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DOSSIER

Public Broadcasting

COUNTRY FOCUS

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Letter from Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

The process of development from state ruled electronic media to public broadcasting in the South East European countries is an interesting field to be reflected. Since in most of the countries the hardware factors have been established but the software factors now need to be developed. Software factors are cultural conditions of mind, of consciousness and of socially built opinion. Public broadcasting is first a public service to the audience and for that the institutions receive the money from the audience. But an audience that just gives money and yet does not understand what public service broadcasting stands for, will always be disappointed by the programming, especially when it is comparing the programmes to those of the commercial stations. A good public broadcasting programme needs an audience with media literacy. So, public programmes have to become interested in developing media competence in the audience's but also in their own interest.

Public broadcasting has to follow public interests. It is supposed to be a public and somehow nationally organised reference for national identity and also a frame for developing

a (national) community. These expectations demand production of programmes, to a certain extent, within national conditions of interest, of money, and of cooperation with other national media institutions (e.g. film production companies etc.) – if they exist. Next to that criterion there is another one: quality. National orientation and quality orientation are criteria that make public broadcasting increasingly difficult. Everywhere in Europe the decline of public broadcasting programming is going on. The situation for all the PB stations in the SEE countries is not easy at all.

The topic is, of course, much more difficult that it can be analysed in this issue of deScripto. But we thought, it would be an interesting subject to get to know – for students who worked on that research for the articles, and for readers who could gain some aspects they did not think about before. In that sense I hope you will enjoy this issue of deScripto.

Thomas A. Bauer, Editor in Chief



Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers,

June, a time when many people think about summer, for SEEMO always is a time of conferences. In this year we have three big events: at the beginning of June the Conference of Private News Agencies was held in Skopje, financed by the Austrian Cooperation Eastern Europe, and at the end of June we will hold the first South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF) in Zagreb, a project that SEEMO has started this year together with the German Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) publishing group and the German Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) foundation, in cooperation with two Croatian publishing houses: Europapress Holding (EPH) and NCL (Nacional weekly). The event will be held under the Patronage of the Croatian President Stjepan Mesic. After this important regional event, that should take place in another country in South East Europe next year, we will organise the Conference on Media and Elections in Croatia, in Opatija, in cooperation with several Croatian partners (Radio 101, ICEJ, HND) and the Guardian Foundation.

Having in mind that so many conferences are being organ-

ised (not only by SEEMO), sometimes questions are coming up such as whether it is necessary to organise big events like this in the modern era of internet. My answer would be: Yes. We should not forget that we all are human beings first and that no technology can replace personal contacts and meetings. And it is not only the working part of a conference that is important; also every break, lunch or joint dinner is very important for networking. Our experience from all these years is that different agreements, but also important discussions about solving problems not only in the field of media, have been initiated at our SEEMO events. In the past media companies from different countries have started joint projects, the exchange of correspondents or materials on SEEMO meetings. Also several new associations have been founded. It means, SEEMO will continue with this tradition of meetings between leading media representatives in South East and Central Europe. I would be glad to also see you at some of our future events.

Oliver Vujovic, Publisher and SEEMO Secretary General

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DOSSIER PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Soft Factor Concepts Media in Transit

Media transformation reflects the transformation of the society. The conditional status of media in South East Europe announces to a certain extent the status of perplexity of South East European societies. After having implemented hardware factors, there is a need for developing software factors.

By Thomas A. Bauer

In a media society understanding the social, cultural, political and economic world needs and means to understand the media. Because all that we know from society, we know from media. Media is the general reference of information, knowledge, and public opinion. Therefore the

An open society expresses what it thinks about itself through the media, of course generally, in the form of most different discourses.

quality of democracy does make quite a difference considering which media system is established, what quality standards in media companies are being realised, and to which level of media literacy the audience has been developed. Of course, all these factors of media and communication culture reflect the democratic quality of life in a society. Since the countries in South East Europe are in transition, the media system is the most important and most influential factor in that process, but, obviously, the developing process still seems to be a project with an open outcome.

In Search for a Democratic Culture of an Open Society

Since Sir Karl Popper, seeking a better world, has analysed the “enemies of open society”, the notion of a quality of society has been enriched by ideals of individuality, auton-

omy and free development. The term “open society” became a carrier of the desire of a society that is responsible for it and that gives possibilities for free development to the individual. The idea is directed against any form of dogmatism, authoritarianism, nationalism, or state communism. Openness first means freedom of thought and reflection on one’s own. The society is what it thinks of itself. An open society expresses what it thinks about itself through the media, of course generally, in the form of most different discourses. Where media do not represent the heterogeneous structure of discourse, there they do not efficiently contribute to clarification of the direction of the society development. The pluralism of opinion, which is vital for an open society, needs a pluralistic media system, since it is essential for an open discourse. Observing the media in the countries of the SEE region in general gives the impression that the societies in the region have somehow decided that they never ever wanted to be in a closed system - they now enjoy the free ways of everyday life but have not yet really decided what rules to develop and follow in order to sustain the development.

So far, the process of becoming an open society is still a project with an open outcome. Such a model of thinking of an open society restrains the state since it has the tendency to understand itself as the hot spot of power, domination and influence, but it favours the idea of a self-responsible

Conditions for situation

civil society. In a society like that, discursive media takes a key role in building the society. The media system becomes the communicational platform of exchange when it is structured in a pluralistic form. Therefore the development of media from state media to public media is one of the transformation processes that have to be driven most consequently. As easy as this transformation has been in print media, so difficult it is to bring it to its very end in the sector of electronic media.

Does Public Broadcasting Have a Chance?

Due to the shortage of frequencies and their persuasive character, electronic media have always been the subject of a fight for influence. The shift from state ruled electronic media to public broadcasting in South East Europe's media landscape was not an easy one and obviously has not yet achieved a sustainable position. The one step was to create and implement public broadcasting system structures in terms of policy and economy as well as in aspects of media law and journalistic work. But the second step, which is to develop a public programme quality, is much more difficult and depends much more on the mentality of people who do the job. Not only that, there still is a relevant number of people serving at the public stations, who already had created programme and taken the responsibility for it under the pressure of the communist system, but also the audience does not really have a clear idea of what they could expect from a public broadcasting system.

Overall a satellite system distributing programmes from all over Europe, commercial and public ones, offers so many opportunities of conversational programme so that the

local public stations discover themselves in an almost hopeless situation of competition. A two pillar system has been now established in all countries, but the first pillar, the public broadcasting, has quite a difficult standing compared to the local commercial stations which have been established all over the region under conditions of a very lax media law. The economic situation for all the public programme providers goes from bad to worse, so that they try to survive with cheap productions or to attract audience by the same programme formats the commercial stations

The development of media from state media to public media is one of the transformation processes that have to be driven most consequently.

use. This unnecessarily mostly doubles the standardised formats like "Who wants to be a millionaire?" or shows like that. How could a public programme provider find its niche for an intelligent public broadcasting programme under such conditions? Maybe there is something to learn from the BBC. But the legal situation and the image situation of the BBC are too far from reality in the Balkan countries.

Can Transition Achieve its Goals?

All SEE countries - even if they are in a different phase and status - are faced with a transition process that does not only take place in politics. It touches the common mind, the basic concepts and the societal organisation in politics, economy, education, culture, communication, and media.

