeyyiz, the first newspaper about child education.
- 1870:** Kevkeb-i Sarki, the first publication about woman issues.
- 1870:** Letaifi Asar, the first comic paper.
- 1870:** Diyojen (Diogenes), the first political comic paper.
- 1878:** Sultan II. Abdulhamid had started the autocracy period which had lasted 30 years.
- 1884:** The first legal press regulations.
- 1890:** Servet, the first evening newspaper.
- 1891:** Servet-i Funun, poetry magazine.
- 1894:** İnkıdam, the most important newspaper of II. Constitutional Monarchy.
- 1901:** The first strike of Turkish journalists.
- 1908:** Autocracy period had ended.
- 1908:** Censorship in press had been abolished.
- 1908:** Gâvâ, the first socialist newspaper.
- 1911:** Osmanlı Telgraf Ajansı (Ottoman Telegraph Agency), the first news agency.
- 1920:** Anadolu Ajansı (Anatolian Agency), the most important news agency of Turkey.
- 1923:** Republic of Turkey had been founded.
- 1924:** Cumhuriyet, the oldest newspaper of Turkey.
- 1927:** The first radio station.
- 1928:** Turkey starts to use Latin alphabet.
- 1929:** The first beauty pageant with Muslim contestants organized by Cumhuriyet newspaper.
- 1946:** First multi-party election.
- 1946:** Journalists Association of Turkey.
- 1948:** Hurriyet Newspaper had started being published, claiming political independence.
- 1948:** First private journalism school.
- 1950:** First journalism institute.
- 1952:** Journalists Union of Turkey.
- 1960:** Military Coup.
- 1964:** TRT, Institution of Turkish Radio and Television.
- 1964:** The first radio broadcast of TRT.
- 1968:** The first television broadcast.
- 1971:** Military memorandum.
- 1976:** The first color and live television broadcast.
- 1977:** Corporation of Radio and Television Journalists.
- 1980:** Military Coup.
- 1983:** First communication faculty.
- 1984:** All television programs switched to the color broadcasting.
- 1984:** The first television broadcast to abroad.
- 1986:** Second television channel by TRT.
- 1988:** The first cable television broadcasting.
- 1988:** Turkish Press Council
- 1989:** AGB Nielsen started audience measurement research in Turkey
- 1990:** Star 1, the first private television channel.
- 1992:** Super FM, the first private radio station.
- 1992:** The first Internet connection at METU (Middle East Technical University).
- 1994:** First Turkish communication satellite.
- 1994:** Legal regulation of private TV and radio channels, foundation of Radio Television Supreme Council.
- 1997:** NTV first private TV news channel.
- 2000:** Digitürk, the first digital television broadcasting platform in Turkey.
- 2004:** First broadcast in local languages other than Turkish by TRT.
- 2006:** Smart sings on Turkish TV.
- 2008:** The first give-away newspaper in Istanbul, Gaste. ■

The ABC of Media

How Media Literacy was Introduced into the Turkish Curriculum

Television and internet are has a considerable influence in the education and socialisation of today's Turkish children. According to a study on television viewing behaviours of elementary school children by the Turkish Radio-Television Supreme Council (RTUK) in 2006, Turkish children are watching approximately three-hours of television daily. Based on such data and following up on global media discussions, academicians and experts have started to emphasise possible negative impacts of mass media on children in a growing rate. Increases of violent acts in schools; and also increases of sharing records of these acts on video sharing websites such as YouTube, can also be seen as reasons for the escalation of these worries: Television and internet content could be reached easily by children without control.

In 2004 media literacy found a place in RTUKs agenda for the first time. The "Anti-Violence Platform" meetings brought delegates from public bodies, NGOs and universities together. RTUKs proposition that media literacy should be a part of primary school curriculum was largely accepted during these discussions. A proposition has been made in media subcommittee reports and placed in the action plan. In the same year RTUK send a report on media liter-

By Ozlem Taskent



acy education to the Ministry of Education (MEB). Following this "official" start, the first international academic conference on media literacy in Turkey was organised by Marmara University in 2005 in Istanbul. Once again, academics, representatives of non governmental media institutions came together alongside governmental bodies; also present were Hifzi Topuz, the President of the "Communication Research Association"

and the RTUK representative Gulden Treske;. The importance of media education for school children was discussed and the necessity of improvement of children's media comprehension and analyses skills was emphasised.

Between 2004 and 2006, RTUK did several studies on media viewing behaviours of Turkish people. These include comparative evaluation of media literacy practices of different countries and also exchange with foreign experts. Following these pieces of research a commission consisting of experts from RTUK and academics from Ankara, Gazi and Selcuk universities organised an international panel on media literacy, in 2006 in Ankara; with the participation of experts from the United States and several European countries.

After almost two years of research and preparation, RTUK signed a collaboration protocol with the Board of Education Subordinate to the Ministry of Education (TTK) in August 2006; which created the legal basis to the introduction of media literacy courses in the Turkish curriculum.

Since 2006, RTUK and TTK are responsible for the full integration of media literacy courses into the Turkish curriculum. As a first step they started a trial phase. Media literacy courses were added to the primary school curriculum as electives. To support these courses a draft programme and a teacher's handbook were prepared. Social sciences teachers were assigned to teach these courses and a trial training programme for 20 teachers from five primary schools from the five largest Turkish cities was organised in Ankara. A field trial for seventh graders in five primary schools was organised during the 2006 – 2007 school year.

The content of the media literacy course consisted of an introduction to communication theory, media economics, media ethics and practical applications on television, radio, newspaper and the internet; such as applied newspaper preparation. The aim of this course was to make children understand media and its importance while being aware of its impacts and being able to beware of them. The success of the trial media literacy courses opened the way to the full integration of the programme into primary school curricula in the school year 2007 – 2008. The course was defined as a 1 hour per week elective course, for 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The creation of media clubs in schools, interactive lectures with participation of media professionals and visits to media companies were suggested as supporting practices. Social sciences teachers and class

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"Smart Signs" inform the audience about the content of TV shows

Photo: akilli isaretler kitapçık kapagi

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teachers were assigned to the courses. To support these, training has been organised for 103 teachers; who were charged to train their colleagues afterwards. Besides the training of teachers, it was also necessary to inform parents about the new curriculum and the concept of media literacy, in order to increase the interest and participation to the courses. Letters were sent to parents whose children were already participating in media literacy courses, asking them to help children to apply the course content in their everyday life. Additionally, a trailer inviting parents to choose this course for their children was prepared and shown on television channels. A website containing information on media literacy was launched for children. Several side themes such as Turkish history, sports, books and games were also added to increase interest to the site. Additional to these, a page called "My friend TV" gave children the opportunity to comment on their favourite TV shows or even propose new TV content.

While this article was being prepared, the Ministry of Education had not yet released official education statistics for the 2007 – 2008 school year. There were no official indications to the success rate of the programme. Yet; our research shows, even though all the work mentioned above provided some progress, the results seem to be less than expected. Interviews with primary school directors and MEB officers, carried out in Istanbul (the biggest city in Turkey), show that there are some difficulties in the coordination between the MEB and schools. While some school directors said that they had not even heard about such a course; some were complaining about the absence of quality course material. However according to RTUK and MEB, the absence of a straight roadmap for the course is a conscious choice; the objective is to free pupils from rote learning, to let them think and express themselves freely. Different from other courses, only a teachers handbook showing them how to

orient the pupils in this interactive course was prepared. And also, since MEB tries in general a new educational system based on interaction and free thinking starting in 2007 – 2008 school year, these complaints can be seen side effects of a transformation process.

Even if it is difficult to get used to a new system in the very early stages, most instructors seem to be in agreement with the necessity and benefit of media education. A social sciences teacher in one of the pilot schools emphasised the importance of the course and found the introduction a very delayed decision. Irem, who took the course at 7th grade in the same school, says that her behaviour towards media changed thanks to the course. She claims that she now knows where advertising begins and where the show ends. The television seems to be the only media for her before the course, but now, she also reads newspapers and magazines. She says: "My choice of television programmes varies now according to signs system and I know that I have right to make a complaint against those I think are harmful for us." (Duran, 2007) The sign system, or so called "Smart Signs" she mentions, is a co-project of RTUK with the Netherlands MATRA funds, which consists of graphical signs to inform the audience about the content of TV shows before and during the show. RTUK organised a painting contest for children to introduce them. These paintings also reflected the perception of media by children.

One other school in Istanbul gives us another story. Here the vice director claims that they have not received the necessary official announcement at the right time before the beginning of the education year and so they could not introduce a media literacy course in the 2007 – 2008 school year. Yet he thinks that a new curriculum, which involves interpretation more than memorisation is an appropriate decision. He on the other hand complains about the lack of manpower: "We don't

employ any teacher having the qualifications envisaged for media literacy courses, instead of giving training to the social sciences teachers, it would be better to employ communication faculty graduates. They can manage this task easily after a pedagogical formation."

A similar critique towards the new curriculum comes from the academic world: Who will give these courses? Istanbul University Communications Faculty dean Prof. Dr. Suat Gezgin: "It is pleasant that the Ministry and RTUK decided to introduce media education in the curriculum, but the course should be given by communications faculty graduates who choose to become a teacher. They could have their pedagogical formation with a masters programme and be ready to give the lectures. Otherwise, although the present social sciences teachers have a goodwill, because of the short training period, I'm afraid the course will not reach its potential." Prof. Gezgins opinions echo the answers of another primary school vice director to our questions. He claims that the teachers in his school had no training about the course and had difficulties during the school year. Supporting data and more critiques to the efficiency of the media literacy courses can be found in Prof. Dr. Yasemin Inceoglus research on the effects of the media literacy course on the teachers and students in the pilot school in Istanbul in 2007. According to this, most of the social sciences teachers were not interested with media concepts before the courses were introduced. So they were failing in defining the elements and functions of the media and they were not even able to recommend any source material than the official web site of RTUK; which also does not give a reading list about media. Most of them were claiming to have difficulties during the lectures and for this reason they were having a hard time preparing the lessons by visiting the relating websites. As for the pupils attending media literacy courses, half of them stated that google.com was their favourite

website, which means that they were not even aware of the differences between a website and a search engine, maybe it was just because their teacher was not aware of this difference either. (Inceoglu, 2007)

The introduction of media literacy courses in the primary school curriculum is a necessity in our media driven age and will obviously have several positive effects on children. Yet there is still a possibility of failure of the project. The lack of manpower and course material are the main reasons lying beneath this possibility. Can a few weeks of training prepare a teacher for the questions of students who were born into the new media ecologies? Yet there is another side of this critique: The quality of training of social sciences teachers is mostly criticised by communication faculties; which see the media literacy education in primary schools as a job opportunity for their graduates. Can these graduates gain educational skills easily? Besides these question of manpower, the question of course material is deeper one. The introduction of interaction and interpretation in classrooms is a positive development, but a difficult task for teachers not used to it. And also without creating the necessary educational infrastructure interaction and interpretation can not occur. One possible problem of the new media literacy programme can be a dated understanding of media. Although it is too early to have a clear assumption, a media literacy conception which defines children as victims of media would not be adequate in a age where new technologies bring media production into the homes of ordinary families.

Turkey is a country with different faces. Media means different things to children living in a big city and children living in a small isolated Anatolian village. The task of bringing a general media literacy conception to different layers of society is a difficult one. There will be problems and there will be misguided efforts, yet with an eager start Turkey as taken the task on. ■



Creating Future Journalism Education in Turkey



By Basak Kalkan

Journalism education in Turkish universities started in the 1950s. The quality and quantity of institutions giving journalism degrees increased in the last 50 years. Nowadays, journalism is one of the most preferred degrees by Turkish youth. This reflects the increasing importance of media as a social, economical and political power. The concept of social responsibility emphasises the role of media on how to govern, to oppose, to learn and to teach, to persuade, to work or to have a rest, to buy or to sell. Looked at in that way, you can see why the Turkish youth wants to become journalists.

Turkish people read their first newspapers about 200 years later than the Europeans. The delay of an educational institution for journalism was much much longer. Yet the role of newspapers during the Ottoman Enlightenment and Turkish War of Independence was very important. While newspapers were gaining power with support of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the young Republic of Turkey, several attempts were made to raise the education level of journalists. Although these first attempts were made in early 1930s, the first private school for journalism could only be opened in 1948 in Istanbul. This has been followed by the foundation of Istanbul University Faculty of Economics Journalism Institute in 1950. A series of similar institutes and private and state press-broadcasting high schools were opened in the following years. In 1983 Istanbul University decided to rename and rearrange the Journalism Institute as a Communications Faculty. The rearrangement process ended officially in 1992. Today, communication high schools, communication programmes of universities of applied sciences and several communication faculties in state and private universities share the responsibility to educate tomorrow's journalists.

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In the 2008 – 2009 academic year, journalism departments of both state and private universities will open their door to approximately 1800 new students. This number is enough to create negative long term theories. Starting in the 1980s Turkey's open economic model helped outside investors to enter the press sector. Big investments changed the traditional concept of Turkish press. The number of newspapers and TV channels were increasing, investment towards technological infrastructure which caused concerns about the demand of the new owners to quality journalists. Although new investment meant new employment opportunities, the fact that new technologies were not always job-friendly caused more trouble among workers. Today, about only a quarter of active journalists are communication faculty graduates. The number of communication faculty graduates increases each year. New graduates have problems finding a job. The demand is not high. Illegal employment of students as trainees is not uncommon. There is also the problem of quality. Journalism graduates have to prove themselves against graduates of different disciplines; who learn journalism whilst working and can add their diploma as a proof of a second expertise. On the academic side, the increase of student numbers means growing lack of resources and academic staff. Besides the need for more professors; low salaries, bureaucracy and high service hours make teaching hard and research almost impossible for academics in most state universities. Private universities on the other hand rely on low numbers of staff with more responsibilities. High numbers of students mean most of the time low quality education and lower chances for finding a job. In short, quantity affects quality.



News meeting at Istanbul University Newspaper

The two perspectives

Prof. Dr. Suat Gezgin, one of the important figures of communication education in Turkey and the Dean of Istanbul University Faculty of Communications emphasises the multi-sided model of education they use. The faculty has been given both theoretical and practical knowledge on journalism together for more than 50 years. During that time due to changing conditions and increasing demands the faculty has been reorganised and the education started to include various areas of communication such as public relations, promotion, advertisement, radio, television and cinema. This change required the opening of new departments and creation of new programmes. To give a proper practical side to the education, the faculty uses its internal production units,

such as a monthly newspaper and a fully functioning news agency. There are also advertisement and public research groups, radio and TV studios, and since 2008 a live radio broadcast vehicle donated by German WDR Channel, used by other departments in the faculty. This, according to Gezgin, gives students the opportunity for practical training and applying theoretical knowledge to practice.

A second approach towards communication education can be seen at Ankara University Faculty of Communications. Here, communication education is based on a much more political and social sciences oriented concept, rather than the more practical, journalistic approach of the Istanbul University. Prof. Dr. Oya Tokgoz from Ankara University supports this social sciences approach and criticises the tendency towards a “profession” educa-

tion in her works. (Tokgoz, 2003, 2006) On the other hand the “profession” approach seems to be not only looking for an answer about the definition of journalism as an academic discipline but also to raise the question of how theory and practice can be mixed in an academic environment. The answer can be found in the three categories model where the courses are divided into social sciences, communications and practical groups. The balance between these differs in each communication faculty department. The difference between journalism and communication sciences departments in faculty can reflect the tendencies of both approaches under the same institution. These different approaches can also be seen as reflections of differences between two cities; the political capital Ankara, and the economical capital Istanbul.

The others

Two alternative models in search for a broader understanding of journalism education in Turkey can be found at Anatolian University and Istanbul Bilgi University.

Anatolian University is a state university located in Eskisehir, an Anatolian city located between Ankara and Istanbul. The Communication Sciences Faculty is the first faculty using the word “science” in its name. The faculty itself tries to give importance to practical courses while showing tendency to communication science and communication arts. The faculty owns a newspaper, a radio station and a television studio besides the TV studios of TRT – Turkish national public broadcast corporation funded by taxes, government funds and advertising – which are used by the university for national open-university programmes. With lots of practical opportunities Anatolian University suggests qualification test for communication faculty entrance which can measure the will and skills of the candidates. In fact Anatolian University used such tests till the university reforms in the 2000. But for some academics the practicality and objectivity of such tests are always in question.