In themselves, media reflect more than other public organisations that general transition process by going through structural instability, culturally heterogeneous performances, and system transformation. Within the media system everything is changing – and changes often are exchanged again: journalistic self-understanding, relationship between media and politics, media and economy, journalism formation / professional education, media content and programmes, market and market strategies, audience, organisational concepts, personnel recruitment, interior management, etc.

Since the SEE countries are important neighbours among each other and important partners for or within the European Union, the EU makes many efforts in supporting the democratisation of social life in South East European countries. One of these efforts is to invest knowledge in development of media and media related structures: institution building in journalism (self-control, ethical standards, work control, etc.) journalism educational programmes, journalism training, and media education. That model of international / intercultural cooperation in development needs a lot of trans-cultural sensitivity, because this international cooperation and the support from European Commission only helps to enrich and to sustain the development towards an open and open minded society, by giving time for going through all those steps that have to be done in a way so that there is no desire left to go back to an already done step if the next one has been reached already. By all means, this needs time. Pressure coming from European Union only has the effect that these nations will not feel the transition process is their own chance. They will understand it as a domination of their giant neighbour. Speed kills.

In Search for Cultural Mind Factors

A liberal and open society needs a quantity of time in order to come so far to share the quality of time. Freedom, as the factor of an open society, as we think, leads to a higher quality standard of living since it is based on tolerance. Freedom of expression is also the path for building a peaceful social environment for political and cultural morals, for minimising the temptation for corruption and in that sense it is a way for developing interest for difference under conditions of a community. Incidentally, this freedom is nothing more than a fundamental human right and has nothing to do with sophisticated arrogance or social opulence. Public consensus is as meaningful today as it ever was, but today we know that it is not achieved through synchronisation and conformity, but through communication which

searches for cultural diversity and a variety of options. Public opinion then is a community frame for difference and not a frame for equality made by media.

There is one factor that gives meaning and new content to the positive ideas for peaceful co-existence: the future mindedness. Those people who are afraid of 'alienation' search for their welfare and identity in the past. Such a view of life generates feelings of anxiety, anger and depression. Focusing on the past becomes an obstacle for learning. Those people who are searching for their career, identity and place in the world in the future open their eyes and minds, develop interests in new areas of knowledge and have no fear of contradictions thus working out their way in life in an emancipated manner.

The paradigm of an autonomous future requires identity. Autonomy is not just a political and organisational status, but first of all a way of thinking and a way of cultural self-determination. Autonomy is a psychological condition for partnership. It makes social sensitivity and empathy possible. Being oneself allows you to be generous towards the identity of others. Autonomy stimulates the development of identity, individuality and constructive interest in the surrounding cultural and social milieu, as well as curiosity about the other. In this socio-psychological context, autonomy is not a question of political structures, but first of an open mind and a way of thinking; it is an integral part of being your own self (authenticity).

Authenticity is an expression of, but also a condition for constructing and shaping identity. Identity consists of what I think of myself ("I" - identity) and of what the others think of me ("Me" - identity). So the attitude of others is an important determining factor in the formation of subjectivity and individuality, especially when there are relations of similarity, neighbourhood and rivalry. When this sense of identity and uniqueness is absent, lost over time or threatened by lies, stereotypes and masks, the ability to communicate is destroyed and suffocated to such an extent that one is unable to escape from the vicious circle of self-deception, self-harm, lies and violence towards others. In this case, one needs more from outside than usual. Austria has all the historical and cultural reasons for such an attitude. ■

Brainfood for the Mob

Public Service Broadcasters: Programmes for Viewers Versus Programmes for Customers

Public service broadcasters in South Eastern Europe and their issue of serving adequate programme content for the audience in terms of plurality and educational means.

By *Christiane Höberth and Kathrin Liener*

“Public broadcasters must provide diverse content to meet the needs of various social groups. They must care for their audiences, and rather than applying the criterion of numbers, they must adhere to the criterion of influence,” states Sandra B. Hrvatin in her book ‘Serving the State or the Public’. The book, which was published by the Peace Institute in Slovenia in 2002, gives information on the sit-

“Public broadcasters must care for their audiences, and rather than applying the criterion of numbers, they must adhere to the criterion of influence.”

Sandra B. Hrvatin

uation of the public broadcasting system in the country, focussing on Radio Television Slovenia (RTV Slovenia), the national public broadcaster. Hrvatin criticises the system and offers suggestions to change it, also giving a critical opinion on the programme content and the lack of transparency that should be fulfilled.

“Public broadcasting had an important role in Slovenia in previous years, because it was actually the main and only programme that provided the public with art, culture, documentaries and so on. Now there are around 50 television stations, but none of them provides any of those contents, so the public is really dependent on public broadcasting to get those sort of programmes,” depicts Marko Milosavljevic, Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Slovenia. Nowadays the challenge of programming lies on

an entertainment focus. Public television has bought a number of foreign licences, including TV hosts or programmes such as for example “Who Wants to be a Millionaire”, which was previously shown on commercial television. According to Milosavljevic, there is too much light entertainment which is completely inappropriate for public broadcasting.

With the support of the Slovene Peace Institute in Ljubljana and the European Commission, Sandra B. Hrvatin, project leader Brankica Petkovic, Roman Kuhar, Marko Prpic and other researchers set up a new project called ‘Media for Citizens’.

The project’s reasoning mainly consists of the citizens who are endangered by media ownership concentration and deficiency of public service media. Various minorities have to face problems referring to proper access to the media. Moreover the regulation lacks anything as far as diversity and pluralism are concerned. Hrvatin criticises the new political leadership which was not willing to discuss these issues especially during the last two years.

“The idea behind the project was to discuss these issues with media activists, citizens and to give them some information, some suggestions, how to organise themselves and influence media politics,” reports Hrvatin.

Monitoring, policy research, advocacy, education and publishing activities with the purpose of causing public awareness in terms of diversity and pluralism as well as consider-

ing minority groups are the major points of the project. The citizens should learn how to be out for their own critical beliefs and wishes.

Minor groups as well as major groups of viewers in Macedonia shall have the opportunity to nourish their cultural identity and get access to information.

The whole project is made up out of four angles: monitoring media ownership pluralism, TV news monitoring, monitoring media representation of minorities and the fourth and last angle is named media for citizens. The main point of 'Media for Citizens' is the sum of all four angles and zooms in on the information of the citizens with regards to the media issues and the encouragement of the recipients to point out their individual convenience. The public broadcaster of Macedonia, MRTV (Macedonian Radio and Television), has been excoriated because of its dependence on the government in the past. Since this problem also concerns programme plurality and the programme mission of the public broadcasting system as a whole, the legislation on the programme and educational mission is quite essential. The new Broadcasting Law of Macedonia was published on 12 December 2005.

For this reason Article 120 of the Law declares: "MRT shall be obliged to produce and broadcast programmes of public interest that reflect the social and cultural plurality in the state, which consist of informative, cultural, educational, scientific and entertainment contents."

Minor groups as well as major groups of viewers in Macedonia shall have the opportunity to nourish their cultural identity and get access to information. Every specific group of the society should have the possibility to benefit from the programme content.

The mass media act of Slovenia also provides articles focussing on pluralism and diversity but the practical implementation is considered problematic by Hrvatin, a member of the Peace Institute. She continues speaking about the problem of pluralism which is quite complicated and gives a suggestion to cope with the problem in an ideal way: "It is much more important to build up a really broad coalition of different NGOs, local communities and media activists who could deal with these issues."

According to the Act of 1996 on Radio and Television Broadcasting in Hungary, the guarantees for independence from parties and political movements shall be given.

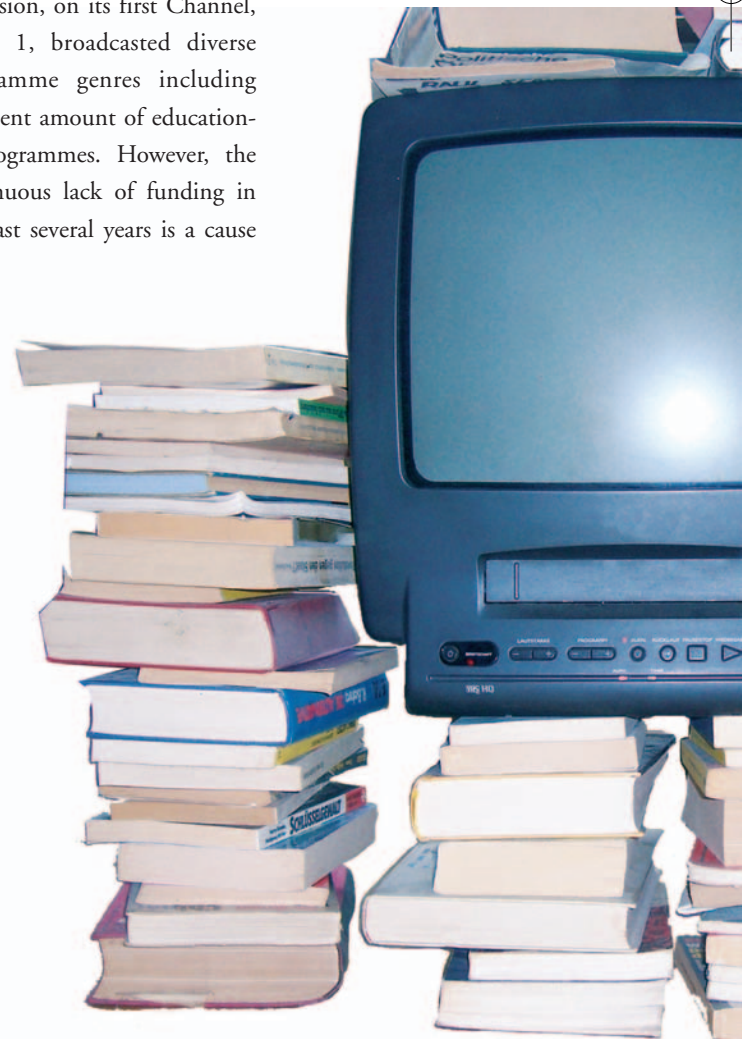
"For this reason a board with the function of supervision was founded. But the members of the board are sent from the parties and they do have political influence on the

Hungarian television and radio," counters Judit Klein, National Coordinator of MTV, the Hungarian national public service television company.

In 2002 an election pledge from the socialist party to abolish licence fees was implemented, which means no income from fees for MTV. They receive their money from the parliament, which results in dependency. It is the parliament's decision how much money Hungarian television and radio gets. In that sense MTV has to collaborate very much with the parliament.

Klein is not sure whether the situation will change or not, thinking of the complicated political situation. The ruling parties are not on friendly terms with each other, so there is no guarantee that they would agree on rewriting the media law. Klein declares that in times of digitalisation the more than 10 year old media law has to be renewed.

The non-profit regulatory body Broadcasting Council of the Republic of Macedonia is responsible for looking after the broadcaster in terms of compliance to the law in Macedonia. Snezana Trpevska is the Head of the Research and Development Department of the Council. She reports: "In the analyses of the weekly programme output for 2005, 2006 and 2007 the Broadcasting Council determined that the Macedonian Radio and Television, on its first Channel, MTV 1, broadcasted diverse programme genres including sufficient amount of educational programmes. However, the continuous lack of funding in the past several years is a cause



for the decrease of the quality of the programming of the public service, a lack of new domestic production (especially quality programmes intended for children), a tendency towards commercialisation of the programmes, that is broadcasting more low quality entertainment programmes” In Macedonia, the main problem therefore is the lack of stable and independent funds, according to Trpevska. The result is that the programming and the educational mission are not fulfilled in the appropriate way. Trpevska believes that the electronic media could certainly contribute to the education of the viewers but without professional staff nor funding, high-quality programmes cannot be produced.

“Therefore, in the Strategy for Development of the Broadcasting Field which is being drafted by the Broadcasting Council of the Republic Macedonia, a special consideration will be given to the overall conditions for strengthening the Macedonian public broadcasting service - Macedonian Radio and Television,” Trpevska assures.

Hungary’s public broadcasting system had to deal with major problems too. In 2001 a crisis in Hungarian public broadcasting took place: “The ratings for television are dramatically down and there is no agreement between rival political parties over the administration of the system,”

stated Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists.

Now that the crisis is over, the financial situation is better than ever: in 2006 they finally went into the black.

“In that time the people did not believe in public service. It is a very slow process to get the trust of the people back,” Klein points out.

Minorities in Slovenia are dependent

on the public service broadcasters concerning the introduction of their point of view in programme content, Hrvatin states.

Macedonia is striving towards well structured programmes concerning marginal groups and ethnic minorities. “...The Macedonian Radio and Television has been broadcasting programmes for ethnic minorities in Macedonia for more than thirty years. At present, on the Second Channel of the public service, MTV 2, there are 65-hours a week of broadcasting in Albanian, 17.5-hours in Turkish, and 1.5-hours each in Serbian, Romani, Vlach and Bosnian. On the Macedonian Radio, there are 56-hours a week in Albanian, 35-hours in Turkish, and over 3 hours each in Serbian, Romani, Vlach and Bosnian,” details Trpevska, a member of the Macedonian Broadcasting Corporation.

Judit Klein, who is responsible for the ethnic minorities’ programming on the Hungarian Television, criticises the broadcasting times for minority groups in her country. They have their slot at 10 a.m. and the second one very early in the afternoon at 12.30 p.m. Hence, all the people who work and children who go to school do not have the chance to view this programme. Another possibility is to watch it on the internet, but of course many people do not have an internet connection at home therefore they have to go to an internet café or have to find other possibilities.

“There is some culture, there are news, there are minority programmes, there are religious programmes, in that sense the Hungarian television does what it has to do,” resumes Klein.

All in all public service broadcasters in Macedonia, Slovenia, as well as in Hungary, do not emphasise on the programme plurality and the educational mission sufficiently yet, due to financial means or deficiency of the public service media.

It is up to non-profit organisations and regulatory bodies like the Peace Institute or the Broadcasting Council to act and develop new projects, such as ‘Media for Citizens’ which gives the “mob” a voice and brings forward the fulfilment of the viewers’ needs. ■



Survival of the Sleaziest?

Public broadcasters in Southern and Eastern Europe quarrel with the competition of their new rivals. As soap operas and bingo shows ensure audience shares, the concept of quality television seems out-of-date.

Have public broadcasters given up their values in a hurry, terrified by crashing advertising revenue? Has TV forgotten to compete for quality?

By Julian Paschinger and Alexander Lehner

Simona Sensual wants you. Wearing a wicked top and a seductive pair of hot-pants she flirts with the camera in an explicit way. The cute blonde croons an episode of her latest single before kissing a photograph of her favourite football player, Ronaldo from Brazil. Simona also supports a campaign of page 5 pin-ups demanding to advance to page 3. Obviously Simona was a bit nervous. After all she

“The competition of public broadcasters with private broadcasters is leading to a decrease of quality and diversity of programmes.”