For a period of time, private universities in Turkey have been criticised for their close relationships with the professional world and accused of serving manpower to companies. When we look into Istanbul Bilgi University, a private university in Istanbul, we see a different picture. “Medya Kronik”, a web portal run by Istanbul Bilgi University Communications Faculty, draws attention to itself with its opposed and critical articles towards media. Here you can find articles about the problems of press policies, union demands of journalists, censorship accusations, etc. These are issues which can cause a young graduate problems whilst looking for a job. Nevertheless, in the last few years, Medya Kronik succeeded in integrating practice with a critical and social understanding and became an important news source regardless of being a student new portal. One of many reasons of this success can be the usage of a relatively easier media. In fact an internet portal can be much more easily and cheaply managed and updated than a monthly news paper.

The future of journalism education in Turkey relies on several variables. First of all the numbers: For how many students how many professors in how many communication faculties will be available? The second variable is the method: How can we balance practice and theory? Which technologies should we use? The third one is the relations with the Turkish media: Do they have enough positions for our graduates? What is the position of universities on issues like a union for journalists? These are the hard questions Turkish universities will have to face in the near future. Their answers will shape the journalism culture in the country. ■



By Sinem Tuna

An Unsolved Problem: Labour Day

Labour Day and the Turkish Media

Labour Day has a special meaning for Turkey. Celebrated officially until the “Bloody May One” of 1977, when unknown snipers shot into a crowd of 500.000 people gathered in Taksim Square in Istanbul, Labour Day celebrations are now banned and have been replaced by a depoliticised “Spring Celebrations”. Since then, the first of May means for many Turks growing tensions between the government unions and NGOs in Ankara as well as growing tensions between security forces and workers, students and activists on the streets all over the country.

This year, the labour unions decided to celebrate Labour Day in Taksim Square. The government, however, decided to ban the rally due to possible security breaches and social disorder, proclaiming Taksim Square off-limits for all citizens. The reaction by unions differed. Some unions have fallen back, but others led especially by DISK (The Confederation of Revolutionary Labour Unions) have insisted on visiting Taksim Square with carnations.

The newspapers have carried the events to their headlines on May 1st, with different approaches parallel to their positions in the political spectrum. The Turkish media, caught in a speedy process of economic concentration and globalization, reflects both economic and political tendencies. A series of independent newspapers and media institutions compete with a large number newspapers and TV channels owned by a few media cartels. Secular, religious, conservative, liberal,

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democrat and nationalist are several definitions which can be used to define general political perspectives of Turkish newspapers. Also relations with the government and position towards the EU are other criteria to differentiate Turkish media politically. These tendencies of ownership and editorial structure were reflected in headlines of Labour Day 2008.

On one end of the political spectrum, *Cumhuriyet* carried the headline "Like Martial Law", accusing the government with making the workers miserable on Workers' Day. On a similar stand, *Aksam* criticised the government with the headline "State of Emergency to Istanbul". *Vatan* carried the headline "The heavy price paid for 'the feet' " a reference to a comment of the Prime Minister Erdogan: "Hell breaks loose when feet becomes head". The *Radika* reflecting the liberal stand of the Dogan conglomerate, used the headline "The day to test democracy" to balance



Sükran Soner

the stance of the government with the persistence of the unions. *Milliyet*, another paper of the same group, tried to take an objective reporting stand by adding "The Day of Workers, labourers" on top of the headline, "Happy May 1st". However, *Hurriyet* the self-proclaimed admiral-ship of the group carries the headline "Sensibility Please", and criticised the unions for their stubborn insistence on commemorating in Taksim Square. The boulevard newspaper *Star*, the last member to join the Dogan group, used a pun to belittle the unions in their different reactions to the government ban. The headline "Sendikalar Uc Taksim" (Unions Three Taksim) is a play on the word "Taksim", the name of the square, meaning "division". The newspaper *Taraf* criticised the government for succumbing to "banning ideology", using the headline "Big Mistake puts barriers on the Roads". The newspaper *Halka ve Olaylara Tercüman* backed the government argument of a potential dangerous terrorist threat by using the headline, "Take Care, Please". *Sabah* had an interesting approach using

the headline "The Taksim Siege" and criticised the stubborn stand of both parties. A similar approach was visible in the newspaper *Türkiye Gazetesi* which blamed the unions, "The Taksim insistence has Istanbul under lock". Similar approaches were visible in both *Yeni Safak* with the headline "This Stubbornness is New", and *Milli Gazete* with the headline "Don't Let it End up in the Police Station". *Zaman*, on the other hand, refrained from comment, the headline was "May 1st Alert".

We spoke with Sükran Soner, one of the most experienced journalists in Turkey, columnist at *Cumhuriyet*, recent president of the Turkish Journalist Union and a prominent figure in the Turkish labour movement on Labour Day and the headlines of the Newspapers.

- What is your evaluation of the Labour Day and its perception in Turkey?

Soner: I personally believe there is a constant relationship between Labour Day events and the political regime, it is an unflinching test. The Labour Day was always perceived as a Marxist threat in Turkey, as a result of the mistakes in political perception as a whole. May Day was not even on the agenda of the unions. In a sense, the day was put on the agenda in the 1976 Taksim demonstration of DISK. After the "Bloody May 1st" of 1977, the taboo returned in spite of a peaceful 1978 commemoration. The coup of September 12, 1980 made the taboo more evident and politicized. A period of softening relationship followed, after 1985 the three confederations organized May 1st demonstrations but the bans brought about by the 12th September constitutional changes, and the ban on Taksim Square, the symbol for the demonstrations made for uneasy, eventful May 1st events.

- What is your evaluation of this year's Labour Day news?

Soner: The religious newspapers and the government backed newspapers tried to overlook the events. They tried to insinuate provocation, whereas no such thing happened. The workers, the unions and the democratic organizations never had a chance to demonstrate and rally. They could not even gather and start a rally. There was unlimited terror exhibited by the police. The natural outcome of this unbounded terror by the police, felt by all the citizens out on the streets and for the -let's call it the classic -media these were sensational news. They had the cameras and reporters ready and the TV taking the lead, they inevitably reflected this police terror. Such incidents as throwing teargas bombs at hospitals and DISK buildings, the chemical teargas bombs with devastating effects, occurred. This aggressive police terror had to take its place on the agenda of the "classic" media. But was there a follow-up, an analysis, an inside story? The answer is negative. ■

Media and Democracy

By Suat Gezgin

Prof. Dr. Istanbul University Faculty of Communications, Dean & Department of Journalism Chair

Media is one of the main elements of parliamentary democracies and freedom of the press is also a notion produced in democratic countries. Developments in the field of journalism, starting from 17th century, resulted in media being accepted as the fourth estate. Considering the important missions of media like explaining public opinion and creating it, criticising and observing the government, and services of governmental foundations for the community; it deserves to be defined that way. Parallel to social, economic and technological improvements, audio and visual mass communication media added to journalism, media gained a wider dimension. Therefore the notion of "freedom of the press", started to be named "freedom of communication". As already known, censorship is an obstacle before freedom of the press. Because it is obvious that public without enough information and news, couldn't make healthy decisions in political-social situations. It is obvious that, it is prejudicial for a constitutional state that gains its power from citizen will.

Actually in every period governments look at the notion of freedom of the press with hesitation as it restricts their radius of action. This situation is based on journalism's primary notion of informing and reporting. The public, receiving information freely, thoughts and views, communicated freely, all foundations and establishments including political authority being criticised freely; all this can only be made with mass communication media. In this frame of thought, in the century we live in there is an indisputable reality:

freedom of the press is not only the journalist's freedom of speech, but also the public's freedom of information. Journalism in the meaning of being the public's eyes, ears and voice, is the trust and main source of democracy.

On the other hand, unfortunately in our country it is really hard to say that the government is at peace with the media. The disagreement that started in Ottoman Empire period still shows itself in different dimensions and consent. It can be understood from Article 28 of the constitution which says, "press is free under law" that press is free up to a specific point and it can be censored on a situation, contrary to law.

Of course it is extremely necessary to convey thoughts and opinions to public opinion for democracy to work correctly. But journalists should be aware of the importance of their duties and know their responsibilities. Today, the fact that great capital is going into the market brings along new discussions. The concept of the consumer entering the world of media affected the relationship between reader and media and the social responsibility mentality in a bad way.

After September 12, 1980, every foundation in Turkey including the press went through some important and radical changes. It is certain that today that period has a great role in the vicious circle Turkey is in. After this date media avoided making news and comments about political issues which resulted in media sliding towards a magazine format and as it did not broadcast the public cry,

it brought into question the press being a foundation distant from public base and support. Briefly, press became distant from the public after September 12 and produced an apolitical approach model. This situation exposed the problem of its breaking off from its audience and losing its support.

At the end of 1980s, as the Turkish press world became the radius of action of large capital owners, rules started to be designated by the large capital owners, in compliance with the capitalist idea that the most valuable thing is what sells most, is applied in this period. After this period, in the 1990s, media establishments became commercial businesses which move according to market rules. In light of this thought, the newspapers were left to a life struggle in a world where the one with the highest circulation is deemed the most successful, and the television channels in a world where the one watched the most is deemed the most successful.

Media is an economic enterprise

Maybe the best example that explains media being an economic enterprise is this quotation: "In whatever period, newspaper managers follow these three goals. Increasing the number of the text that will be published (in page count and circulation); enriching the content and diversity (texts, graphics, photographs...); continuous reduction of production costs (to keep the sale price in balance and to reduce it)"⁹¹ As it can be seen, the goals that are made for newspapers, is actually enough to explain the economical enterprise character of media. This

situation keeps its effectiveness for other mass communication media with difference in form and content.

Above all it should be pointed out that, methods of media production requires fully technological equipment. This also means a serious investment on production facilities. What kind of compensation would make such an important investment worthwhile? This cannot be explained by the mere understanding of public service and self satisfaction it gives. This economic investment does not have a sublime answer like citizens being acquainted, or the society to become more democratic. This technologic investment is made for an enterprise that goals a direct discernable added value or which will provide this added value indirectly.

Thoughts like public service and public benefit run the risk of disappearing under the pressure of direct financial expectations. Along with that, this also exhibits the need for qualified personnel to use this technological structure. Qualified personnel, in other words while providing qualitative development, means quantitative reduction. This created a direct reflection in the sub process of production. Traditional production methods have left their place to modern production methods and structure already. This development is a consequence in the nature of the service given. This also shows itself in the extent of product. A product far beyond yesterday's type of product appeared. This newspaper's, television and radio programme's, series styles are also in a change parallel to these developments. This change also affected consumption habits and forms. It is also possible to say that according to demand and supply, product also differentiates. It is a question to be answered if demand or supply affects the form of the product. The answer of this question is presented; if considered from the both sides point

of view, for the source of production "demand is like this".

Liberals of the market are against the monopoly of the media protected by the state. According to them, public service broadcasting restricts the representation of personal needs and worries. It tightens, narrows and reduces the field of choice. The conjecture that the government relies on is thus: "You cannot leave the choice of what they want to watch to the people. They have to be supervised by the ones who know what is best for them and whose thoughts are close to each other." If considered from another point of view, the consumer also proposes that they are against a choiceless and enforced presentation. Without a doubt this approach is expressed by the circle with this sensitivity. If taken as a whole production and consumption processes revive an economical circulation and process. The quotation above is justified with this point. While the newspaper is against a process of being purchased, this is not applicable to television and radio. The product and the service should be made more attractive for the advertiser in radio and television.

It is possible to extend the assessments about media's economic dimension. But, although media is not seen directly as a commercial facility, it is an important actor of a commercial process directly or indirectly. By means of all of its processes it indicates an economic enterprise. It has to continue its profitability and efficiency to keep its continuity and permanence like every other economic enterprise. For example, the numbers given in an international dimension defines the important economic potential. For example, some numbers like 12.5 billion USD of profit for Time Warner are uttered.² Especially the cooperation of these enterprises made with company marriages exposes a scene with even more dimensions. This

is an example just to give an idea. These examples can be increased.

The organisation of media as a public monopoly can not be justified anymore. The best antidote of media under the protection of the state is environment of diversity that market competition offers. But this does not mean that, the commercial profit measurements of the owner of the private broadcasting company take the place of quality; and cheap game shows, empty entertainment shows which are not different from the commercials and magazine shows fill in nearly the whole hours of broadcasting. Although we contradict ourselves at this point it is impossible not to think of this: the issue that the private media organisations increase the freedom of choice in the market. This thought would be true if everything goes by its rules but that would be a little dreaminess. Market competition without borders is in fact damaging the freedom of choice of certain citizens, especially minorities, strongly. When they are competing the broadcasters know that the best method is to address the middle section with programmes that will charm the masses; and this causes diversity in programmes to decrease and overlapping. This has to be known that, today communication markets restricts the freedom of communication; puts barriers for those who want to come into the market, allows monopolies, limiting the choices and estranging the dominant meaning of information from public benefit notion and transforming it to a good that will be possessed privately.

According to the market liberals, the audience consists of independent consumers and the most practical quality measurement is their choices. Media has to develop apart from the state but, media, should not profit political administrators or businessmen, it should profit public use or all citizens' pleasure. Newspapers are also an intellectual half public product. This characteristic of it

necessitates its circulation success and also being believable and strong in content. As it stands apart from how much the newspapers sell, what they sell is also important.

What is important for a newspaper is, to earn the readers' trust and never shatter that trust. Because a real newspaper, stands with the support of its readers, not with the demand and offer balance the market conditions create that day.

The direction of some of the attention that private media organisations attract towards to the organisations which conduct public broadcasting may lead the commercial media organisations to straighten up a bit. One of the priorities to provide these is to display the state's methods of censor and to remove them. When these priorities are applied the dominant definition concerning the public broadcasting will change radically. When public service communication is mentioned, communication foundations, which are sponsored and protected by the state, but also staying out of the state and providing a thought circulation between citizens, will come to the mind. With this, polyphony in press besides a full and quality broadcasting will be provided. A communication environment in which the citizens will follow the economic, political and social developments and changes in the world, and the country's agenda properly, and make their own comments will be provided.

It appears clearly in many example situations from the time that press has come to action that communication has great importance in relationships made in a healthy political system.

Relationship between politics and media

According to political scientists, politics of the government and all political events are formed by the members of the

society. In other words, there is a continuous relation and interaction between the administrator with the power and the governed. Public opinion has great importance in democracies' in which the power stems from the people.

Three basic elements are indispensable elements for democracy: Freedom of thought, freedom of publishing and printing; Constitutional State (Human rights, independent courts); Political participation (Citizens contribution to administration, free elections, and political parties). In this system media being free and independent is the most important condition for the function of democracy. Media, being free and independent, is something that the other elements need and if it is right to call it a "lubricant" which helps them function. Public opinion is first of all created by the media. Media provides the information to be transferred to form a free public opinion, oversees the circumstances and conditions, forms development and changes, voices the criticisms, reveals the negativity.⁴

According to Bektas; public opinion appears in this relation and interaction process. This relation and interaction's main device is the press. As already known, for a public opinion to form first of all the people in charge or the groups should be informed and discuss on it later on. In the face of a controversial issue, in order for the people or the group to impose their own ideas as an agreed-upon public opinion, they should get in touch with the other groups and explain their ideas and thoughts. Here in all of these relations communication's role is very big. Mass communication media, which is accepted as one of the most effective elements, transfers information in this communication process.⁵

Media researches, in historical process, are positioned in three main axes. First

of those is the answer to these questions: "how did public space transform, how did public communication reform, with the effect of the media?" The second question that media researches tried to find answer to is "what are the different models that media used to form the political reality in the relationship between media and political reality?" The third concentration point of researches is "the form of the effect of the media receivers' political tendencies in the construction of characteristic reality..."⁶ The main conjecture is that there is a political function, description and effect of media with its historical development. It is emphasised that the events and facts in the production process of media are faced with another production process. There are important arguments in the events in this sense and how these events are formed after the media filter. "What is the change or mutation that the fact or the event has gone through?" is the question whose answer is searched the most. The governed has the power, authority or the right to transfer their ideas on the government's base and form. One of these materialises as a natural and formative political participation which is voting. The other one is a citizen looking for a way to transfer his/her ideas all the time and not just in the election period, the first choice medium for this is the media.

As known, monopoly shows itself in different dimensions in today's form of media. In this sense, especially the ones trying to have a word on the economy-politic of Turkish media, underline this reality. Media organisations materialised with large infrastructure and technological investments, trying to get the answer to these not only from its own channel but from different channels. The sublime ideas uttered under this different quest, public benefit, profit and necessity falls to contradiction from time to time.

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The examples for this can be seen in Turkey and in other parts of the world also in different dimensions. Assessments made under the title of media and democracy without mentioning this structure will be far from the reality and won't have the power to make a diagnosis. Considering these circumstances it is important with what ethical codes and understandings is the production process formed. It should also be questioned how a capital power that tries to provide the production forms its sensitivity towards the ethical codes and references. It will be proper to make this determination in the relationship of media and democracy. Democracy, for the media, is a situation which will be explained with economical parameters.