Marijan Jurenc

appeared on Tonomatul DP2, Romania’s most popular entertainment show which is aired every day on Romanian Television, TVR, the fee and tax co-financed public broadcaster, and not on a commercial channel as you might expect.

About sixteen years ago the same channel aired pictures of more historical value: They showed scenes of governmental violence, bleeding protesters and burning communist flags during the Romanian revolution of 1989. TV played an important role in discharging the former communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Even completely governmentally controlled then, TVR could not hide the rumours during a live speech in front of a mass assembly on 21

December. After the overthrow of Ceausescu the public’s interest in television gradually increased as they recognised its potential for free expression and opinion-making. Television served as a platform for political discussions in the early days of the new democracy. In 1992 the dualistic system was established and commercial television grew from a local phenomenon into a serious threat for TVR over the years. Nowadays Romania 1, TVR’s main channel, and the commercial channel Pro TV compete for the leadership on the Romanian television market.

The Triumphal March of Entertainment

The concept of commercial broadcasters vehemently stirred up the media landscapes of Southern and Eastern Europe. The competition with profit-driven businessmen overwhelmed most of the state-owned broadcasters. In panic, public channels filled their programming with entertainment, such as variety shows and light talk-shows instead of news and investigative programmes in order to save advertising revenues. “It is true, the competition of public broadcasters with private broadcasters is leading to a decrease of quality and diversity of programmes, particularly because our public broadcaster has responded to competition with intensive commercialisation of its programming,” Marijan Jurenc, General Manager of the Slovenian commercial market leader Pro Plus, told deScripto.

Due to a liberal licensing policy numerous private broadcasters entered Slovenia's media market after the country became independent in 1991. Despite the country's small expanse and a population of merely two million people, there are 49 stations in Slovenia today – with five of them being national TV channels and the rest regional and local channels. Jurenc points out that “culture and education are in domain of the public broadcaster, and it would be an illusion to expect that commercial TV stations could assume that role.” As most commercial broadcasting is non-political, relying on soap operas and films, with little news and current affairs reporting, it is not a real competition for SLO 1, the main channel of the public broadcaster, RTV Slovenija. The main exception remains POP TV, the most successful private channel, which broadcasts daily one-hour evening news, weekly current affairs magazines and talk shows. Jurenc describes the programming as “informative and entertaining contents typical for European privately owned TV stations.” Initially, POP TV's news programming embarked on the strategy of tabloid reporting to win a large audience. In turn, this prompted SLO 1 to also adopt a more commercial approach in its news reporting, and also in other programmes. More recently, however, both sides have abandoned some of their most blatant commercial attitudes. Sophisticated news shows like “24UR” (24 Hours) on POP TV became more and more popular. With this competition leading to a recreation in quality reporting, RTV somehow prevailed with its educational charter. Does Slovenia's media landscape provide the panacea for public broadcasters in Europe?

In Turkey the public broadcasting network TRT, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, endorses quality programming too. Yet after the introduction of commercial television in 1992, TRT's channels significantly lost in ratings, holding only a total of about 10% in audience share in 2006 anymore, according to TV audience measurement by AGB Anadolu. Whereas the leading entertainment channels Kanal D, ATV and Show hold about 14 to 15% each. Yet neither of them reigns supreme as the leadership shifts almost every year. Hasan Erel, a reporter and editor for the foreign news department of TRT, ascribes the success of private TV channels to their popular programming. With soap operas, talk shows and song contests commercial channels would offer simple entertainment and score high ratings. “Commercial television is much more diverse and flexible,” explains Asli Tunc, Chair of Media and Communication Systems Department of the Istanbul Bilgi University. They are “more attractive, more colourful and

have more interesting news,” she told deScripto. Erel on the other hand describes the commercial station's programming as “low culture” and primarily consisting of “private life programmes” like morning and talk shows, in which people would “talk slang”. According to Erel the TRT network cannot have that kind of programmes due to its high ethics. Instead they would air demanding documentaries, movies and educational programmes.

As this kind of programming attracts the audience, a commercial television supplier will probably insist that the viewers independently decide what to watch, and the supply would just follow the demand. Banking on light entertainment, commercial TV stations got what they wanted, namely higher ratings at the expense of quality in television. So who is behind these decisions and what are their interests?

Local Moguls and Multinational Networks

Turkey is dominated by four big media groups: Dogan, Merkez, Cukurova and Star. Together the four leading groups control about 80% of the market. Media expert Tunc points out a Turkish phenomenon: “Although there is a profound concentration in terms of media ownership in Turkey, moguls prefer a number of TV and radio channels in order to hold an enormous power in their hands.” TRT journalist Erel criticises the amount of editorial control

“Commercial television is much more diverse and flexible. They are more attractive, more colourful and have more interesting news.”

Asli Tunc

exercised over commercial TV stations by its private owners. As an example he named a media group which forbids its TV stations to criticise the government during the time a business deal is being negotiated. “The mainstream media is controlled by oligarchs, like in Russia,” Erel told deScripto. Yet he admits that also the public broadcaster TRT “is controlled to a certain amount by the government.” Tunc does not mince matters: “Mostly, TRT is a voice of the government.”

Also local politicians and corporate directors as well became owners of television stations, realising that the media helps to build careers. Compared to the real big players, multinational media companies, they are only small potatoes. The international media investor CME, Central European Media Enterprises, operates TV stations in the Czech Republic, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Croatia and Slovenia. Its TV stations reach approximately 91 million

people across Eastern Europe. Slovenia's leading channel POP TV as well as its second largest commercial broadcaster Kanal A are owned by CME. This financial background enables them to offer a variety of international programmes such as family movies and popular series as well as self-produced domestic programmes. According to Media Service AGB's 'people meter' measurement, in 2006 POP TV led the all-day ratings with a 28.6% audience share. SLO 1 came second with 23.1%. Altogether CME's channels beat the public national services with 38% to 32% in total shares.

"Multimedia companies have brought both fresh air and money into the local market, especially coming from countries that had a history in making television," says Oana Matei, Head of International News Desk at Romania's leading commercial TV supplier Pro TV. In Romania media ownership concentration has increased as a result of foreign investments. Pro TV and the women-focused channel Acasa TV are also part of CME's empire. The multinational SBS Broadcasting Group, which reaches approximately 100 million people across Europe, competes with CME on the Romanian market. Matei endorses the cooperation with international partners: "Romanian journalists have learned a lot from this kind of partnership. Overall, Romanian television owned by foreign media companies have shortened the way to making professional journalism." SBS's commercial channel Prima TV however is only a minor contestant. The public broadcaster TVR held a total of 22% in all-day audience share in 2006, according to TNS AGB International. CME's channels summed up to a total of 24%, with Pro TV making up the bulk. In a situation where commercial TV stations provide information and entertainment, the question comes up why public services would be needed anymore?

An Indistinct Future

The EU Commission stated in a 1999 report that "public service broadcasting has an important role to play in promoting cultural diversity in each country, in providing educational programming, in objectively informing public opinion, in guaranteeing pluralism and in supplying ... quality entertainment." Whether public broadcasters are living up to these expectations is disputable. License fees and state subventions create a public responsibility not to primarily compete with commercial broadcasters over advertising revenues.