But, according to some ideas, bonding the media's power altogether to its owner is not right. Although the employer has some effect up to some point, there are hundreds of people working in that establishment. They would try to transfer their ideas and would want to reflect public opinion and will. As a result to this a different kind of power will be formed.⁷ After all, it is obvious that in multi-party democracy comments being large in number is more beneficial for the community. Because instead of a one sided comment, public opinion being fed from different sources and different comments will need to search for the truth of the news, this situation will cause a development for the political system to improve.

Democracy is a system which makes free thought and free speech possible, and provides large space or human rights and freedom to be performed. As a necessity for this, the public should criticise and detect the representatives chosen to govern, should warn them, should announce it if they think that they are not using their rights as a citizen and want assurance for their right. It is

obvious that they can make all these communication by the press. It is important for democracy to work right that the assurance of the freedom of the press by editorial or legal ways.

Conclusion

The governments claiming to practice real democracy in their countries should make provisions for their public to be informed by comments and news from several different free sources. In the point that has been come to today it does not seem possible for the media organs to be autonomous foundations, in today's economic and technological circumstances. Besides, media organisations should be supported in a different way if thought from the feedback angle. This situation makes media organisations elements that are independent and organic relationships. On the other hand, political regulations and systems, formed according to economic enterprises and powers, bring the scene to an even more meaningful level. Consequently while talking about a duo like media and democracy; it is not a consistent approach to ignore these facts. There are certainly some exceptions to this. But these exceptions do not have the power to change the scene. After all, what should be is; assurance for the freedom of the press in editorial or legal means and providing the existence of media organisations which take public benefit as their first goal. This has great importance in democracy working in a healthy way and the country's democracy reaching a higher standard. ■

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¹ Jean Marie Charon, *Medya Dünyası*, Edited by Jean Marie Charon, Trans. By Oya Tatlıpınar, Pub. By Korkmaz Alemdar, İrfan Erdoğan, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 1992, s.269.

² Thomas Meyer, *Medya Demokrasisi*, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, s. 53.

³ Esat Çam, *Siyaset Bilimine Giriş*, Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 1987, s. 153.

⁴ Walter Bajohr, "Medya ve Demokrasi", <http://www.konrad.org.tr/Medya%20Mercek/20bajohr>.

⁵ Arsev Bektaş, *Kamuoyu, İletişim ve Demokrasi*, Bağlam Yayınları, İstanbul 2000, s. 98.

⁶ Meyer, a.g.e., s. 9-10.

⁷ Nezi Demirkent, "Medyanın Gücü", *Son Salı Yazıları*, Dünya Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, s. 90.



By Asuman
Kutlu

A Continuing March to Equality

Women's Media in Turkey

Turkish media has gone through rapid change for the last ten years, a process which has been criticised in many ways. One of the major critiques on Turkish media has always been that it is male dominated. Although there are legal arrangements regarding sexual and social exploitation of women in the media and recent legislative reforms have been impressive, because of a highly patriarchal culture and a male dominated public sphere, women are still prevented from becoming an important part of the media structure in Turkey.

Turkey became a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985 and ratified it in 1986. Founded in 1990, the governmental institution General Directorate on The Status of Women, aims to promote gender equality through communication, training and other means. Based on the decisions of the 4th UN World Conference on Women, GDTSW created a plan to increase the participation rate of women in the decision making processes in mass media; and awarded TV shows against gender discrimination and encouraged media institutions to increase the number of such programmes. Since 2006, in an attempt to stop violence against women and especially stop honour killings, media institutions are obligated to report to the General Directorate on The Status of Women, their activity plans on honour killings and violence against women every three months. Also Turkish Radio Television Supreme Council signed an agreement with Television Broadcasters Association in 2007. The agreement set ethical principles to respect private life and not to objectify women in media.

Women's lack of participation in mass media production and negative representation of women in media are issues studied and monitored carefully by some scholars and NGOs. One of the leading organisations, "The Women's Media Monitoring Group" (MEDIZ) which was established in 2003 with the support of 23 women organisations aims to play a transforming role to stop sexism in media. Their well-known campaign, "End To Sexism" started with a media watch analysis. This analysis was based on a two week long monitoring of television and radio channels, daily newspapers and websites with an emphasis on violations of women's rights, sexism and discriminatory content. During that period also positions and degree of employment of women in media were investigated. According to the results of this study,

the number of women media professionals is lower than that of their male counterparts; and women are working in secondary rather than senior positions of the media landscape; so they are not given the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Almost all news executives are male and there are no anchor-women; and women are mostly positioned in advertising and magazine departments. Media's portrayal of women is also negative; they are represented in media less than men and generally are depicted around traditional roles such as mothers, victims, sexual objects and dependent upon men.

An alternative, EU supported project was BIA (Independent Communication Network) which has been promoting human rights, women's rights and children's rights issues in the media. After BIA's success, BIA2 (Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Survey and News Network) project started in 2003 and aimed to raise journalistic standards and professional ethics. They hold seminars and training programmes. The training programmes include "New Regulations on Women" and seminars on "Women's Rights and Reporting with a Focus on Women" were held by BIA2. BIA2 also monitored Turkish media between 2004 and 2005 and was one of the most extensive independent media monitoring in Turkey. They watched 12 daily newspapers for a year and found out that only 7.7% of the all news were related to women. These similar results to the MEDIZ research underlined the problematic representation of women in media once more. Today, BIA News Center, bianet.org, daily provides alternative news generally neglected by the Turkish mainstream media. A special section in bianet.org monitors women news in media regularly and also provides alternative news for its readers.

Since the 1980s women in Turkey preferred to organise themselves by publishing their own journals rather than forming an NGO or a political party. Women almost always used print media to speak out and in recent years they have also started using the internet.

One of the important women's journals, *Kadınlara Mabsus Gazete, Pazartesi* (Monday, newspaper for women) was published monthly for 10 years. Today, it is still published over the internet. One of Pazartesi writers, Handan Koç, emphasises the difficulties in introducing and expressing themselves in the main-

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Women's Journal
Amargi



Melek Ozman
Interview



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stream media. Because of media cartels, change was almost impossible for them. The journal was like a school giving opportunity to untrained women to write their first articles. Pazartesi redefined women's news such as rape, suicide, murder or violence. Koç indicates that it is very hard to make news by promoting gender equality in mass media and women can only challenge the mass media by using their own media.

In the 1990s, magazines like *Kadınların Kaleminden Kadın Erkek Herkes için Mektup* (A Letter from Women's Pen, for Women, Men and Everybody) and *Kadın Kimliği* (Woman's Identity) tried to create an Islamic women's media movement. Their first concern was to question Islamic women's identity on the social basis. Besides critiques of issues like sexism and women's status in the west, they demanded justice rather than equality; because according to them, an equality between men and women would mean depriving women of certain religious rights. These magazines opposed to some demands of feminist movements. They were also criticised by the general Islamic media.

In 1996, organised around the journals *Rosa* and *Jijun*, the Kurdish feminist movement started to express itself. Kurdish feminists tried to underline their independence from the Kurdish nationalist movement, from men and from Turkish women. The

common aims of the journals were to express the issues and demands of Kurdish women and to suggest solutions.

Currently, other leading feminist publications in Turkey are: the women's journal *Amargi*, the first Turkish feminist e-journal *Feminist Yaklaşımlar* (Feminist Approaches), and the monthly *KAZETE –Independent Women Newspaper*. All aim to stand against sexism, violence and discrimination against women in media and in general.

Ucan Supurge (Flying Broom), another alternative media group, hosts plenty of activities and training seminars about women and media. They also held a women's film festival in each year. This NGO established in 1996, also publishes *Ucan Haber* (The Flying News) bulletin since 1998. The aim with the bulletin is to enhance the communication between women, to support women's groups by providing information on legal rights regarding women, events nationwide and abroad. The bulletin also analyses some special issues like gender inequality in the media in detail. Selen Dogan, the General Coordinator of Ucan Supurge, states that although the present relationship between media and women is negative, alternative feminist media gives hope for the future. They try to stop negative tendencies towards women in mass media and become a pressure group. Ucan

Supurge has promoted many projects regarding media so far. One of them is Local Woman Reporters Network Project started in 2003. The aim of the project is to initiate women's information and news network to carry out local issues, demands and priorities to the national agenda. Thus, they have created a strong alternative women's media and women have been given the opportunity to take their place in a more democratic society. Their focus point is women so Dogan implies that they cannot be objective. In contrast to other women's media in Turkey, they not only use print media, but they also produce radio and television programmes on women's rights, the European Union, local politics or tourism. These programmes also highlight women's issues and build a bridge between individual woman and women's organisations. Ucan Supurge also broadcasts research and articles related to women and media on its website.

Filmor Women's Cooperative, established in 2003, is another women's institution making films and trying to increase the participation of women in film and media as well. They hold a women's film festival every year with different themes. Their first aim was to give women an opportunity to express themselves and improve their productivity. They directed a film entitled "What's Clitoris?" Melek Ozman, speaking on behalf of Filmor, underlines the fact that cinema is one of the means of communication

and women have a right to participate in cinema. Today, with the help of digital technology, it became easier to make alternative films. There is no competition in this festival because their primary aim is to be together with films and empower themselves without having to compete. In WorkshopPurple, women also gain knowledge and experience on cinema, writing and producing films throughout the workshops on several subjects from film-making to film-criticism each year.

The Feminist movement in Turkey has its roots in the last days of the Ottoman Empire. While modern Turkey gave rights to its women very early in its history, women were always the subjects of discussions; discussions on culture, religion, secularism, democracy, ethnicity and politics. As publications where "subjects" can give their opinion on these subjects, women's media in Turkey plays a special role in the democratisation process of the country. Women from different backgrounds have put most of their differences aside and discussed women's issues in these publications. These publications are also important as alternative media texts against mainstream media. They not only provide an alternative to the mainstream texts but also an alternative to the mainstream production and male-dominant press culture. Gender discrimination is a fact the Turkish media has to face and journalists have to work to promote gender equality in every aspect. ■

Joint Declaration of Professional Media Organizations in Turkey

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the AKP government are not satisfied to only hold the majority at Parliament, but they are also attempting to place all national organizations, including non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, trade unions and media, under their control.

This is a serious threat to the democratic system.

The unjust accusations and interventions which the Prime Minister started and increased against the media, by calling on his supporters „not to take these newspapers to your homes“, are unacceptable attacks which exist nowhere else in the world and which target the newspapers and journalists together with their readers.

Freedom of expression is an essential. The right to learn the facts should be protected under any condition and by everybody.

As a result of freedom of opinion and expression, which should be protected by our constitution and laws, journalists use freedom of the press in a candid manner and for the benefit of the right to learn the facts. For this purpose, journalists must combat censorship and self-censure and keep the public advised.

Journalists' responsibilities to the public are above all other responsibilities, for example, to their employer and to the authorities.

On the other side, the executive body has the significant task and responsibility of ensuring that journalists are able to perform their profession, publish freely and secure publishing rights.

The executive body can not lay down preventive and obstructive economic, financial and political conditions on the free publishing of news, ideas and opinions. It can not even make a law in this regard, cannot prevent the operation of media organs.

Journalists are under no conditions whatsoever prepared to apply threats or blackmail; rather they stand against such oppression as per the nature of their professional principles and appropriate conduct. While the journalists who fully comply with the mentioned principles expect the same from their Prime Minister, they likewise strongly condemn the contrary attitude, opinion and words. Journalists expect the politicians and rulers of the country to accept the criticism as well as the acclaim.

Journalists defend the respect of peace, democracy and human rights, as well as the universal values of humanity, plurality of opinion and diversity. Journalists do not discriminate according to nationality, race, gender, language, religion, class or philosophical belief among peoples, societies and nations, and avoid publications promoting hatred and hostility.

Therefore, journalists have the right to ask the executive body and its head, the Prime Minister, to refrain from using words and behaviors that promote hatred and hostility. We want everyone to be sure that journalists will defend the public right to get information to the full extent, despite the anger of the country's Prime Minister and executive body against the media. The right to demand information, freedom to obtain information, to comment and to criticize will be defended by journalists under every circumstance and will be their main responsibility. Consequently, in accordance with the principles of their profession, journalists are an enclave against the interference of government and similar bodies.

Considering the recent developments, it is more important than ever that the hurdles against the syndication of the journalists should be abolished. Monopolization of the media should be prevented. Editorial freedom should be secured. Press freedom will be strengthened with these steps. The only way to overcome the recent obstacles is by lifting the impediments to freedom of speech and press freedom. Journalists should be able to perform their profession as journalists, and unionization should be provided.

We, the media organizations undersigned, will be engaged in addressing these problems:

- Association of European Journalists (AEJ)
- Basin Enstitüsü Derneği, IPI National Committee
- Press Council
- Press Senate
- Contemporary Journalists Association (CGD)
- G9 Group (Journalists' Platform, Ankara)
- Association of Communication Research (ILAD)
- Media Communication and Postal Employees Union (KESK Haber-Sen)
- Journalists' Union of Turkey
- Journalists' Association of Turkey

Media Owners Association and Alumni Association of Marmara Communication attended as monitors to the assembly. ■

Medya Okuryazarlığı (Media Literacy)

Edited by Melda Cinman Simsek & Nurcay Turkoglu

Media literacy has been one of the most popular subjects of Turkish media scholars over the last couple of years due to the projects of Ministry of Education and Radio Television Supreme Council. However the concept was not widely known for Turkey compared to Western Countries which have had media literacy lessons in primary and secondary school curriculum for many years.

In May 2005, the media literacy conference organised by Marmara University, Faculty of Communications, took place in Istanbul over three days with the participation of communication scientists from nationwide communication faculties, representatives from Radio Television Supreme Council, Turkish Journalist Association (TGC) and Communicational Researches Association (ILAD).

In the conference, a wide array of topics were discussed, ranging from media education, development of media literacy concept, theoretical and practical approaches for media literacy, media education practices toward children and adults, monopolisation of media, internet literacy, media literacy in the European Union, social reality and power relations in mass media. Different solutions which emphasised Turkey's own conditions were suggested.

The book "Medya Okuryazarlığı" (Media Literacy) edited by Prof Dr Melda Cinman Simsek and Prof Dr Nurcay Turkoglu consists of detailed versions of these papers presented in the conference which suggest solutions and an extensive road map regarding needs and the existing social structure of Turkey. It is a guide book for both those who want to know what the concept of media literacy is and how it is useful for individuals and also those who want to know what the conditions in Turkey are related to media literacy and what can be done. ■

Agos is still Agos, Almost...

An Interview with Aris Nalci, the News Editor of Agos Newspaper

By Babar Muratoglu



The murder of Hrant Dink was one of the most shocking events in recent Turkish history. He was one of the founders and Editor-in-Chief of the *Agos* newspaper. He called himself a Turkish-Armenian journalist with a dream. His dream was a peaceful and respectful Turkey where ethnic or religious differences were not dividing the society. His perspective was called "the four way mirror", simultaneously emphatic to people of Armenian diaspora, citizens of the Republic of Armenia, Turkish-Armenians, and citizens of Turkey. He was an advocate of the

Armenian community in Turkey, and an advocate of Turkey abroad. He was a bridge between two societies divided by history and accusations. He was a symbol, always on the front. Although, or maybe because he was not the radical many people were waiting to see, he was mostly misunderstood. He was prosecuted and convicted. He endured threats from radicals. Maybe the worst was that he was seen as a provocateur by ordinary people who hurt his name but never listened to or read what his thoughts. He was assassinated on 19 January 2007 near Agos.

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Hrant Dink Funeral. Photo by Kerem Ozcan

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About one hundred thousand mourners marched in Dink's funeral, protesting his assassination.

I spoke with the News Editor of *Agos*, Aris Nalci; about *Agos*, Turkish-Armenians and of course Hrant Dink.

- *Agos is not the first newspaper published by the Armenian community in Turkey. What are the differences between Agos and the other Armenian or other non-Muslim communities' newspapers?*

Nalci: Of course *Agos* is not the first Armenian newspaper in Turkey, but it is the first Armenian and Turkish newspaper. There are two other daily newspapers published in Armenian. *Agos* is published both in Turkish and Armenian. Being published in Turkish is a very important factor here, because lots of Armenians who had come to Istanbul from Anatolia, unfortunately are not capable enough to read in Armenian. These people could have felt that they had been isolated from the Armenian community. In the end, we are the press and we need to provide communication. Second, *Agos* is like a bridge: A bridge between people living in Turkey and Armenian community in Turkey. If we express our problems in Turkish, then people can understand us better. Because the Armenian community is a religious community, not an NGO, it does not have a presidency. It has only a patriarchate and only this patriarchate can make contact with the official institutions. So sometimes there can be some problems while expressing matters. Writing problems about the Armenian community in Turkish is like giving the message directly to the address.