Media expert Tunc explains that in Turkey the notion of "doing something good for the public" lost its meaning and ratings became the "only criterion to measure suc-

cess." The aim must be to create a competition for quality, not for entertainment. Pro TV's Matei points out that Romanians missed entertainment for over 40 years. Therefore, "it was a natural thing to offer them something they could only see on foreign televisions." Television changes and evolves all the time which makes it difficult to pinpoint the right way of broadcasting. Also cultural influences and new generations profoundly affect the media. "The young population, the attractiveness of popular culture and the youngsters' general aloofness to the political issues brought the success for the private channels," illustrates Tunc.

Jurenc, General Manager of Pro Plus, sums it all up: "The public broadcaster is still not sure about its role. Should they compete with private stations with commercial programmes, or should they fulfil their mission? This dilemma is reflected in their programming." Eventually it will be up to the viewers to either fuel further commercialisation or appreciate quality by changing their viewing habits. The question they should ask themselves is: Do I want to see sexy Simona Sensual too? ■

Pandora's Box of Nationalism

The Challenge of Public Broadcasting in Multi-Ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina By Anna Fritzsche

In a critical essay, Boro Kontic, Director of Mediacentar Sarajevo and former editor of the Radio Sarajevo, vividly describes a scene from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian movie 'Days and Hours': While the cousin takes a screwdriver to repair a broken boiler that is probably older than him, the

The legacies of the country's destructive war were three ethnically structured, separate media systems with inflammatory reporting on other ethnic groups and extensive nationalist and political influence on all levels of the media environment.

resigned Uncle Idriz tries to explain the problem with the boiler to both the handyman and himself: "I'm afraid the fault lies somewhere deeper in the system!" To Kontic, this little scenario matches the ongoing struggle of establishing a public broadcasting service in Bosnia and Herzegovina to a tee.

Transforming the media structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina from communist-era state-controlled mouthpieces into a nation-wide, European-style, balanced public service broadcasting system has been one of the most cumbersome tasks the international community has faced.

The legacies of the country's destructive war were three ethnically structured, separate media systems with inflammatory reporting on other ethnic groups, and extensive nationalist and political influence on all levels of the media environment. Although impressive achievements in the development of a functioning public broadcasting system have been made since the Dayton Peace Agreement, real progress has long been hampered by the ethnic divisions in society and the specific post-conflict circumstances.

The current public broadcasting service of Bosnia-

Herzegovina is composed of a complicated and costly tripartite system that includes the two entity broadcasters RTV Federation and RTV Republika Srpska, based in Sarajevo and Banja Luka respectively, as well as the nationwide channel RTV BiH, or PBS BiH which started broadcasting in 2004. Each of them is build upon the national quota system, attempting to reconcile professional criteria with the premise of national equality. The goal is to provide each citizen of BiH with full access to a public broadcasting service which is free of bias and discrimination, whilst safeguarding his/her legitimate rights to nourish individual cultural identities. But how far is it really possible to maintain both requirements?

The Tale of the Three-headed Dragon

The ethnic structure of post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina consists of three constituent peoples, but only two entities and is considerably polarised. With the devastating war and its aftermath, the country that was once described as a "leopard skin" due to the intertwinement of its peoples, became a state of three separate ethnic territories that are up to 95% homogeneous. On the state level not one of the three major ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats – are in absolute majority. According to the 1991 Census of the population, Bosnia-Herzegovina had a population of 4.35 million: Bosniaks made up 44% of the population, Serbs 31% and Croats 17%. The remaining citizens declared themselves as Yugoslavs (5%) or members of 25 other nationalities (3%).

This strong division is reflected thoroughly in the current public broadcasting system. Although there are some cross-ethnic cut-throughs in the commercial sector, the three constituent peoples of BiH largely still watch, read and lis-

ten to media along ethnic lines and the largest Bosnian Croat party, following complaints that the public broadcasters are effectively divided between the Bosniaks and the Serbs, is fighting for a separate channel in the Croatian language. According to Media Online, a South-East European media journal, the consequence is that a major part of media users distinguish information as “ours” and “theirs”,

With rare exceptions, the media are either explicitly local or they cover only the areas of ethnic majorities, thereby remaining notably limited and additionally affirming the existing divisions.

indicating that “the main motive for media usage is not always one’s own experience or independent recommendation of their reliability, accuracy, promptness, attractiveness... but the identification with the ethnic perspective or ideology concept of media.” Media outlets are often compelled to ethnically profile their content if they want to keep or attract the public.

With rare exceptions, the media are either explicitly local or they cover only the areas of ethnic majorities, thereby remaining notably limited and additionally affirming the existing divisions. While hate speech in its original war-mongering sense has practically disappeared from the media due to international observance, its mutants even today emerge in all levels of society, whether through prejudice, intolerance or political show-downs. Public trust is usually limited to the entity broadcasters. While they are the dominant market leaders within the entities, RTV BiH has never become a medium of all citizens and nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. To someone outside the country, such insistence on ethnic origins is even more surprising considering that all citizens essentially speak the same language. According to Radenko Udovicic, Director of Media Plan Institute, the difference between the three languages in Bosnia can be compared to the dialects of British, American and Australian English; thus making everyone in BiH perfectly capable of understanding the media discourse from every outlet. It seems again, “the fault lies somewhere deeper in the system.”

Internal Contradictions and Invisible Problems

The underlying issue of the ongoing struggle with public broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the much more serious disagreement on the long-term functional structure of the country as a state and consequently, the continuous

political attempts by various ethno-national powers to take control over the media.

At present, none of Bosnia’s constituent peoples are truly satisfied with the countries post-Dayton organisation which to this day has been largely imposed by the international community. Bosniak political leadership, advocating a strong centralised state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, supports a unique public broadcasting system with fewer broadcasting companies and a strong central state broadcaster. Croat parties, interpreting the existing structure as an infringement of their national interest and ethnic particularities, are in favour of a division of the federation and demand the establishment of a separate Croat public channel. And lastly, for the Serb authorities any discussion that questions or seeks to modify the existence of RTV Republika Srpska is taken as a direct attack against the entity itself. “In this environment,” says Jusic, “where so many issues are out in the open that really deal with the basic consensus of how this country should look like, it is really hard for RTV BiH, the multi-ethnic Public Broadcaster, to establish its position as a nation-wide station based on principles of balance and independence.”

Another reason for concern is the lack of a viable economic basis to sustain such a large number of similar public broadcasting services. So far, all attempts by the international community to unify the existing public broadcasters under a joint steering board have failed; the costly system of three similar channels with all technical and human potential completely separated prevails, preventing it from playing its part in reintegrating the country. Taking into account the pronounced poverty of the TV market in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the rapid decrease in ratings, as well as the fact that even more prosperous neighbouring countries such as Croatia and Slovenia only have two public television channels each, this also becomes a major financial problem. Kontic states that the two entity broadcasters are

So far, all attempts by the international community to unify the existing public broadcasters under a joint steering board have failed.

the absolute limit of what can be afforded, while economic justification could probably be found for only one. Jusic agrees, wondering “What does the current public broadcasting system actually offer its viewers to survive? Certainly not three identical channels with slightly different dialects.”

Apart from all these specifically Bosnian issues, the global debate about the future of public broadcasting in general has important ramifications on the country's media landscape too. While dramatic changes concerning video and information technology have been taking place over the past few years and significant progress towards digitalisation has been made, Jusic points out that "we here are now debating a model of public broadcasting as it was known in the 1980s in the rest of Europe." He adds: "While we are trying to establish something like ORF or BBC back then, those broadcasters are now heavily involved in changing themselves completely to be able to survive in the multi-channel digital world. Our debates are lagging behind, and once we establish the system here, we will realise that it's completely outdated and at odds with media trends." So

Public broadcasting should be everyone's medium, rather than just a roughly divided ethnic proving ground.

what is to be done? Speaking with the words of Uncle Idriz, the screwdriver will not be able to fix the problem; instead you might want to think about a new boiler...

Glimmers of Hope

Within this seemingly never-ending tale of the three-headed dragon, there is still reason for enthusiasm when it comes to potentially establishing a unified public broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to Jusic, the issues of ethnic identities currently dividing the country are primarily a legacy of the war and have proven not to be impenetrable enough as that they could not be dealt with. "I want to hope that such a strong division is impossible to maintain in the long run and I want to hope that if other countries with much stronger differences are able to put them aside, we will be too." Already there are trends pointing towards the growth of new businesses and investment strategies, such as cross-country mergers and corporations which do not recognise ethnic borders or cultural differences. "It's going to be interesting to see how right-oriented, ethno-nationalist politics keep their rule as opposites to quite rapidly developing businesses whose interests are expressed not in ethnic attributes, but in Dollars and Euros. One could expect that there will be tensions between these two elites in the future, and that there is a chance that the million dollars are going to prevail."

Also, within the larger context of a EU-membership prospective of Bosnia-Herzegovina which would guarantee

civil and minority rights, many people have come to find the issues of ethnic division and distrust more and more irrelevant.

In Jusic's view, there is a lot of potential in the fact that unlike other multinational societies such as Belgium and Switzerland, all Bosnian citizens essentially speak the same language, thus creating an important foundation for a harmonic society with a nation-wide public broadcasting system that can be understood by everyone. Kontic agrees, emphasising that "a company with thousands of employees, paid for by citizens, that broadcasts a programme no one is particularly interested in is already an anachronous idea and cannot represent the media in the modern sense of the word."

Public broadcasting should be everyone's medium, rather than just a roughly divided ethnic proving ground, and a debate about three or four nearly identical nationally and ethnically defined public channels will become completely superfluous when confronted with the digital context of hundreds of thematic channels. "I strongly believe that the future of public broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not in ethno-national and mono-linguistic channels," Jusic concludes. "That concept is totally outdated and has become redundant. I think the future will lie in a multiplicity of platforms and channels targeting specific audiences of tastes, not of different ethnicities. That's how I see the future of public broadcasting, if we want to have a future of public broadcasting. Because otherwise, people will just watch other channels." ■

Smooth Landing or Crash?

The destination is freedom of expression.
But the way of landing there can be quite a different one,
as the two examples Romania and Hungary clearly show.
By Petra Waxenegger

“We all were like people after a long time in prison who were suddenly faced with freedom: first, you are not able to be happy, but only confused,” Catalin Stefu remembers the time after the downfall of Ceaucescu. Although the young Romanian was only twelve in the historic year of 1989, he remembers exactly this feeling that “something major was happening and that everything was changing”. Preceding this political turning point, a crash landing into the decade of newly gained freedom took place: Hard,

“When I got my first cable TV in 1994, I honestly watched television for twenty hours on the first day. I was speechless about the immense programme diversity I had never seen before.”
Catalin Stefu

rapid and abruptly changing everything. First there was the breakdown of the Ceaucescu Regime, followed by the execution of the leader. Then, after 45 years of closure, people slowly discovered life beyond restrictions, reports the today thirty-year-old corporate consultant Stefu. During Ceaucescu’s dictatorship everything was predetermined: Food, medicine and clothes were rationed and had to be produced within Romania. Travelling was allowed only for two weekends per month and, of course, only within the Romanian borders.

The severe restrictions affected all areas of life – among them public broadcasting. The only public broadcasting was under the full control of the dictator’s government. Censorship was common practice. “Ceaucescu-TV”, as Stefu calls the public broadcaster of former times, was the

station that was meant for the dictator’s own interests. Broadcasting was limited to two-hours a day and mainly showed the big leader’s activities and their alleged benefits for the people. On Sundays, movies were broadcast too but of course only chosen ones with harmless contents that could not damage the communists’ image. Preferred European films from Italy or France such as Alain Delon movies were able to pass the strict selection criterions of the government. “At that time American films like those with Schwarzenegger or those that criticised the programme of the communist party were unthinkable,” said Stefu, “but anyway, lots of Romanians found a way to avoid Romanian public broadcasting and watched the Bulgarian television – illegally, of course.” Stefu remembers the time under Ceaucescu pensively, and adds almost laughing: “When I got my first cable TV in 1994, I honestly watched television for twenty hours on the first day. I was speechless about the immense programme diversity I had never seen before.”

A lot of things have changed for the better in Romania since the country made its first steps as democracy in 1991. Also media, and with them the former state controlled public broadcasting, have experienced huge improvements. Now censorship is forbidden, press and information freedom is guaranteed by law, the accumulation of monopolies is not wanted and inhibited, commercial broadcasting is allowed. Besides that, Romania has officially accepted supranational agreements concerning basic human rights as the country has joined the European Union in January 2007 and became member of the Council of Europe. De jure, Romania is a country where freedom of press is constantly performed. But paper can hide a multitude of sins:

So let's ask what the Romanians think about the situation of the right to freedom of expression in their country. Was the transformation from the censored to the free public broadcasting successful?

Catalin Stefu gets thoughtful when he tries to find an answer for this question. He says that in principle, the freedom of press is warranted in his country as in other countries of the European Union. His country, says the young Romanian, has a big variety of press productions and a politically independent public broadcasting. But at the same time he points out some new problem areas that in his opinion need to be considered: "There is not one single TV station, whether public or commercial broadcaster that does not serve any interest of a lobby-group. I especially think of economically powerful people, who are backed by politicians. Of course, this happens in Germany or France as well, or in any other country. But the difference in Romania is: Here manipulation is so obvious and absolutely not diplomatic. For me, this is always a danger for freedom of press." For him, there is still a lack of credibility in media coverage in public broadcasting, because real objectivity is not possible under these circumstances. Freedom of the press is much better than in earlier days but suppressed by so many different interests. Today, there is no censorship any more but powerful people may have such a strong influence regarding topics they talk about in public broadcasting in Romania, he says. "However, I think Romania still needs some time for development. Other countries had around fifty years for maturing; we had only sixteen till now. We have a young generation of journalists who are committed – though badly paid. It is always a step forward, and sometimes a step back." As a step backwards a lot of journalists see as well a new law in Romania based on the Constitutional Court's decision to reinstate press offences as crimes. The ruling taken on 18 January 2007 has brought the resentment of many Romanian journalists, and national and international press freedom organisations.