On the other hand, *Agos* has its four pages in Armenian and it is also sold in Armenia. So it is like a bridge between Turkey and

Armenia too. Think about this: The border between two countries is closed. So we are like public relations NGO. When a person comes from Armenia to Turkey and has some problems here, he or she comes to *Agos*. When a person who wants to go to Armenia for a football match does not know where to go, he or she comes to *Agos*. When a man who falls in love with an Armenian girl does not know how to introduce himself to her family, he comes to *Agos*. We even have taken part in formal marriage permissions.

Besides, lots of Anatolian, and lots of people from Istanbul had gone to other countries from Turkey. They are called the diaspora. They left this country many years ago and they do not have the fresh information about Turkey in Europe or in USA. They have only limited information and it is almost impossible to have some information about minorities in Turkey. That is why, they also read our newspaper. So we make a connection between diaspora and Turkey, also between diaspora and the Turkish-Armenian community. *Agos* has 24 pages, 4 pages in Armenian, 7 pages are about the Armenian community, and the rest is about fresh news in Turkey. But due to the fact that *Agos* is a weekly newspaper, we try to look from a different perspective, from *Agos*' perspective to the fresh news. This is different from the other daily newspapers.

- *Were there any difficulties in the process of founding Agos?*

Nalci: I have been working here for 11 years. I was not here during the foundation process, but I do not think there were more difficulties compared with any other newspaper. Maybe inside the Armenian community there were some reactions, because writing in Turkish means spreading out what you have in Turkish. And this means that everybody can read it. We do not only write

about the corruption in Turkey. We also write about the corruption in the Armenian community. The Armenian community criticises *Agos* too much, but *Agos* criticises the Armenian community too. In short, we are journalists. That is why, maybe the Armenian community had reacted, but in the eye of the majority, it is something good. It gives the opportunity to express ourselves. We have lived lots of problems as a newspaper, but in the foundation process, I do not know of any special problem.

- *Does publishing an Armenian newspaper in Turkey creates some difficulties?*

Nalci: There may be some problems about language. If you want to publish something in Armenian, you have to make sure that the person in charge is capable enough in Armenian. Most of us have graduated from Armenian schools here, so showing our diploma is enough. Then we send our newspaper to the government, to the police, like any other newspaper. But if you publish a magazine only in Armenian, you may be asked to give a summary in Turkish in every issue. We are not asked to do that, because our pages published in Armenian are already the summary of the pages published in Turkish. Other than this, there are no problems about publishing in Armenian. Let's say, there are no attempts. In the end, we are defined as minority, and there are some rights given by Lausanne Treaty. If you make the legal applications, the problems can be solved. There is a recent plan to establish an Armenian radio station. There is a problem, but it is a financial problem. Also there are about 40 – 45 thousand Armenians here, and it is difficult to find people who can work. We have 14 Armenian schools in Turkey. They are private and they do not receive government support. They can not demand money from students as well. They can only receive donations,

and there are not enough students. We are just 45 thousand people, and so we only have 3000 students. These schools need to have a high quality of education because at one point, parents naturally start to compare Armenian schools with the other schools. So these days the Armenian community is focused on the economic problems.

- *Can Agos out reach to the people in Turkey who are not Armenian?*

Nalci: Yes. *Agos* sells 8000 copies daily, and it has 3000-3500 Armenian readers. This means we have 4500 or 5000 readers who are not Armenian. It has also changed during the last year, after the homicide, the death of Hrant Dink. If you think about the hundreds of thousands people who had come here after the murder, and demonstrated on the street, it is natural. I think they were socially responsible people of Turkey. I do not categorise them as Armenian or Turkish, but if we had looked to that 100 thousand, only one or two percent would be Armenian. It is nice to have that kind of support.

Also *Agos* is an independent newspaper, and people find the opportunity to express themselves. We have lots of good writers, they want to write for *Agos*. During the last year, other newspapers' columnists have sent essays to *Agos*. This is so important, because this means, they want to reach our readers. This is a great honour for us.

- *How is your relationship with the Armenian press and the European press?*

Nalci: Let's first talk about our relationships with Armenia and Europe. If a European parliamentarian or a commissioner

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comes to Turkey, they first meet a representative of the government and then come here. They visit us, and get some information. It is same with Armenia. If they first visit the patriarchate, than they come here. Again, it is same with the press. For example, opposition Armenian journalists from France, or opposition journalists from Armenia, send their essays to *Agos*. Somehow, this newspaper has become the meeting point of the opposition voices

- How is your relationship with the Turkish press? Do you think they represent you properly?

Nalci: We were shocked for two months after the homicide. In that period of time, everyone from the Turkish press, leftist or rightist, including the ones from higher positions, had come here to help us. We could even say that they prepared the newspaper for publishing. The executive editor of a very well known newspaper came here and served tea. He could not find anything to do, and he served tea. Columnists from other newspapers came here and offered to write for our newspaper. So we can not deny their support. Nevertheless, maybe the reason Hrant had become target was the press itself. They reflected things in a distorted way; they just picked certain things up and quoted only these. Most of the things you can find on the internet are that kind of stuff. Maybe it was a problem that we did not have a website before, but now we have one. When you search, you can find out what he actually said. Also there is another problem; our people do not know how to read. We like to pick things up from a text instead of reading it as a whole. That is why I do not say, the press does not have any guilt. They should have reflected things more properly. Maybe there was someone else who made them prepare the news in that way. Press is a very powerful tool anyway, and some people control them. Being independent is very difficult; although some newspapers look as if they are totally independent, when one digs in behind the scene, can easily discover various establishments or interest groups acting undercover.

- Does *Agos* have a role in solving the problems between Turkey, Armenia, and the diaspora?

Nalci: Of course it has. It is very important to tell the ideas of the Armenians in Turkey to diaspora and vice versa. I think we manage this, because lots of things have changed during the last 10 years. If we can talk to the Armenians in the diaspora today, that is due to fact that they read *Agos* or they get in touch with us through *Agos*. Hrant visited the diaspora, and talked to every one of them, although Armenians in diaspora were against him. Most of the time, he received negative reactions, but still he kept going and talking. If you raise even only one question on someone's mind, then even if you wouldn't be there afterwards, he or she might keep questioning. During the last year, I have gone

abroad for panels, and I saw that I was the only source, and people listened to me. The agenda changes so fast in Turkey, so we forget things very quickly. That is why it is like being an embassy, to tell people what is going on here. It is very important to tell them rightly. I think the best way for doing that is to communicate with emotions, not with logic. That is why I think people communicating with each other are more effective than politicians communicating with each other. When they listen to my speech in a conference, they tell me that I am taking Turkey's side. I say: "I am taking people's side." First we need to communicate with people, and I think *Agos* manages this. It is same with the Armenia. Lots of institutions there pay attention to *Agos*. They get in touch with us, and they sent news to be published. We have that kind of connection.

- How do you evaluate the other minorities' press? How is your relationship with them?

Nalci: We have good relations with all of them, we are always in touch, especially with *Rums*. We are not in the position to criticise their publications or their attitudes. Every one of them has different dynamics, but their existence is very important. They should be maintained and supported.

- How do you evaluate the reactions of the press and journalists after Hrant Dink got murdered?

Nalci: There were ones who really did great journalism, and there were ones who created some speculations. Even there were ones who had claimed that Hrant had himself killed. Nevertheless, the best reaction was the one I mentioned before. They came here, and helped us.

- What kind of a person was Hrant Dink, what kind of a journalist was he?

Nalci: A very good one. He was emotional. He knew how to reach people. He could speak every persons language, but not in the bad way. I mean it was not like responding violence with violence. He could get along with everyone. I can not think of any single person he had talked to who got him wrong. Maybe the ones who read only distorted quotations and not his whole essays, might have misunderstood him.

- Has anything changed in *Agos*, especially in publication policy, after the death of Hrant Dink?

Nalci: Nothing has changed in our publication policy, but something did change in *Agos*. Now, there is no Hrant Dink. He is not writing in this newspaper anymore. We can not read what he writes. *Agos* is now not the newspaper where Hrant Dink writes. ■

Turkey's Own Caricature Crisis

A Tale of Humour and Freedom of Speech

By Babar Muratoglu

A short history of the crisis

During the last couple of years, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has sued a few caricaturists, claiming that they have insulted him with the caricatures they had drawn. The three caricaturists which are going to be focused on in this article have been sued for the same reason: Representing Prime Minister Erdogan as animals.

The first case which became a big issue in Turkish media was about a caricature which was representing Erdogan as a cat. It was drawn by caricaturist Musa Kart, and published in *Cumhuriyet* on May, 9 2004. It was about the problematic issue of Imam Hatip High Schools (publicly founded high schools which are educating students to become ecclesiastics). In the caricature, Erdogan was shown as a cat that got stuck with a ball of wool and says: "Do not create tension. We promised, we are going to solve it." Erdogan sued the newspaper for emotional distress. First he won the case, the court decided that the caricaturist Musa Kart and the Editor of *Cumhuriyet*, Mehmet Sucu had to pay 5000 Turkish Lira for damages (Aksam, 2005). Nevertheless, the Supreme Court of Appeals reversed the judgment, demanding complaisance for humor. The case then returned to the local court, but the judge dismissed the case due to the justification of the Supreme Court. In the end, the caricaturist has been acquitted (Radikal, 2006).

During this process, after the first local court sentenced that caricaturist for dam-

ages, *Penguen* (which means penguin in Turkish), a very well known humour magazine in Turkey, protested the court's decision and Prime Minister Erdogan. On February 24 2005, a caricature was published on the front cover. It represented Erdogan as 9 different animals; including an elephant, giraffe, monkey, camel, frog, snake, cow, duck and penguin (the symbol of the magazine was drawn as Erdogan too), each was drawn by a different caricaturist. The title of the caricature was "The Tayyip Universe". Erdogan sued this caricaturist and comic paper as well, demanding 40,000 Turkish Lira for emotional distress (Sabah, 2005). The court decided that there was no intention of insult in the caricature and the case was dismissed (Aksam, 2006).

The next caricature Erdogan sued was published on the front cover of *Leman*, another very well known humour magazine, on July 6 2006, during a hot summer with many tick attacks. It was drawn by caricaturist Mehmet Cagcag and it was representing the Prime Minister as a tick on a citizen's back. The text next to the caricature indicated that Turkish citizens were able to pay high taxes, the highest oil prices in the world, high telephone prices but could not get rid of the tick on their backs. The citizen in the caricature says: "They say it is more dangerous to rip it out. Let him suck. Maybe he will go away by himself when he gets full." Once again Erdogan sued the caricature, and demanded 50,000 Turkish Lira for emotional distress claiming that it was insulting him by comparing him to a malignant, blood suck-

ing animal (Sabah, 2006). Nevertheless, the case was dismissed and the caricature was acquitted.

Caricaturists talk about the crisis

Erdil Yasaroglu, one of the caricaturists who had drawn "The Tayyip Universe", and one of the founders of the *Penguen* magazine, said that when the Prime Minister sued the caricature which was representing him as a cat, it did not make any sense to them. They thought Erdogan was trying to suppress the caricaturists. That was why they had drawn "The Tayyip Universe". "Actually there is no humour in that caricature. It was just a reaction, an attitude towards a prime minister who was trying to suppress the caricature." says Yasaroglu. "Then he sued us as well, claiming that the caricature was insulting him. In our point of view, representing someone as an animal is not insulting; our logo is an animal. We have chosen an animal as a character for us". Yasaroglu says, "it is sad that a prime minister approach is very emotional to that kind of stuff. Nevertheless, it is nice that these cases were not a penal action, these are just personal deformation cases. It would be more sad if the system was like that."

When he is asked if he feels free as a caricaturist, after that kind of case, Yasaroglu says: "Yes. I mean we may have lots of problems, but still we feel free. We do our job without any restriction. We do not restrain ourselves with the fear of being sued. I mean, it is not that horrible. Europe always wants to see Turkey as a country which

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is horrible for artists, a country in which people are always suppressed, a country with a dictatorship. This is not true. These cases are just personal cases. Everyone can make mistakes.”

On the other hand, Mehmet Cagcag, who had drawn the caricature which was representing Erdogan as a tick, says that he does not feel free himself. “It is like having dyspnea” he says: “You sometimes breathe well, but generally you have difficulties in breathing. There is suppression, a censorship which is not clearly expressed”. When he is asked about the case of his caricature, Cagcag explains: “It was about the high taxes Turkish workers are paying, high electric and energy prices Turkish citizens are paying. It was criticising the economic success which has been achieved by taking so much money from citizens, not by any creativity or innovation. So it was like a tick on the back of a citizen. That was the thing what made them so offended. They said that there was an insult in the caricature, the Prime Minister had been compared to a malignant, blood sucking animal. Nevertheless, this was not the court’s point of view. The caricature which had represented Erdogan as a cat had been acquitted, and a tick is an animal as well. The court did not see any differences between the animals. If one was acquitted, then the other one has to be acquitted too”. Cagcag continues saying that there are boundaries of traditions, ethics, and high values which a caricaturists should respect. In other countries, values may be different, and the boundaries of expression may be wider. “For example, if a Turkish caricaturist wants to tell that Turkey is under USA control, he or she would not represent the prime minister as Bush’s dog. Nevertheless, Tony Blair did not sue the caricaturist for drawing him like that. Or there was a caricature about Angela Merkel, I guess it was photo montage. She was suckling someone. Turkish caricaturists would not do that either. Maybe some day, if Turkey makes lots of progress, and Turkish leaders internalise democracy properly, then we can make the boundaries wider.”

When we talked about *Penguen* magazine as an example of independent media, Yasaroglu says: “We are totally independent. We never publish advertisements. This is true for all humour magazines. No one can interfere with us, we can do what we want. There are lots of young people who follow this agenda. They do not read other newspapers or magazines. That is why humour magazines are effective. We have managed to create a certain culture. This is a culture consisting of people who can take a humorous look at the events, people who are open and liberal minded, and people who like laughter”.

When they are asked about freedom of speech, both caricaturists agree that each of these cases discourages it. Yasaroglu says: “They made us fed up. Even though they do not affect us too much, they cause us to lose much of our energy”. On the other hand, according to Cagcag, acquittal of these caricatures does not mean that there is freedom of speech. He says: “These cases would not take place in a society in which there is a real freedom of speech.”

There is a general agreement amongst caricaturists, or let us say in all comedians that humour is opponent and/or critical. Comedy criticises the politicians, the society; it shows us ourselves in a witty way. Maybe it gives us the opportunity to see ourselves from an outsider’s point of view, and makes us realise what we did not realise before.

As a conclusion on the position of Turkish caricaturist, let us take heed of what Cagcag says about the humour’s mission: “Make people more humane. Create people or societies who can establish more elaborate and more peaceful relationships. Make the world a better place. That is what all the comedians do. They criticise the rudeness; the rudeness of the ones who hold great powers. Humour is a thing which can create a tsunami by saying just two words. It is like what Diogenes said to Alexander the Great: ‘Stand out of my sunlight.’ This is the greatest criticism”. ■

deScripto Reporters

The articles in the Turkish special of *deScripto* were written by students at Istanbul University. For those who would like to know more about them here are their short biographies:

ALPER DINCEL: Dincel graduated from Istanbul Kultur University Turkish Language and Literature programme. He’s working in Istanbul University Communication Faculty since 2001 and he’s also continuing to practice photography and editorial jobs. He contributed to *deScripto* Turkey Special with his photographs

BASAK KALKAN: Kalkan graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Political Sciences Public Administration Programme in 2001. She has a Master’s degree from Anatolian University Faculty of Communication Sciences Press-Publishing Programme. She is a PhD. student with the Journalism Programme of Istanbul University since 2007. She is specialised in political communication.

ASUMAN KUTLU: Kutlu graduated from Istanbul University English Language and Literature Programme in 2005. She gained experience by working both in media and education. She is currently a master student at Radio, Television, Film Programme of Istanbul University and works as an instructor at Istanbul Technical University.

BAHAR MURATOGLU: She graduated from Baskent University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Tourism Management Programme. She is currently studying at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences Journalism Master Programme. She has been a member of ELYADAL (Critical – Creative Thinking and Behavioural Research Laboratory) since 2003. She has worked as a co-editor in PIVOLKA (official publication of ELYADAL) from 2003 to 2007. She participated in the

Global Understanding Project, a collaboration between East Carolina University and Istanbul University. Her various articles have been published in Turkish newspapers and magazines.

IPEK OZARMAGAN: Ozarmagan graduated from Marmara University Faculty of Fine Arts in 2006. She also studied at Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg Hasselt Belgium in 2005 as an Erasmus student. She is specialised in painting, video-art and printmaking. She is currently a master student of Radio, Television, Film Programme of Istanbul University. She also works as research assistant at Istanbul University Communications Faculty. She is specialising in film theory and analysis.