The Hungarian public broadcasting has to deal with problems of quite a different nature at the moment. And this although Hungary has had – in contrast to Romania - a real smooth landing at the destination "freedom of expression". The transformation from a communist country to a democracy in 1989 happened peacefully, flew smoothly and set a good start for a new beginning into the democratic era. It seemed as if it would go on in the same uncomplicated and problem-free way. Nevertheless today, almost two decades after the political change, Hungary has to deal as well with a problem area. This problem area within the

Hungarian media pertains to the situation of the Hungarian Public Broadcasting, MTV (Magyar television). Involuntarily MTV is exposed to a "zone diet programme" of the Hungarian government. The zone that gets starved out gradually is the financial base of each public broadcasting: The radio and TV fee. In 2003, the fee was abolished by the new mid-left government as "a present for the public". So this "present" was actually the realisation of an election pledge of the MSZP. "The socialist party wanted to attract a lot of voters with that promise, especially the retired people. They focus especially on the elder people - and they were successful with that idea as you can see", Krisztina Nagyvaradi, a 28 year old Hungarian bank employee, says. Of course, for the public the cancellation of a fee is always a welcome financial relief, but for MTV this meant a serious danger for its survival. Since then, the public broadcasting was not endued with stable resources any more. MTV is without fail on the drip of the government to be able to survive. The debts accumulate constantly and if MTV does not want to sink, the government has frequently to give some financial support. "MTV is now absolutely dependent on the government. And it happens often that the news are given a false colour for the benefit of the socialist party," the 28 year old Nagyvaradi reports. She exemplifies this with an interview broadcasted on MTV in 2006 during the election campaign: "The reporter ignored or disagreed with the leader

MTV is exposed to a "zone diet programme" of the Hungarian government. The zone that gets starved out gradually is the financial base of each public broadcasting: The radio and TV fee.

of the conservative party, the Fidesz Polgári Párt, and spoke only with the socialists. This interview was really one-sided and not objective." With such an apparent big dependency from the governing party problems like that are preassigned. If an objective news coverage is possible under such circumstances and if the freedom for expression is guaranteed, may be doubted, as the depictions of the young Hungarian show. Even the MTV - building is representing the awkward situation of the Hungarian public broadcasting: The building and the technical equipment are old and need some modernisation urgently.

The specific problems of MTV have a long history: Soon after the big political turnaround in 1989, the public broadcasting and the media sector had to cope with some turbulent times. The many changes of the Hungarian gov-

ernment led into the so-called two “media wars”: This term stands for conflicts between the leading party and the media. The influence of the party in Hungary was always a highly discussed topic, mostly in connection with MTV. The newspapers were barely concerned with this problem: due to privatisation and the holding of foreign companies on Hungarian newspapers, the Hungarian government focused its interest on the local public broadcasting. The new 1996 law for public broadcasting enabled a variety in the Hungarian media sector: The dual media system was established and a lot of new commercial broadcasters started to be on air. Unfortunately, besides the cancellation of the TV fees, this new law was the second reason for the “zone diet” of the Hungarian Public Broadcasting.

For many years now MTV has suffered from these problems but it is not “only” press freedom that is at stake; also the possibility of the programming council to act may be questioned with such surrounding conditions. As it seems,

these problems will still burden the Hungarian freedom of press in the future. The opinion of the young Krisztina Nagyvaradi aligns with that of many other people who do not agree with the situation of the public broadcasting in Hungary, as she says: “I think, it is important that a country has its public broadcasting and not only private channels. But in Hungary a reorganisation of MTV is absolutely necessary – and a change of the present management of MTV who only seem to do what the government is telling them to do.”

These two examples of the public broadcasting in Romania and Hungary presented in this article should have made clear: freedom of press is a downright political dimension. Power and its distribution within a country, the state of the democracy process, the current government, specific laws and rules, and the fact if media are seen as “the fourth power” or not – all that is important for this always current topic. ■

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Values for Europe - Europe for Values

edited by Thomas A. Bauer and Gerhard E. Ortner



Chapter 1: Democracy - Media as Place of Reflection and Self-Organisation

Chapter 2: Dialogue - Understanding Differences

Chapter 3: Diversity - Identity as a Trans-Cultural Project

Chapter 4: Sustainability - Learning Society Europe

The articles in this book are written by highly recognized scientists and experts from institutions such as the University of Vienna, the Distance University of Hagen, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Maribor, the Society of Pedagogy and Information, etc.

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ERASMUS EUROMEDIA AWARD 2007

Call for Application

The European Society for Education and Communication (ESEC) awards the Erasmus EuroMedia Prizes for outstanding productions and programmes in the sector of media dealing with European Values (society, culture/education and politics). Since 1995 the Erasmus EuroMedia Awards have been given to a considerable amount of producers with high profile for their media oeuvres interpreting Europe.

The ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Award Ceremony will take place in Vienna (Rathaus Wien) on September 28th 2007.

The Erasmus EuroMedia Awards 2007 are endowed with 10.000 EUR in total. This sum will be distributed among the winners of the Erasmus EuroMedia Award, the Erasmus Sponsorship Awards and the Erasmus Special Awards.

Apart from the donation, the value of the award mainly lies in the fact that the awarded projects gain international attention. Moreover these awards have always been a good reason and criterion for receiving financial support of future projects given by public institutions. Within the past years with its Erasmus EuroMedia Awards, the ESEC has become an international competent network entity between various projects and project operators. It is not only recognized but also appreciated by experts, award candidates and award winners.

ERASMUS EUROMEDIA AWARDS

ESEC awards the Erasmus EuroMedia Prizes for programmes, products or productions in all kinds of media and media formats, which

- critically support the European Discourse regarding interpretations of its objectives, perspectives, problems, conditions and challenges;
- pursue educational goals regarding the European topics such as European values, European identity and consciousness, trans-cultural communication in Europe, social integration, solidarity, diversity and peaceful neighbourhood,

AWARDING PROCEDURE

A two-stage award Procedure will be used:

1. stage (rating)

Erasmus Seals of Approval

An international jury of experts will evaluate all submissions on the basis of qualitative criteria. Due to different languages the evaluation will be carried out under the supervision of the national ESEC Representatives and ESEC Experts. All submissions that correspond to the catalogue of criteria will be awarded with the Erasmus EuroMedia Seal of Approval.

2. stage (ranking)

All submissions achieving the Seal of Approval will automatically take part in the Erasmus EuroMedia Awards Contest.

Erasmus EuroMedia Award 2007 (EUR 3.000)

The international jury of experts will select the application with most outstanding performance, depth in topic, critical and/or analytic reference to reality and/or innovative format from the Erasmus Seal awarded projects..

Erasmus EuroMedia Sponsorship Awards 2007 (in total EUR 3.000)

The international jury of experts will chose projects with special thematic focus on current debates, controversial topics and investigative formats.

Erasmus EuroMedia Special Awards 2007 (each with EUR 1.000)

The international jury of experts will assign winners according to the following categories:

- Arrangement: innovative and creative format
- Educational intention: level of impact and participation
- Critical analysis: regarding the past, the present and perspectives for the future

Erasmus EuroMedia Country Focus 2007

The main goal of ESEC is to bring the idea of Europe with its different cultures, traditions and values together. Thus it is essential to show these regional and national specific traditions and stories. 2007, for the first time ESEC will give the ESEC EuroMedia Country Focus 2007.

This year the countries Bulgaria and Romania became members of the European Union. This is a good reason to put the focus on media productions in these two countries. With this specific award category ESEC wants to give the best of Bulgarian and Romanian organizations, producers, groups and others the opportunity to present their works to the European partners.

AWARD

The candidates will be informed by August 15th 2007 about the Erasmus Seal of Approval Certification and the Erasmus Awards Nomination. The Winner of the Erasmus EuroMedia Award 2007, the Winners of the Erasmus EuroMedia Sponsorship Awards 2007, the Erasmus EuroMedia Special Awards 2007 and the Erasmus EuroMedia Country Focus 2007 will be announced at the ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Award Ceremony on September 28th 2007. The award winners are allowed to use the ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Award Logo after the ceremony for their advertising purposes.