SEDAT OZER: Ozer received his B.A. degree from the Ege University Communication Faculty Department of Journalism. He earned his M.A. degree from Kocaeli University. He is still doing his PhD. at Radio, Television, Film programme at Istanbul University. He also worked as a reporter and cameraman at various local and national TV channels. He is specializing on radio and television technologies and television news.

DIGDEM SEZEN: Sezen is a PhD. candidate at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences. She is currently studying as a visiting Fulbright Researcher at Georgia Institute of Technology School of Digital Media in the USA. Her research interests are accented films, new media literacies, postmodern literature and interactive narratives. She also works as a research assistant at Istanbul University Faculty of Communications.

OZLEM TASKENT: Taskent graduated from Galatasaray University Communications Faculty. She then finished a master programme on the European Union at the same university. She has been a PhD. student at the Journalism Programme of Istanbul University since 2007 and is working as the editor of an international technical journal. Her research interests are political films, minorities and the European Union.

SINEM TUNA: Tuna received her undergraduate degree in archaeology from Istanbul University in 2003. She gained her master’s degree in Media Arts. She is a PhD. candidate at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences Radio, Television, Film Programme. She also works as a lecturer at Beykent University.

OLGA UNTILA: Untila graduated from the University of State in Moldavia. She received her journalism master’s degree from the same university. She worked for 10 years as a radio reporter and lectured on Radio Management for two years. She has a SOROS scholarship. From her articles published in the Moldavian press 10 are about the culture and civilization of Turkey. She is a PhD. student at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences.

MERVE YILMAZ: Caner is a 3rd year undergraduate student at Istanbul University Communications Faculty Radio, Television, Film Programme. She also studied at Nantes University France in 2006 as an Erasmus student. She worked as an intern at CNNTurk TV channel in 2008. She is interested in ecology, arts, politics and sport. Her article in *deScripto* was her first experience as a reporter.

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Slovak Independent News Agency

By Selma Koric

Travelling to Bratislava and meeting local media professionals is always a rewarding experience. The latest visit offered an opportunity to meet journalists from the Slovak privately owned news agency SITA and find out interesting details about its history, its struggles in the past and its plans for the future.

One thing to be discovered about SITA is its readiness to take a chance and invest resources in young and talented journalists who often come to the agency straight out of school or have professional training at the agency while still attending school. Another thing is its readiness to welcome colleagues from other countries who, for private or professional reasons, found their new home in Slovakia. One such story is that of Pavel Urban, an experienced journalist from Serbia who came to Slovakia in the early 1990s as a result of unsettling political situation in Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic. His is the story of a journalist who changed country and citizenship to pursue his passion for his profession and has found fertile ground in SITA. Today he is the Head of Domestic News department and one of the driving forces of the agency.

The story of SITA dates back to 1993 right after the break-up of the Czech-Slovak Federation. After the break up, the official press agency CsTK split into two parts, but the main operations remained in Prague as they had been before. In Slovakia at that time the regional office of CsTK had to be developed into a fully-fledged national news agency. Based on a law passed just before the break up in mid-1992, the Press Agency of The Slovak Republic, or TASR Slovakia, was established. The agency was, and still is, financed directly from the state budget, and the appointment of the Director General is a cabinet-level decision.

In March 1994, Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar and his party, HZDS (an acronym that stands for „Movement for a Democratic Slovakia“), lost their majority in parliament. With the additional loss of a parliamentary vote of confidence, Meciar was forced to turn over rule to an interim government led by a former confidant, Democratic Union leader Jozef Moravcik. During this political upheaval, TASR gave Meciar its support, a decision that signalled the end of any independent, free and unbiased reporting at that agency. Still, the support didn't prevent Meciar's temporary fall from power - he returned after another round of elections seven months later-and the subsequent recall of TASR General Manager Dusan Kleiman.

Meciar's ruling coalition maintained a communist-era attitude toward the media after its September 1994 victory, best summarised

in the saying, „Who is not with us is against us.“ Meciar and his supporters viewed independent media more or less as the opposition media of their political enemies. They maintained a direct influence on TASR and on state-subsidised and perennially under-financed public radio and television. This situation continued even through to the year 2000 despite a rapidly changing political landscape.

It was at this time, in early 1995, that a group of managers and staffers who had been fired from TASR began to discuss the feasibility of establishing a privately owned news agency that would be free of the influence of whatever clique is ruling in Bratislava. They knew the difficulties that lay ahead, first and foremost in finding investors to help provide the basic resources. A majority of the business leaders in Slovakia at that time supported Prime Minister Meciar and his newly elected government, and showed little interest in supporting a source of information that could not be controlled by government. After receiving offers from various foundations - especially foreign - to run the agency as a non-profit organisation, the group decided not to accept those offers because they felt that maintaining the profit motive was the best assurance of quality in their product. This is, after all, a regular business: news agencies produce information as goods to be sold and the better the product, the better it can be sold.

Finally, in late 1996, Mr. Pavol Mudry, Editor, Co-founder and the first General Manager of SITA made contact with investment bankers, financial advisory companies and others who agreed to raise funds to establish the new agency SITA. Their attitude was that their companies needed reliable information on business and financial affairs. Such information is available from the major news agencies like Reuters, Bloomberg and Dow Jones, but over the long term these are very expensive. Plus, they do not provide their clients here with sufficient information about Slovakia's economy. The idea was to cover Slovakia as completely as possible and to then, in turn, exchange this information with the international agencies and other resources.

SITA Ltd. was established on January 15, 1997 and the launching of its operations immediately posed many problems, as Mr. Mudry explains: *“I believed my role at that time especially to be to explain the urgent need of having an unbiased agency that stands in sharp contrast to the state-owned TASR. I needed to explain this to our future clients as we sought out our special niche in the market.”* It was not an easy task, particularly in view of the political situa-

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tion in Slovakia. But they saw that indeed there was a big niche in the information market for them, a great demand for unbiased information, a need for real-time, online business and economic news about Slovakia. No organisation in Slovakia had ever provided business information online before SITA except Reuters. However, Reuters focused primarily on banking and macroeconomic issues, rarely providing news about individual firms and corporations, people in business or other microeconomic issues.

At that time the Central European Office of Reuters evaluated the possibility of establishing a special business news service in Slovakia. They agreed on a trial period for SITA, during which Reuters would assess the quality of the business news SITA could provide for its use. The trial was a success, and SITA won its first important contract and reference.

Staffing the newsroom at SITA brought its own special challenges. SITA management decided to seek out new graduates or even current students of the University for the Economy in Bratislava and give them the chance to create for themselves a working place for the future. They established three desks - general news, business news and news in English, and they hired three relatively experienced agency and newspaper journalists to lead the operations. After three months of training the staff and sending out news „blind“ -meaning to nobody but Reuters - they felt ready to go on wire and announced that wire operations would begin by June 15, 1997. At the time, SITA had a staff of approximately 20.

Meanwhile, another battle for them was on the horizon. In a letter sent to state administration offices, the Ministry for Culture labelled SITA an „oppositional“ organisation financed by mysterious sources and warned officials not to give the agency any information. This happened at a time when SITA had yet to get its first story published. With every roadblock put in their way, however, came offers of help from others. Among those was the U.S.

Embassy in Bratislava, which pledged its support of media plurality in Slovakia and offered to seek a grant to fund new equipment. SITA stressed to them and all their supporters that they welcomed assistance but could never accept any that was politically aimed.

The Meciar government fought SITA from day one. While it could not prevent them from attending press conferences or reporting on parliamentary sessions and committees meetings, what the politicians of the ruling coalition could do was refuse any comment or answer any questions posed by a SITA reporter, and this is what they did. SITA solved this problem in a way that was unique for Slovakia. SITA's management decided that publishing politicians' „no comment“ responses can be a good story in and of itself, a good indication to the public and to voters of the attitude of the politicians who claim to represent them. This lasted for about three months, at which point the so-called politicians recognised their silence could affect their popularity with the public.

As SITA faced down the politicians on one side, they encountered an even more important problem on another: their marketing. Privatisation in Slovakia at this time was characterised by much carrying of favours from the government, which was still determining the rules for privatisation. The result for SITA was that they were having trouble finding commercial customers. The owners of financial institutions and new business enterprises or financial institutions were literally afraid to use SITA's business news service despite our growing reputation for quality. This lasted until early 1998.

In late 1997 and early 1998, a strong coalition of some 11 political parties organised with the goal to defeat Vladimir Meciar and pre-election campaigns were once more in full swing. One tool SITA utilised in putting out the false accusations of bias from Meciar and other politicians during the pre-election campaign was their so-called „Original Text Service“-or OTS. This is a paid service in which they published the full-text statements delivered to SI-

TA by political parties. With OTS, no political party could accuse them of refusing to publish their platform or other statements. Every party had the chance to sign a contract with SITA and get its full-text statements on their wire. The service includes a special coding and a SITA statement disavowing any responsibility for the contents of the text. In Slovakia, this proved an important step. SITA was able to avoid the problems other media organisations faced, such as lawsuits and court actions brought by political parties as a result of stories they didn't like. On the other hand, SITA was, and still is, diligent in acknowledging errors and accepting responsibility for them. This was atypical in Slovakia, where news organisations generally do little or nothing to correct misinterpretations of stories and rarely apologise to readers, clients or the subjects of those stories. SITA's willingness to do so went far in ensuring its credibility.

Today, SITA is an agency of approximately 150 freelancers and correspondents. The agency produces more than 300 news items and stories per day and has more than 200 customers, both media and commercial, as well as non-commercial ones such as governments, foreign embassies and non-governmental organisations. SITA's specific structure allows it to operate with just five or six fixed-employed staff members, while most of the journalists work as freelancers on a contract basis offering their professional services to the agency. The average age of the professional staff is in the 25-30 range and having such a young force at the agency positions SITA well for operating in the new environment of multimedia news. Due to the fact that Slovakia has relatively small number of media, only six daily newspapers, SITA receives about 70% of its revenues from the non-media domain primarily concentrating on the industry and economy sector.

In terms of what future holds for SITA, it is clear they first have to continue to stabilise their market position by maintaining a high quality of service. As Pavol Mudry explains: „I think that the time for state-run or state-dominated agencies like TASR is over. In

nearly all of the Central or Eastern European countries in transition we have noticed similar small, privately owned, independent news agencies like SITA starting up. SITA has already joined in cooperative agreements with ONASA in Bosnia, BelaPAN in Belarus and BNS in the Baltic States. We intend to broaden this cooperation to as many as 15 agencies across the region.“. Small, stand-alone agencies like SITA will have no chance to survive unless they learn to cooperate and form some sort of association among themselves. Only this will earn them the chance to gain more respect and treatment as a partner by their larger and stronger counterparts. The future for SITA and similar agencies must lie in close mutual cooperation and in a resulting exchange of products and experience. The first step was set when SITA in common with its software company provided access to its excellent editorial system to ONASA in Bosnia. That was only the start.

Another challenge for the future will be a solid education in professional standards of the next generation of journalists. As Mr. Mudry points out: „Thanks to the 1989 „velvet revolution“ we luckily got rid of state censorship and started a new era. A consequence was that we lost one generation of experienced journalists from the communist time. Now, very talented-but-inexperienced youngsters have filled the gap. My experience has been that they are generally good and don't have the burden of the past that the older, still-active journalists carry.“ On the other hand, the education of these younger journalists is often not satisfactory. Not to be overly pessimistic, however, a lot has been done already to change and improve the level of journalism in Slovakia. The profession has a lot of good, respected, young, clever and well-educated journalists who are strong enough to stand all the pressures they face. They put much stress on quality in their work and are justly proud of what they have done. They will help determine the future of journalism in Slovakia. Concludes Mr. Mudry: „My generation-those of the age of 50 or older-will someday fade, but it is our obligation to create conditions as favorable as possible for the new generation. A lot of us are eager to do it. I know that I am.“ ■

Interview with Mr. Milos Nemecek, Chairman of the Slovak Union of Newspaper Publishers

In Bratislava deScripto sat down with Mr. Milos Nemecek for a brief conversation about the print media environment in Slovakia.

by Selma Koric

For a start, please describe the Union of Newspaper Publishers you are chairing.

The Union of Newspaper Publishers has existed for over 18 years, and when it was founded we were still Czechoslovakia. In 1991 the Association split into two organisations, one for the Czech Republic and one for Slovakia, and both organisations were internationally recognised. In the beginning of our work in Slovakia, we received some support from our Austrian colleagues as well. Like in every young democracy, our main duties were to learn how to conduct free and independent reporting, and how to produce and distribute newspapers. Publishing structures were previously in the hands of the government and after privatisation our association entered into partnerships with private printing and publishing companies. From the very beginning we were involved in different media legislations and that was the complicated part of our job. Although we made some big steps forward, we are still not at that level that we can compare our technical and economic situation with countries like Austria, Germany, Switzerland and so on. However, we have so far achieved a lot in our Association through the work of our colleagues and journalists.

What does the overall situation with print media in Slovakia look like? Please, give a brief overview.

The situation in Slovakia is not so great, as we don't have the same circulation numbers like, for example, our colleagues in Scandinavian countries or other Central European countries. There are three or four daily newspapers available with 300 to 400 copies sold per 1,000 residents and that number has been further reduced by half in the last 10 to 14 years. All daily newspapers are held in private hands and this has been the case for a long time. Foreign investment and foreign publishers play a big role in the publishing business. Out of the four largest publishing houses three are in the hands of well-known publishers from Western Europe. The publishing situation is the most complicated among daily newspapers, while magazines fare a little bit better. In the last few years,

women's magazines are doing very well, several new ones have been established, and all have pretty high circulation numbers.

The daily newspapers face two problems. On one side there is the internet and e-publishing, which makes it much faster now to obtain information online. On the other side, there is a lack of interest in serious political topics and discussion, so there is more interest among public in tabloid stories and populist-style news.

The most popular daily newspaper is a tabloid called *Nový Cas* with 200,000 printed copies. In comparison, those newspapers ranking second, third, and fourth on this list have circulation of only 70,000.

In terms of economic problems, the main one is that publishing expenses are paid in foreign currency. The only expense we pay in our domestic currency is salary of our journalists, which is in the lower range, so the quality of newspapers suffers for that reason as well. This is the only area we can save some money, because for everything else, such as technical costs and printing we need to pay in foreign currency. Advertising prices are also generally much lower than in western newspapers, the cost of one page in a daily newspaper is approximately 3 000 EUR. The income of our daily newspapers is much lower than that of comparable newspapers in, for example, Austria or Switzerland, but our expenses are nearly as high, except for already mentioned salary costs.

What are the most popular daily newspapers in Slovakia?

We have very few daily newspapers due to our small market. We have two elite newspapers, *Sme* and *Pravda*, one mainstream paper in the Hungarian language, and one economic newspaper *Hospodarske Noviny*. They are the most popular because they are the only ones available. *Sme* has the more liberal tradition, while *Pravda* used to have a communist past and today is a very well established newspaper. Both these newspapers have their own specific characteristics and are competing for the leadership in the

market. Our problem is that the regional publishing sector is very underdeveloped. We have only one regional newspapers chain in East Slovakia, and no regional daily or weekly newspapers in West and Central Slovakia. This mostly has to do with the fact that we had different regional administrative divisions in Slovakia and we still don't have strong regional tradition related to culture, economy and so on, which would require its own newspaper as well, due to numerous changes in regional divisions and administrations.

Tell us little bit about the recent protest in Slovakia when newspapers were published just as a blank pages without any text. The protest was regarding controversial media law ordering newspapers to print responses from people mentioned in news stories without the newspapers being entitled to demonstrate the accuracy of their report.

Yes, we actually had two protests, one during the preparation phase of the new law and one when it was presented to the Parliament for a vote. We as publishers are not against anyone's right to respond to a newspaper story, but we do object to the way this law is defined, because it means that publishers and journalists are not allowed to present their point of view or object to the complaint about their work. There should be obligations on both sides and equal rights for both parties involved, on one side the right of the reader and on the other the right of the journalist. There is no good balance in this law, because the burden only lies on the side of the journalists and publishers. Also, most inquiries about corrections and responses made to the publisher did not come from regular citizens, but rather from politicians, celebrities and business entities. We are training our colleagues, journalists, in what they have to know and do in order to follow the new regulations, and we are also working with legal experts regarding our response to this media law.

How much are professional journalism standards and international trends followed by Slovakian journalists?

This question is difficult to answer, because we don't have any statistics about which written standards are followed by journalists. Roughly 95% of the newspapers are owned by publishers that are members of our association, and 70-80% of magazines are owned by publishers that are also part of our association. All our members are either international publishers or very strong Slovakian publishers, and all work closely together with international organisations like the World Association of Newspapers and European Newspaper Publishers' Association and have very good contacts with foreign colleagues. Therefore, most of the daily newspapers in Slovakia work according to international standards that they aim to follow, as well as their own additional codes of ethics. Our members know very well that we are two times a year at the ENPA and once a year at the WAN congress and we always keep them informed about the latest developments in journalistic standards and international trends. ■

Incognito on the Web

We would like to recommend the book „Unerkannt im Netz – Sicher kommunizieren und recherchieren im Internet“ written by Peter Berger and published by UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbh, Konstanz, Germany. The book informs about simple techniques that ensure the anonymity of private e-mail and telephone communication. This is particularly useful for journalists, lawyers and doctors. The book focuses for instance on topics such as: “How to hide ones identity when calling per mobile?” and “How to evade censorship in totalitarian dictatorships?” This book should be in the personal library of all people dealing with journalism.

By Elva Hardarson

SEEMO Award for the Best Human Rights Photograph for 2008

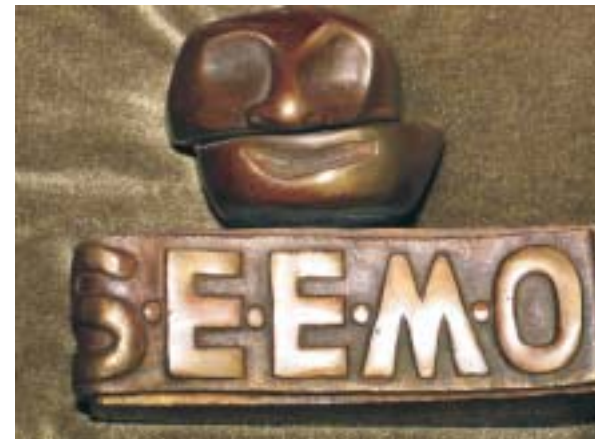
By Selma Koric

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute, in cooperation with the BETA news agency from Belgrade, Serbia presented an award for the best photograph in the field of human rights on June 16th, 2008 during the IPI World Congress in Belgrade.

The award, issued for the first time this year, is based on a decision by a jury comprised of Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, Jorgos Papadakis,

SEEMO board member from Greece, and Djordje Zorkic of the BETA news agency.

photographs published in many foreign publications such as Guardian and National Geographic. Maja is also the



The winner of the award Maja Zlatevska (Dnevnik, Skopje) received a sculpture designed by Belgrade artist Ivana Dragojevic



The award ceremony held on Monday, 16 June 2008 at the World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPI) in Belgrade: Maja Zlatevska, Marko Djurica, Djordje Zorkic (BETA news agency) and Oliver Vujovic (SEEMO Secretary General)

The first winner of this award was Maja Zlatevska (Dnevnik, Skopje), for the photograph "Zatvor" ("Prison"), her contribution to the human rights struggle in the region.

Maja Ristovska works as a photographer for over 10 years, and is employed in the highest-selling daily newspaper "Dnevnik". She is also cooperating with the world news agencies such as Reuters, EPA and France Press and has

2008 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe

receiver of prestigious awards for photography in Macedonia, such as Grand Prix Award for Photography in 2004 and the award for the best portrait photography in 2005. The photography "Zatvor" ("Prison") was captured while Maja was working on a report about living conditions in the prison "Idrizovo" located near Skopje. During her visit she was appalled by the poor conditions in the unit where those convicted to a life in prison are serving their sentence. With the approval from the Interior Ministry, she was allowed to walk around and satisfy her curiosity as a photographer by capturing lives of those prisoners with her lens. In Maja's own words what she encountered there was emotionally powerful: "Between the floors in this prison there is a wire barrier serving as a safety protection, and at the moment I was shooting the photo one of the prisoners ran across that wire in order to reach his cell on the other side. It was an exceptional sight in an equally dark surrounding." One of the good news she learned during her visit to the prison is that the new housing building is being build while the old one will be renovated to provide more humane living conditions.

SEEMO also issued a certificate of distinction to Marko Djurica (Blic/Reuters), for his photograph "Liturgija" ("Liturgy") during the same ceremony. ■



The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is pleased to announce the winner of the 2008 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe.

After careful deliberation, the SEEMO Jury has chosen Brankica Stankovic, born in October 1975 in Belgrade, Serbia. Stankovic has been working as an editor for TV B92 in Belgrade since 1997.

The SEEMO Jury based its decision on the integrity and personal courage demonstrated by Stankovic in carrying out her work. Her outstanding efforts in journalism, have contributed toward a better understanding and removing barriers between nations in South Eastern Europe.

In the course of her work, Brankica Stankovic introduced new and improved standards of professionalism to Serbian journalism and has addressed in her TV show, The Insider (Insajder), important issues that have been either concealed or sidelined by Serbian authorities. The Insider has attracted much attention and, as a consequence, the authorities have often resorted to launching investigations, pressing charges and issuing warrants. Even political leaders have felt it necessary to comment on allegations made in her show.

Brankica Stankovic received the Dusan Bogavac Award for ethics and courage in journalism, presented by the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, in 2005 and the Jug Grizelj Award for developing friendship among peoples and removing barriers between nations, presented by the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia/Jug Grizelj Fund, in 2006.

The 2,000 EUR media award is sponsored by Dr. Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria, Coordinator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), and President of the European Forum Alpbach, and is awarded every year to a journalist, editor, media executive or journalism trainer in South East Europe, who, through the media, has promoted better understanding among peoples in the region, worked towards solving minority-related problems, and fought against ethnic discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, among others.

In 2002, the jury honoured the Croatian journalist, Denis Latin, with the award. In 2003, it was presented to Kemal Kurspahic, former editor-in-chief of the Sarajevo daily Oslobođenje. Brankica Petkovic, Head of the Center for Media Policy at the Peace Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia, was the recipient of the 2005 award. Danko Plevnik, international relations columnist for the Croatian daily Slobodna Dalmacija in Split, was the winner of the 2006 award, and Milena Dimitrova, commentator for the Bulgarian daily newspaper Trud in Sofia, was last year's winner.

The Sixth Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe will be presented in Vienna on 16 November 2008 by Dr. Erhard Busek, and by SEEMO Secretary General Oliver Vujovic. ■



Maja Zlatevska - photo "Zatvor". Copyright: No photo may be used without written permission by SEEMO (Copyright ©)



Marko Djurica - photo "Liturgija". Copyright: No photo may be used without written permission by SEEMO



SEEMO Regional Conference: Media, Marketing and Business

By Elva Hardarson

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) organised, in cooperation with the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) / Austria Development Agency (ADA) and with the local partner Media Centre Belgrade and its partners, the SEEMO Regional Conference “Media, Marketing and Business” in Belgrade in June 2008 during the International Press Institute (IPI) World Congress. The IPI World Congress presented an important opportunity for participants from the SEEMO region to meet media representatives from around the world.

The topics addressed in the conference were for example “Political influences, ownership, regulation and editorial independence: opportunities for developing professional journalism and high quality content”, “Regional media market”, “Advertisers, media buyers and media outlets: competition and influence of dominant forces in the market” and “World trends: new vs. traditional media models.”

Important issues were reflected upon in the panel discussing political influences, ownership, regulation and editorial independence, given that the media in the Balkans was under the direct influence of politics during the communist era. The panellists included: Gordana Igrić (Director, BIRN, Belgrade, Serbia), Nadežda Gaće (President, Independent Journalists Association of Serbia, Serbia), Željko Ivanović (Co-Owner, *Vijesti* daily, Montenegro), Mitja Meršol (former Editor-in-Chief, *Delo* daily, Slovenia), and Aidan White (General Secretary, International Federation of Journalists). Mitja Meršol mentioned for example that the links between media owners and political parties are not transparent enough. Commenting on the problems with independent journalism, Aidan White said that the working conditions for journalists in the region are very bad, since the salaries have dropped substantially and most of them are employed as freelancers.

A further challenging issue was evaluated in the panel about regional media marketing and the development of successful media businesses. The panellists were: Mirjana Milošević (Director, Media Center Belgrade, Serbia), Hans Mahr (Senior Advisor RTL CEE, RTL Group, Germany) Andreas Rudas (Member of the Board, WAZ, Germany), and Veran Matic (Chief Executive



Officer, RTV B92, Serbia). According to Hans Mahr, South East Europe is a dynamic market, contributing to local economies, advertisement and consumer markets, but the prevailing monopoly in the area of electronic media stifles development and competitiveness. He continued by emphasising “a message to all of you: let us not be afraid of competition.” Veran Matic noted with regard to the media situation in Serbia that a large group of neo-Nazis tried to burn down the B92 building in February 2008. B92 managed to convince the police to build barricades around the building to save the company, employing around 500 people, from destruction. For several days, the police had to accompany some of the B92 managers around the city for security reasons. Regarding this incident, Veran Matic stated that “you can just imagine what it looks like to be surrounded by police when you go to negotiate for a Coca-Cola advertisement, for example.” ■



Österreichische Medientage and Österreichische Medienmesse

By Elva Hardarson

The Österreichische Medientage (Austrian Media Days) and the Österreichische Medienmesse (Austrian Media Trade Fair) took place on 24 and 26 September 2008 in Vienna. The Austrian Media Days, well organised by Hans-Jürgen Manstein (Manstein Verlag) and Oliver Voigt (Verlagsgruppe NEWS), have again proven a vital forum for discussion on current trends between leading media experts. Both these events have established themselves as the most important Austrian events with regard to marketing, advertising, media and communication. This year’s topic was “What will come – what will stay? How will marketing, media and communication develop?”

This event provides a vital networking opportunity, with more than 100 exhibitors presenting their businesses at the media trade fair and approximately 8,000 visitors from the media and marketing field.

Media executives and media experts discussed issues such as: Public and Private Broadcasting – How should Politics regulate the Media?; TV-Revolution: mobile TV, peer-to-peer TV and IP-TV; Publishers and Web 3.0, Lifestyle and Society Magazines and Advertising and Trends in Online Advertising. Among the panellists were for example Oscar Bronner (*Der Standard*), Dr. Eva Dichand (*Heute*), VD Wolfgang Fellner (*Österreich*), Euke Frank (*Woman*), Mag. Peter Kropsch (*APA – Austria Presse Agentur*), Christian Nienhaus (WAZ Mediengruppe), Dr. Karl Pall (Google), Dr. Christian Rainer (*Profil*), Markus Schächter (ZDF), Oliver Voigt (Verlagsgruppe News) and Dr. Alexander Wrabetz (ORF). ■

Upcoming Events

South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF):

Media and Democracy in South East Europe: Professional Standards and Education of Journalists

5-7 November 2008, Sofia, Bulgaria

More: www.seemf.org

OSCE Mission to Serbia:

Training course for journalists on free access

to information of public importance

20 November 2008, OSCE Mission to Serbia Training Facility, Novi Pazar

The Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD):

Second World Conference

7-10 December 2008, Athens, Greece

SEEMO Conference:

Public Broadcasting in South East Europe

9-11 December 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia

More: www.seemo.org

SEEMO Human Rights Award

10 December 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia

More: www.seemo.org

2009 World Press Photo contest

World Press Photo is inviting professional photographers and photojournalists to enter the 2009 World Press Photo contest. Founded in the Netherlands in 1955, World Press Photo is an independent non-profit organization whose primary goal it is to create international support and attention for professional press photographers. Throughout the years, World Press Photo has developed into an independent platform for photojournalism and free exchange of information.

In order to achieve its goal, World Press Photo organizes an annual press photography contest that has become one of the largest contests in the field of press photography. In the 2008 World Press Photo contest, 80536 images were submitted by 5019 photographers from 125 countries. The winning pictures are composed into a traveling exhibition that attracts more than 2 million visitors every year at more than 90 locations worldwide. All contest information in nine languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese,

Russian and Spanish) is now available on: www.worldpressphoto.org/contest. The web entry site to submit entries to the 2009 contest online will open on 1 December 2008. Detailed information about entering online can also be found on www.worldpressphoto.org. The deadline for entries to the 2009 World Press Photo contest is 15 January 2009.

University of Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Fellowship Program 2009/10

The University of Oxford offers a unique funded fellowship program for mid-career journalists at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. The fellowship scheme enables visiting journalists from across the world to do research in Oxford for a period of three to nine months. Fellows enjoy an opportunity to critically reflect upon their profession, to research a subject of their choice under the supervision of an Oxford academic specializing in that area and to enjoy the breadth of academic, cultural and social life at the University of Oxford. This is not a degree program but the chance for journalists to engage in academic research in their professional fields of interest.

For more information, please see <http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk>

(Source: International Journalist Network)

Your Excellencies!

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE SLOVAKIA

Vienna, 23 January 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), would like to express its concern regarding a draft bill on 'the periodical press and news agencies' in Slovakia, the so-called „press act“.

According to information before SEEMO, on 9 January 2008, during the 75th Slovak Republic government session, the Cabinet approved a new bill containing amendments to certain acts, such as the Right to Reply Act („RRA“). While the right to a correction within eight days is taken from current law, the draft amendments state that if a person mentioned in an article sends a reply, this reply has to be published within three days, even if they provide no facts to repudiate the original article.

Moreover, the draft bill denies the editors the right to react to the reply. The bill also states that this reply must be published in the same place and be the same size as the original article.

SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said that „there is a potential threat in the wording of this bill, which leaves room for politicians to manipulate the media. This could force the media into self-censorship for fear of bankruptcy. This new law has an impact on editorial independence, and could be used as a means of self-promotion for the politicians,“ he added. SEEMO also warns that this law could jeopardise the right of publishers to receive commercial profit from their advertising space if the editor is forced to relinquish control of parts of his newspaper to individuals who may seek to use this legal right for their own ends.

SEEMO does, however, welcome the part of the bill that reduces maximum fines for print media and news agencies from SKK two million to SKK 200,000. This change is a welcome first step in creating a better media environment.

Nevertheless, SEEMO would like to point out that, in order for a democratic society to be maintained, a free and vigorous public debate is necessary. For that to be possible, the politicians should receive less protection in the press than ordinary citizens, and these modifications to the RRA may well hinder this accepted principle.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE: Attack on Journalist in Macedonia

(Republic of Macedonia - Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia)

Vienna, 30 January 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), strongly condemns the attempted murder of Goran Gavrilov, General Manager of the Stip-based Channel 77, a private radio station network with national coverage in Macedonia.

According to information before SEEMO, Gavrilov was attacked by two armed persons in the night between 25 and 26 January in front of his home in Stip, eastern Macedonia. The masked assailants shot at him, but missed, and then violently beat him with metal rods. Gavrilov was severely injured and received medical treatment in the Stip hospital. His wife, Emilija Gavrilova, believes that this attack was linked to Gavrilov's work with regard to media regulations and reforms during the last 16 years and may present a direct threat to Channel 77's effort in developing media democracy in the region.

Commenting on the incident, SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said „SEEMO strongly condemns the brutal attack on Gavrilov and stresses that a full investigation should be conducted by the Macedonian authorities. Every threat against a journalist in Macedonia is a threat against the fundamental principle of freedom of expression in this country. We will continue to follow this case and we hope that the police will solve it as soon as possible.“

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE CROATIA

Vienna, 20 February 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is alarmed by the recent death threat against Croatian journalist Drago Hedl.

According to information before SEEMO, on 12 February 2008, Drago Hedl, editor of the Croatian weekly Feral Tribune, received a death threat by way of a letter sent to his home address. Hedl has actively investigated war crimes committed against civilians in the eastern city of Osijek in 1991. Several other individuals involved in the trial for war crimes over the civilian deaths received the same letter, which contained warnings and a drawing of a skull.

SEEMO is deeply concerned about this occurrence, especially because Hedl's life has been threatened repeatedly in the past. Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, said that „investigative journalists are an important link for democratic societies and should thus receive full support and protection from the state. We urge the authorities to take these threats seriously and to do everything in their power to resolve the situation and protect Hedl.“

SEEMO would also like to emphasize that these intimidations not only threaten the lives of individual journalists, but also impinge on the public's right to be informed and the principle of freedom of expression more generally. No democratic society can accept threats that impose self-censorship on journalists fearing for their lives. SEEMO will continue to monitor the situation, and urges the Croatian authorities to expeditiously investigate this case and ensure Hedl's protection.

SEEMO PROTEST SERBIA

H.E. Vojislav Kostunica
Prime Minister of Serbia
Nemanjina 11, Belgrade, Serbia
Fax: +381 11 3617 609

Vienna, 28 February 2008

Your Excellency,
The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is alarmed about the recent wave of violent attacks on journalists in Serbia.

According to information before SEEMO, journalists reporting on the protest „Kosovo je Srbija“, held on 21 February 2008 as a reaction to Kosovo's proclamation of independence, were subjected to serious physical attacks. A photojournalist from Holland's NRC Handelsblad, Dirk-Jan Visser, sustained broken ribs, while two Russian journalists from Russia Today, an English-language TV station, also suffered physical injuries. In addition, the crew of Radio Televizija Srbije (RTS) was attacked during a separate protest.

In the meantime, Serbian radio and television station B92 has received written threats ever since Kosovo's declaration of independence, including a montage video, posted on YouTube, which juxtaposed images of guns firing with footage of B92 anchors. On 20 February, B92 received a bomb threat by e-mail, forcing the staff's evacuation. The following day, protesters surrounded the B92 building at 6pm, trapping the staff inside until well after midnight. Thankfully, police officers managed to prevent attacks on the building.

Moreover, according to information before SEEMO, on 25 February 2008, Milica Ivanovic, a journalist for Beta news agency and the newspaper Blic, was attacked while reporting on the unrest at the Mutivoda crossing between Serbia and Kosovo. When the journalist asked for protection from police officers standing nearby, her request was refused. According to reports, a B92 cameraman who was also present avoided harm by removing the station's logo from his camera after hearing members of the crowd asking about the B92 crew.

SEEMO strongly condemns these repeated and targeted attacks on journalists in Serbia, as well as the failure of the police force to adequately protect them. Journalists must never become targets, regardless of their reporting style or their background. Furthermore, any attacks must carry consequences and be fully investigated. We urge Your Excellency to do everything in your power to provide a secure environment for journalists, and to remind all involved of the importance of the media's freedom to report on current events, which ensures the Serbian people's right to information, and is a crucial element in a free democracy.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,
Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO Secretary General

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE MONTENEGRO

Vienna, 28 February 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), appeals to Montenegrin president and former prime minister Milo Djukanovic to drop his one million Euro lawsuit against Vijesti, Montenegro's leading newspaper.

SEEMO first spoke out against the lawsuit when, on 6 September 2007, Milo Djukanovic pressed defamation charges against Zeljko Ivanovic, founder and director of Vijesti, a Podgorica-based daily, Ljubisa Mitrovic, the publication's editor-in-chief, as well as its publishing house, „Daily Press“. Djukanovic is expected to return to the prime minister post.

SEEMO encourages Djukanovic to seize the opportunity provided by his new mandate by dropping all charges against the publication as a sign of good will. Such a move would constitute a first positive step, and serve as a signal that the government permits and even encourages freedom of speech, a vital aspect of true democracies.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE ALBANIA

Vienna, 14 March 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), condemns the assault carried out by Member of Parliament (MP) Tom Doshi against Besar Likmeta, the Albania editor for the online publication Balkan Insight.

According to information received from The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), Likmeta had been working on a series of articles, published on Balkan Insight, concerning forged diplomas in Albania. The investigated degrees included MP Tom Doshi's law degree from Tetovo University, an Albanian language university in The Republic of Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). At the time, Doshi was still listing the degree on the official parliamentary website. The investigative reporting uncovered that Tetovo University had informed the Education Ministry that Doshi never completed his studies.

Soon thereafter, Doshi's CV was removed from the website of the Albanian parliament, and Likmeta arranged to meet Doshi at the Sheraton Hotel in Tirana in the late evening of March 10 for an interview. During the interview, Doshi demanded why Likmeta was investigating the story, commenting that it was „extremely brave“ to pursue the matter. MP Arben Isaraj, who accompanied Doshi to the interview, asked Likmeta if he was „out of touch with reality“. Doshi then attacked Likmeta, hitting him with a leather briefcase. The journalist sustained a black eye and his glasses were broken. When Likmeta tried to take statements from nearby witnesses after the assault, the hotel barman ordered him to leave.

SEEMO deplores this disturbing incident, and calls for a full investigation of the matter.

„Physical violence against journalists is never acceptable, but is particularly deplorable when carried out by a public official,“ said Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General. „Investigative journalists play a vital role in uncovering political malfeasance, and must be protected, not hindered, by states.“

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE CROATIA

Vienna, 19 March 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about

the recent death threats against the Croatian journalist Vedran Strukar.

According to information made available to SEEMO, on 10 March, Strukar who is a journalist of the leading media company Europe Press Holding, received several SMS and phone calls expressing death threats. Strukar informed the police about the threats addressed to him and his family members. The threats are probably related on the article written by Strukar, sources said.

Commenting on the incident, SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said „SEEMO strongly condemns all threats against journalists as a violation of the fundamental principle of freedom of expression. I would like to urge an immediate and through investigation by the Croatian authorities“.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE CROATIA

Vienna, 27 March 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), joins the Croatian Journalists Association in its support for Zeljko Peratovic, freelance journalist and blogger, in his civil petition passed on 14 March 2008 to the Committee for Internal Politics and National Security and the Council for Civil Supervision of Intelligence Agencies in Croatia. In the petition, Peratovic is asking the authorities to protect his professional rights and freedoms and to cease the pressure to which the Security Intelligence Agency has exposed him to over the past few years.

Zeljko Peratovic was imprisoned on 17 October 2007. He was later released after spending 20 hours in police custody. SEEMO reacted to this case on 6 November 2007 with a protest to Croatian officials. According to the authorities in Zagreb at the time, Peratovic had allegedly published state secrets on his blog. The police confiscated his equipment and materials, including three PCs.

SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said, „Journalists should have the freedom to express themselves and do their job without pressure from State authorities, regardless of the media they work in. Freedom of expression is not only guaranteed by law, but is also the foundation for the democratic development of society. Journalists play an important role in any society by holding others accountable for their actions, and it makes no difference if they carry out this job using new media, such as blogs, or work in the traditional forms.“

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE SERBIA

Vienna, 27 March 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI) is deeply concerned by the recent death threats against Momcilo Djorgovic, editor-in-chief of the Serbian weekly Nedeljni Telegraf, and Danijela Milinkovic, assistant to the editor-in-chief.

According to information made available to SEEMO, on 24 March, a letter signed by the „red berets“ arrived at the editorial office of the weekly. The „red berets“ are the former Special Forces Corps of Serbia. According to the official press release issued by the Nedeljni Telegraf, the letter contained, besides many insults, threats addressed to Djorgovic and Milinkovic warning them to „take care that a bullet is not put through their heads,“ or that „they will be blown up.“ The editorial office informed the police of the threats.

Commenting on the incident, SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said, „SEEMO strongly condemns all threats against journalists as a violation of the fundamental principle of freedom of expression. I would like to urge an immediate and through investigation by the Serbian authorities.“

RECENT SEEMO PROTESTS AND PRESS RELEASES

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE ALBANIA*Vienna, 27 March 2008*

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute, strongly criticises recent comments made by the Prime Minister of Albania, Sali Berisha, against journalists.

According to information before SEEMO, on 18 March 2008, Berisha insulted journalists during a government meeting that was not only carried out in front of reporters, but also broadcast live on television. The Prime Minister was commenting on coverage of an explosion that occurred in Gerdec, near Tirana, on 15 March 2008, and repeatedly insulted journalists reporting on this matter.

„We deeply criticise these events and this manner of communication,“ said SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, „particularly when it is carried out by public authorities.“ Vujovic continued, „SEEMO calls for and strongly supports the maintenance of a respectful environment for journalists and media in Albania, as in every other country, as such an environment is the cornerstone of a true democracy.“

SEEMO / IPI EXPRESSES CONCERN REGARDING THE AMENDED VERSION OF SLOVAKIA'S DRAFT PRESS ACT
Vienna, 1 April 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), remains concerned about pending legal changes to Slovakia's media law.

According to information before SEEMO, Slovakia's parliamentary Committee for Culture and the Media on 26 March 2008 recommended that the parliament approve the government's latest draft of the Press Act. SEEMO, which issued a statement regarding the initial version of the Draft Press Act on 23 January 2008, is disappointed that recommendations regarding limitations on the right of reply made by local Slovak media organisations, international non-governmental organizations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have not been incorporated into the amendments. The obligations prescribed in Sections 7, 8, and 9 of the Press Act fail to conform to the standards articulated by the Council of Europe, would grant politicians limitless access to publicity, and would seriously restrict media independence and editorial autonomy.

SEEMO Secretary General Oliver Vujovic commented, „while I welcome the changes made to previous versions of the law, these simply are not sufficiently far-reaching. The government's refusal to exclude some of the heavily-criticised provisions suggests that the law's real aim is to control Slovakian journalists. I hope Slovakia's parliamentarians will do their part to ensure that the final version of this law is more compatible with international standards and recommendations“.

Mr. Vujovic also expressed support for the recent initiative by all five Slovak national dailies, both quality and tabloid, to run blank front pages in protest against the law, noting that the action underscored the need for further amendments to the pending legislation.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE ROMANIA**IPI / SEEMO CRITICIZES TEMPORARY DETENTION OF ROMANIAN JOURNALIST***Vienna, 4 April 2008*

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), criticizes the recent police detention of Razvan Martin, program coordinator for the Press Monitoring Agency in Romania.

According to information before SEEMO, on 2 April 2008, Razvan Martin received a phone call from anti-globalisation protesters in Bucharest, who stated that the warehouse in which they were gathered for a workshop had been surrounded by the police and the Special Intervention Service. Martin notified the media about this development and arrived at the scene one hour later, when the police were already removing the detainees. Martin and his colleagues, who were on their way to a police station in order to secure legal assistance for the protestors, asked one of the policemen for directions. A policeman then used the car of both to take them to a different station for questioning. Martin notified the media of this from the car. He was never officially told that he was being detained, but was taken in for questioning like others in the area, and was released one and a half hours later, after announcing that he had a lawyer.

„Razvan Martin was at the scene as a Monitoring Agency coordinator and observer, and the police should have treated him as such,“ stated Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General. „The fact that he was not a member of the group of protesters at the time further confirms this. Special security steps and checks were expected because of the NATO summit that started on 2 April in Bucharest. However, even in these situations, the police must respect the free movement of media representatives and organisations“.

„SEEMO deplors the fact that a member of the staff of the Media Monitoring Agency was constrained by the police, especially since he did not take part in the protest, but was merely an onlooker. All individuals have the right to express their opinions in a peaceful way, and the government must support this right, not interfere with it,“ Vujovic added.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE: REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**IPI / SEEMO ALARMED ABOUT DEATH THREATS TO MACEDONIAN JOURNALISTS**
Vienna, 4 April 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is alarmed about recent death threats against a group of Macedonian journalists.

According to information before SEEMO, several Macedonian journalists, professors and politicians received anonymous death threats warning that they would be „liquidated“ if they did not stop being „anti-Macedonian“ in current dialogues with Greece regarding the countries' dispute over the state's name. Some of the e-mails were signed by an organisation identifying itself as the „Macedonian guard“. The e-mails containing these threats were aimed at a group of journalists from both print and electronic media in favour of reaching a compromise in the talks between the two neighbouring countries. The debate regarding the appropriate name for the Republic of Macedonia/Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia began with the break-up of former Yugoslavia, with Greece objecting to the name Macedonia because a Greek northern region bears the same name.

According to SEEMO's sources, the messages were sent by ultra-nationalist circles, and the targeted journalists refuse to be intimidated by the threats.

„Intimidating journalists and forcing them to self-censor their work is not acceptable,“ said Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General. He added: „Vigorous political debates, which are vital in democratic societies, are possible only where people have access to a variety of opinions.“ SEEMO therefore strongly condemns these threats, and urges the authorities in Skopje to take action to ensure that the culprits are promptly identified.

SEEMO / IPI Strongly Condemns Attempted Murder of Croatian Media Owner*Vienna, 11 April 2008*

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and lead-

ing journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), strongly condemns the attempted murder of Ivo Pukanic, co-owner and director of Nacional, a weekly news magazine from Croatia.

According to information before SEEMO, shortly before midnight on 9 April 2008, an unidentified assailant carrying a gun with a silencer approached Pukanic on the street in front of his apartment. The assailant first threatened to kill Pukanic, and then shot at him from a distance of several meters. When the first shot was fired, Pukanic ducked and the bullet narrowly missed his head. The assailant again pulled the trigger, but his weapon jammed up. He ultimately fled the scene without hitting Pukanic.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, stated that, „it is essential that the attacker is discovered. Pukanic is a well-known media owner, and his weekly Nacional has long played an important role in Croatia. We welcome the fact that Pukanic and his daughter received a 24-hour police escort for their protection.“

SEEMO is very alarmed about this attack, and urges the Croatian authorities to do everything in their power to find those responsible, and to bring them to justice.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE KOSOVO*Vienna, 22 April 2008*

IPI / SEEMO Express Concern Regarding European Commission Liaison Office Comment on Publishing Information without Prior Institutional Consent

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is concerned about a letter of complaint sent to Koha Ditore by the European Commission (EC) Liaison Office to Kosovo, after the Kosovar daily published an article based on a letter of communication between the EC and Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) in Kosovo.

According to information before SEEMO, on April 15, Koha Ditore published an article entitled „MEF Risks 5 million that were Committed to New Privatization Agency“, which was based on a communication between the EC Liaison Office and MEF. The EC Liaison Office subsequently sent a letter to Koha Ditore's editor-in-chief, expressing „strong disapproval of the practice of publishing internal communicationŠs without prior consent“ from both institutions.

SEEMO would like to emphasize that, where journalists are limited to publishing only those articles approved for publication by the government or international institutions they essentially function as spokespersons for those entities, a role at complete odds with their goal of providing information that is in the public interest.

„The media functions as an important pillar of democratic society by performing its work in the interest of the public,“ said Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General. „It is important that governments and international institutions support investigative reporting, which permits members of the public to access a wide range of information, in turn allowing the necessary public debate of issues that affect them.“

SEEMO PROTEST Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Nikola Spiric
Chairman of Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Milorad Zivkovic
Chairman of House of Representatives of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Niko Lozancic
First Deputy of Chairman of House of Representatives of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Beriz Belkic
Second Deputy of Chairman of House of Representatives of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Sulejman Tihic
Chairman of House of Peoples of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Mladen Ivanic
First Deputy of Chairman of House of Peoples of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Ilija Filipovic
Chairman of House of Peoples of Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vienna, 29 April 2008

Your Excellencies,

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina's media environment.

According to information provided to SEEMO by the „BH Journalists“ Association, on 18 April 2008, during a press conference in the town of Bihac, Sadik Bahtic, a Member of Parliament (MP) and a member of one of the leading political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, allegedly tried to physically prevent Federal Television journalist Avdo Avdic and cameraman Refik Vejzilagic from attending the scheduled conference. SEEMO's sources allege that MP Bahtic and a colleague first attempted to hinder the journalists by trying to cover their camera's lens, and that the incident subsequently escalated into a fight. During the same conference, MP Bahtic allegedly prevented Mirsad Fazlagic, a journalist for Slobodna Bosna, from entering, stating that neither Avdic, Vejzilagic nor Fazlagic „had been invited“.

On 23 April, a protest organised by Start magazine in response to the incident gathered approximately one hundred journalists in front of Sarajevo's parliament during a joint session of both parliament houses. Journalists from Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, San, Slobodna Bosna, Nezavisne Novine, Dani, TRVFBiH, BHRT, eFM Radio, Radio 202, TVSa and other media outlets were joined by members of NGOs as well as by private citizens.

SEEMO has also been informed about other troubling developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, involving increased pressure on the Communications Regulatory Agency, an internationally recognized, state-level independent regulator. According to SEEMO's sources, the exerted pressure was related to the body's core activities, including its financial independence and the appointment of its members, thus calling into question the very essence of a free media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

SEEMO expresses dismay at these allegations of both direct physical confrontation of journalists and of interference with independent regulators, and urges timely investigations into these matters. It would like to emphasize that physical violence against journalists is particularly problematic when carried out by official representatives, who can send potentially dangerous signals regarding the treatment of journalists with their actions.

However, SEEMO would also like to express its encouragement about upcoming discussions involving parliament representatives and the House of Representatives regarding a proposed business consolidation plan for BHRT, a public broadcasting service in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is vital that such entities can function transparently and are financed in a manner that ensures their stability and permits them to function at arm's length from the government, and SEEMO urges all parties to keep these principles in mind in their upcoming discussions.

Yours Sincerely,

Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO Secretary General

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE CROATIA*Vienna, 6 May 2008*

SEEMO/IPI Urge Croatian Authorities To Intensify Investigative Efforts Regarding the Attempted Murder of Pukanic

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is concerned about the apparent lack of progress in the investigation of the attempted murder of Ivo Pukanic, co-owner and director of Nacional, a weekly news magazine in Croatia.

As outlined in an earlier SEEMO statement, on 9 April 2008, an unidentified assailant carrying a gun with a silencer fired a shot at Pukanic, but missed; the assailant ultimately fled the scene after his gun jammed up. One month after the attack, nobody has been charged in connection therewith.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, emphasized the importance of finding the assailant, stating, „Nacional, Pukanic's publication, plays an important role in Croatia. The fact that the attacker tried to kill Pukanic in a public place demonstrates a dangerous sense of confidence about being above the law. It is important for authorities to counter such brazen attacks with vigorous and thorough investigations.“

SEEMO CONCERNED ABOUT CURRENT MEDIA ENVIRONMENT IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE*Vienna, 30 May 2008*

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about the current media environment in South East Europe, tarnished by a recent string of attacks on journalists and other press freedom violations.

According to information before SEEMO, during the evening of 23 May, Mladen Stojovic, a sports journalist from Montenegro, was physically attacked by unidentified assailants in his apartment in Bar. Stojovic, who was taken to the hospital in a state of shock, has no memory of the attack other than being covered in blood after regaining consciousness. He sustained severe head injuries and a fractured jaw. Stojovic, a reporter for Danas, a Belgrade daily, and correspondent for the Montenegrin daily Vijesti, was the first journalist to write about the mafia's involvement in football in Serbia and Montenegro. He has repeatedly been threatened for his journalistic work.

In May alone, two other journalists were harassed in Albania. On 16 May, Perparim Halilii, vice editor-in-chief of the newspaper Sot, was threatened by a supporter of the Democratic Party of Albania (DP) at their Tirana headquarters. A group of DP supporters joined the harassment and forced Halilii, at the headquarters for work, from the DP premises.

A few days later, on 20 May, Ksenofon Ilia, an investigative journalist reporting for a TV programme addressing corruption and organised crime, sought to interview a judge, and was threatened by the judge's brother, who was carrying a gun. Ilia continued asking questions, prompting both men to exit their vehicle and brutally attack him. A severely-injured Ilia was later found and given medical assistance. The High Council of Justice subsequently announced that legal proceedings will be initiated against the judge.

SEEMO is also concerned about an incident in Serbia, where approximately fifty supporters of the „Workers' Resistance“ („Radnicki otpor“) movement attempted to force their way into the premises of Kragujevac Television on 19 May. The supporters, finally stopped by the police, sought to enter the building to record a statement of their leader on alleged election improprieties.

The tendency to view journalists as easy targets may very well have its roots in a dangerous trend towards impunity.

RECENT SEEMO PROTESTS AND PRESS RELEASES

In Serbia, three unsolved murder cases against journalists loom large. Slavko Curuvija, the owner of the daily Dnevni Telegraph and the magazine Evropljanin from Belgrade, was gunned down near his home in the centre of Belgrade on 11 April 1999. Milan Pantic, a local reporter for the Belgrade-based daily Vecernje Novosti, was murdered on 11 June 2001, in the central Serbian town of Jagodina. Dada Vujasinovic, a journalist, was killed on 8 April 1994.

The investigation into last year's bomb attack in the centre of Belgrade, in front of the home of Dejan Anastasijevic, journalist for the weekly Vreme, who reports about the war crimes, also has until today yielded no results. Similarly, the brutal May 2004 murder of Dusko Jovanovic, owner and editor-in-chief of Montenegrin daily Dan, who was killed in Podgorica, remains unsolved.

Two exceptions should be noted. Croatian police promptly arrested the alleged suspect in the attack on Filip Brala, photojournalist for Zadarski list and 24 Sata, targeted while filming a football game in Gorica on 26 May. Similarly, the perpetrator of the 20 May attack of on Danijela Banko has also been detained, and is awaiting trial in Zadar. Banko, a journalist from Narodni list, was attacked in front of witnesses in connection with one of her articles. She sustained severe bruises and required hospitalization. SEEMO commends the swift reaction in these cases.

In the judicial sphere, lawsuits involving exorbitant requests for damages, some so high they carry the risk of financial insolvency, have provided additional reason for concern. In February 2008, a company registered in the Netherlands sought ten million Euros in damages from the publishing house „Daily press“, publishing-group of the daily Vijesti, and Nebojsa Medojevic, economic expert and political leader of the Pokret za Promjene (Movement for Change) party. The lawsuit is based on a 17 February article written by Medojevic, and published by Vijesti, Montenegro's leading newspaper, on the privatization of a particular company. It was filed even though the paper published a different point of view on the matter two days after running the initial article.

The proceeding is not the first lawsuit against Vijesti involving an excessive request for compensation. In September 2007, Milo Djukanovic, today Prime Minister, requested one million Euros in damages from the paper. An initial decision in the matter, rendered in May 2008, imposed a punishment of 20,000 Euros, an amount still disproportionate in light of average incomes in Montenegro.

SEEMO also expresses its concern about the large number of other lawsuits against the print media in Montenegro during the past months, and additionally stresses the importance of forming an independent Press Council, acceptable to all, in Montenegro.

SEEMO notes with concern this trend of assaults, both judicial and physical, against journalists in the entire region. It calls on authorities to demonstrate their commitment to the protection of journalists, and press freedom more generally, by taking active steps to counter these disturbing developments.

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Minister for Internal Affairs
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Vienna, 04 June 2008

Your Excellencies,

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply alarmed about the brutal attack on Dusan Miljus, a journalist for Jutarnji list, a Croatian daily.

According to information before SEEMO, at around 8.15 pm on 2 June, two assailants wearing motorcycle helmets approached Miljus in front of his building in Zagreb, and violently attacked him with bats until he lost consciousness. The attackers fled the scene when a neighbour noticed the attack and started yelling.

Miljus, who was hospitalised, suffered a fractured left arm, a concussion and facial injuries. His writings span 20 years and cover crime in South East Europe, the mafia and Croatian underground circles. Miljus has previously been threatened in connection with his investigative journalism, but has received no protection.

SEEMO is dismayed by this attack, which constitutes a direct threat to investigative journalism and freedom of the press more generally. Democracy falters where journalists are forced to operate in constant fear for their lives.

SEEMO therefore urges Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to ensure Miljus's protection, and to bring to justice the persons behind this brutal incident.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO Secretary General

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE KOSOVO
Vienna, 11 June 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), condemns the assault on staff members of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) in Kosovo.

According to BIRN, at approximately 1:30 pm on 6 June, members of its team were assaulted by a security staffer while filming outside of the Kosovo Judicial Council's premises in Pristina. BIRN stated that the reporters in no way endangered the safety of the building or interfered with the staff's work.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, commented, „It is important for journalists to be able to work in an open environment, and the security staff of a judicial body should be setting a good example instead of interfering with that right.“

**PREVIOUSLY-ATTACKED CROATIAN JOURNALIST
SUBJECTED TO NEW THREATS**
Vienna, 10 July 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is alarmed about new threats issued against Dusan Miljus, a journalist for Jutarnji list, a Croatian daily.

According to the Croatian Journalists' Association, on 9 July, serious threats were communicated by telephone to a relative of Miljus, who was told that if Miljus did not „stop talking, other members of his family might get hurt“. The unknown male caller then clearly indicated that he had information about Miljus's family members. Miljus was assaulted by two unknown assailants in front of his Zagreb home on June 2. In that attack, regarding which SEEMO issued a protest letter, he suffered a fractured left arm, a concussion and facial injuries. Miljus was also previously threatened by way of a paid advertisement in Vecernji List, when the sister of a murdered criminal convict issued an obituary for Miljus.

SEEMO Secretary General Oliver Vujovic stated that he was „alarmed about these new threats, and the police's contin-

ued failure to track the assailants responsible for the June attack on Miljus“.

SEEMO notes that these threats are not only attacks on personal freedoms, but also on investigative journalism and freedom of speech in general. SEEMO urges Croatian authorities to do everything in their power to protect Miljus and his family, and to bring the attackers to justice.

SEEMO PRESS RELEASE SOUTH EAST EUROPE
Vienna, 10 July 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is concerned about several recent developments in the SEEMO region's media environment.

Political pressure was exerted on journalists in late June in Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia - Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), when Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski accused several correspondents from Brussels of „speculating to the expense of their own country“ following his official visit to the country. Gruevski also suggested that the media should work in the country's interests. SEEMO condemns such statements as an unacceptable attempt to impinge on journalistic independence, and emphasizes that journalists have a right to report what they see, including by articulating critical opinions and encouraging dynamic debate, which are vital in democratic societies.

SEEMO also expresses concern about the case of Boris Pejovic, a photojournalist for the Montenegrin daily Republika and the EPA press photo agency. Pejovic was arrested by the police on 12 June at 12.30 pm, while reporting on a protest by workers of a local company.

During the protest, Pejovic and other journalists were asked to move to the side, from where they continued to cover the event. A police officer then approached Pejovic, but refused to recognise his official press document, issued by Pejovic's newspaper. Pejovic was taken to a police office, where he remained for about one hour. According to Pejovic, he was treated like „the worst criminal“, and was not permitted to call either his newspaper or a lawyer. As Pejovic reported, the police chief told him that he „has no rights“, and that the policeman could apply physical force, without suffering any consequences. Pejovic was released without having received any sort of written document regarding the reasons for his arrest, but subsequently received an official communication indicating that he would be charged for an offence.

SEEMO condemns such behaviour by the police. Journalists have the right to be present at events of public importance in order to report on them. SEEMO is especially concerned about the fact that Pejovic was arrested and not allowed to use the phone to call his lawyer.

SEEMO was also informed of a problematic Montenegrin draft law, the Law on Electronic Communications, which provides that the council members of the Agency for Electronic Communications and Postal Services shall be appointed by the government. This clearly provides an opportunity for direct political influence on the media. SEEMO requests the parliament and the government of Montenegro to consider international standards and to propose a law that permits the media to remain independent.

SEEMO is alarmed about these cases, all of which involve pressure on journalists and the principle of freedom of expression. Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, noted, „it is vital for journalists to be able to carry out their work in safety, and to be able to report freely on current affairs. Any attempts to influence media independence, whether by way of verbal or physical harassment, or by way of laws that don't conform to international standards, are unacceptable in modern society.“

**SEEMO EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT THE
HARASSMENT OF A JOURNALIST IN FRONT OF
A PUBLIC BUILDING IN MOLDOVA**
Vienna, 16 July 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), expresses concern about an attack against Ghenadie Brega, a cameraman for Eu TV in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova.

According to information before SEEMO, on 9 July, Ghenadie Brega accompanied to the prosecutor's office an individual implicated in an inquiry into alleged Internet-based calls to overthrow the

government. Upon his arrival at the building, Brega was verbally and physically attacked by a person in civilian clothing. The attacker told Brega to leave, and repeatedly struck at his camera, even though Brega identified himself as a journalist and explained that he had the right to film in the public building.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, condemned the incident as undue interference with the journalist's right to access information of public interest, and called for „an immediate investigation to identify the individual responsible for the attack.“

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H.E. Prokopis Pavlopoulos
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Vienna, 22 July 2008

Your Excellencies,

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), wishes to express its concern after the Greek authorities denied a group of journalists from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia) entry into the country.

According to information before SEEMO, on 19 July, journalists from TV A1, TV A2, Forum and Makedonsko sonce were on their way to report on a cultural event in northern Greece, and were bearing standard passports with regular Greek visas. However, at the border the journalists were denied entry with the explanation that they did not have the permission of the Greek government to report on the event. One journalist from Forum was denied entry although he had a journalist's visa. An offer to enter Greece as non-journalists, without their cameras and other technical equipment, was declined by the journalists. They were also told they could enter the country as journalists after the cultural event was over.

SEEMO condemns this move by the Greek authorities. Greece is a member of the European Union, and expected to uphold the right to press freedom, one of the pillars of democracy. Decisions like this prevent the ability of journalists to work freely and hinder the free flow of information. We urge Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to ensure that cases like this do not happen in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO Secretary General

SEEMO Protest Serbia

H.E. Ivica Dacic
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior
Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 2
Belgrade, Serbia
Fax: +381 11 314 8 535

Vienna, 24 July 2008

Your Excellency,

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading

journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), would like to express its concern about the recent attack on Stefan Cvetkovic, and the general pattern of unresolved crimes against journalists in Serbia.

According to information before SEEMO, on 18 July, Cvetkovic, owner and editor-in-chief of RTV TNT from Bela Crkva, was physically attacked by an individual while having dinner at a restaurant. According to Cvetkovic, the attack was related to a past report aired on his TV station. As outlined in a SEEMO protest letter of 13 August 2007, Cvetkovic previously received death threats by way of telephone. In its letter, SEEMO urged Serbian officials to investigate these threats. SEEMO now urges Your Excellency to do everything in your power to protect Cvetkovic, and to ensure that this case is closed by bringing the perpetrator to justice.

**Република Србија
МИНИСТАРСТВО УНУТРАШЊИХ ПОСЛОВА
Кабинет министра
Биро за притужбе и представке
01 број: 7704/07-8
15.09.2008. године
Београд**

«SEEMO Општи мејл» >seemo@freemedia.at<
Генерални секретар, господин Оливер Вујовић

Поштовани господине Вујовићу,

Поводом Ваше пријаве упућене електронским путем Министарству унутрашњих послова Републике Србије, дана 24.07.2008. године, у вези догађаја од 18.07.2008. године, када је у Белој Цркви физички нападнут Стефан Цветковић, власник радно-телевизијске станице ТНТ из Беле Цркве, обавештавамо Вас о следећем:

Спроведеним поступком провере Ваших навода утврђено је да је дана 18.07.2008. године, дошло до нарушавања јавног реда и мира, од стране Павловић Марка из Беле Цркве и Цветковић Стефана.

Након утврђивања чињеничног стања, Полицијска управа у Панчеву је дана 21.07.2008. године поднела захтев за покретање прекршајног поступка против оба лица Општинском органу за прекршаје у Белој Цркви.

Такође је утврђено да су у вези претњи упућених Цветковић Стефану, дана 13.08.2008. године, полицијски службеници предузимајући одговарајуће мере открили идентитет учесника, на основу чега је Цветковић Стефан, обзиром да се ради о кривичном делу за које се гоњење предузима по приватној тужби, поднео приватну тужбу Општинском суду у Белој Цркви, због извршеног кривичног дела угрожавања сигурности из члана 138. став 1. Кривичног законика, пред којим је поступак по овом предмету још увек у току.

На основу изнетог, оцењено је да су полицијски службеници ПУ Панчево у свим догађајима везаним за Цветковић Стефана из Беле Цркве, поступали професионално, у складу са законом и својим овлашћењима.

Полицијски службеници ће и убудуће предузимати све потребне мере и радње у складу са законом, ради пружања ефективне заштите свих права, слобода и интереса грађана.

С поштовањем,


ШЕФ БИРОА
Светлана Тратар

This attack is just one example of a troubling trend in Serbia. SEEMO notes that its records indicate that, since the beginning of 2008, 36 threats or attacks have been made against journalists in Serbia.

Several unresolved attacks loom particularly large. Dada Vujasinovic, journalist for the magazine Duga, died under unclear circumstances on 8 April 1994. Slavko Curuvija, owner of Dnevni Telegraph, a daily, and the magazine Evropljanin, was gunned down near his home in the centre of Belgrade on 11 April 1999. Milan Pantic, a local reporter for the Belgrade-based daily Vecernje Novosti, was murdered on 11 June 2001 in Jagodina. In addition, the culprits behind the 14 April 2007 bomb explosion in front of the apartment window of Dejan Anastasijevic, an investigative reporter and editor for the Belgrade-based weekly magazine Vreme, have not been found.

SEEMO welcomes Your Excellency's call for the protection of journalists against pressure and attacks, and urges you to ensure that it is appropriately followed-up on.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Vujovic

SEEMO Secretary General

SEEMO PROTEST MOLDOVA

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Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova
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MD-2033 Chisinau
Moldova (Rep.)
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Vienna, 31 July 2008

Your Excellency,

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is concerned about the ongoing delay in issuing accreditation to a Romanian correspondent in Moldova.

According to information before SEEMO, on 23 July, Lina Grau, correspondent for the Romanian news agency Newsln, was denied access to a presidential press conference in Chisinau based on her lack of accreditation. Grau, who holds both Moldovan and Romanian citizenship, applied for accreditation as a journalist on 14 April, presenting both Moldovan and Romanian identification documents when doing so. Over three months later, she has not yet received any response.

According to official documents, accreditation decisions „will be taken within 30 days from the date of presentation of papers and will be finalized by issuing an accreditation card“. Grau has been working as a journalist in Moldova for ten years, and stated that she has never experienced any problems in the past.

SEEMO urges Your Excellency to do everything in your power to ensure that this issue is quickly resolved, especially given that several other journalists have in the past been denied accreditation in Moldova without reason. SEEMO emphasizes that administrative requirements should never serve to hamper the free flow of news, and must always be dealt with in a transparent manner.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Vujovic
SEEMO Secretary General