PARTICIPATION

The invitation for the submission of projects/products/productions/programmes is addressed to organizations and enterprises in the field of broadcasting, television and print media, to organizations in the field of education with emphasis on media, to cultural and/or social initiatives and project groups, to public institutions in the field of media-education (e.g.: media centres, media museums) and to project groups, institutions and enterprises in the field of documentary film.

CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Submissions for the ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Awards need to be delivered by June 15th 2007 (Postmark). After this date no further submissions will be considered. Detailed information about the conditions of participation is available on <http://www.esec-online.net>.

JURY

The media-projects/products, when submitted to the ESEC, will be certified by the ESEC Representatives in several European countries. Detailed information of the jury member is listed on <http://www.esec-online.net>.

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To Fee or not to Fee?

That is the Question - Controversies about the Funding of Public Broadcasting

The way of funding public broadcasting is related to various problems - questions of dependence and legitimacy arise. In Moldova, Cyprus and Romania different opinions about these problems exist. Is there a connection between the way of funding and independence?

By Angelika Truttenberger and Manuel Hirmke

It is two o'clock in the morning on a chicken farm in Cyprus. The farmer has been asleep for hours but the light in the stable is still on. No one would expect that this could have an impact on the amount of money the Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC) receives from this household. But until seven years ago in Cyprus the size of the electricity bill determined people's contribution to public broadcasting, as the license fee consisted of a tax on the electricity bill. "That was not fair," Neophytos Epaminondar, Director of the Cyprus Radio and Television authority, states because "as we know chickens do not watch television."

Nowadays CyBC is completely financed by state subsidies and advertising. "We depend actually on the law and we depend actually on the government. If we do not get any subsidies, we cannot do our job here," explains Adriana Zannoupa, CyBC's first finance officer.

Fees or State Subsidies

There are several models of funding public broadcasting in South East Europe and countless opinions about how a public broadcaster should be financed but for sure it is an area of conflict. If the money comes from the government, there is the question of dependence, if money is paid via license fees, legitimacy starts to be discussed.

"I think that there must be license fees, because they establish a direct connection between the public broadcaster and

the consumer," emphasises Alexandru Dorogan, Chairman of the Moldovan Electronic Press Association (APEL). In Moldova there are no license fees, the public broadcaster TeleRadio Moldova is mainly financed by the state (relatively stable with around 80% in the last years, according to the Report of the European Audiovisual Observatory 2006). There is a parliamentary guarantee for state funding, but the amount of money is not fixed or set borders by a minimum. Furthermore, TeleRadio Moldova has advertising and sponsoring revenues, and sells its programme content. Teleshopping is not allowed. Until 2006, the broadcaster has been state property by law, now it is allowed to own, use and dispose money. In 2002 there was an attempt to introduce a license fee, worked out by NGOs, but the suggestion was voted down by the parliament, with the argument that Moldovans could not afford to pay such a fee. "I think this is a specious argument," retorts Dorogan, "people pay a lot of money for cable TV and other things, and then the living standard grows, and in the end people will realise that if they pay license fees, they should receive reliable information so that their interests are reflected in the programmes." While APEL believes in the necessity and good sense of license fees, Adriana Zannoupa strongly disagrees: "I do not think it is the best way for the people to pay license fees for the CyBC, I think the method of the direct subsidy of the government is better." Dan Preda of the Romanian Radio Monitoring

Agency RADOR on the other hand again opines that license fees are important, “to assure the money and the independence.”

Monitoring TeleRadio Moldova in 2005, APEL figured out that the broadcasted content lacks objectivity, professionalism and independence as the information is in most of the cases biased, refers to only one source, or is mainly about important political persons in the government. The information is conflict-free, focuses on the capital Chisinau and such important topics as children’s problems, poverty and corruption are hardly ever mentioned. The opposition has almost no access to TeleRadio Moldova’s broadcasts. These deficiencies could be reduced if license fee were introduced, Dorogan is convinced, because receiving the money from the people would put the broadcaster in direct dependence on the recipient and therefore increase the sense of responsibility for the public: “Then they are obliged to serve the interests of these people.”

Not everywhere is the absence of license fees equated to dependence: according to Zannoupa CyBC is financed 77% by governmental subsidies which are bound to a balanced content – that is defined by law. Every year the Cyprus Radio Television Authority publishes a report regarding the percentage of the different programme sections. If the asked conditions are not fulfilled, the government takes the report in consideration and has the right to cut down the subsidies. The idea is to guarantee content balance while there is full economic dependence on the state. But it remains arguable if such an approach can really guarantee independence, as Dorogan demurs: “The money spent from the budget is anyway the people’s and not the government’s money. But if it is given by the government, there is already somehow a dependence.”

Similar to Moldova, Romanian public broadcasting has to face criticism. According to an Open Society Institute Report of 2005, there is a lack of independence and critical political broadcasts. And that even though unlike in Moldova and Cyprus in Romania the main funding source are license fees. “I think everywhere the politicians are interested in being present in the programmes of the national radio and TV stations,” says Preda. “We try to respect the law and to assure time for every political party to deliver its ideas,” he adds.

Besides the license fees (about 10 to 12 EUR a year, according to the Open Society Institute Report 2005), advertising revenues and state subsidies complete the budget of the public broadcaster. The number of fee payers doubled in 2003 when the parliament changed the paying structure and introduced paying via the electricity bill. There was

also established a special television and radio fee for companies, which amounts to 150 EUR for large and medium sized, and to 45 EUR for small ones a year. Nevertheless, Preda is afraid of losing too many payers: “The main danger comes from the number of citizens who declare they do not have radio sets... The number is larger and larger.”

Justification of Public Broadcasting

It seems that the willingness of paying for public broadcasting cannot be taken for granted anymore, as public and commercial programmes often do not differ much. Public broadcasters always face the dilemma of having to serve public interests on the one hand and competing with commercial stations on the other hand. “I think everywhere people like to be entertained, of course,” declares Preda, confronted with the reproach of focusing on entertainment. “I have the feeling that if tomorrow the government would be deciding to imply a fee for CyBC, there would be a huge negative reaction from the people,” Neophytos Epaminondar describes the ambience in Cyprus where the public broadcaster suffered from a market share of only 17.2% in 2004 (according to European Institute for the



Media Report 2004). Nevertheless, the meaning of public broadcasting seems to be known – if public broadcasting was abolished, “it wouldn’t be a nice thing for the people; again they would react negatively.”

However, public broadcasters have to serve the people’s interests and assure their audience, while trying to keep their identity and facing the problem of dependence. It is obvious that this task is not simple. “We try not to do the same as a commercial station. Maybe we don’t succeed,” admits even Dan Preda. ■

City of Vienna – A Hub for Europe



Europe does not stop at the borders of the European Union. Vienna, capital at the heart of Europe, like no other has come to be a link between the European Union and cities in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe.

We don't just

In Touch With Our Neighbours

Vienna is world-renowned for being a cultural metropolis and a city with a high quality of life. It is a top location for both sciences and research and ranks undisputedly high where social comfort and safety are concerned. Not least because of its geography at the heart of Europe it is also a hub between East and West. Recent years have witnessed a growing commitment towards communicating with countries in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe in areas as diverse as culture, tourism, business, education and youth exchange, not to mention the transfer of environmental and urban technologies and modern city management.

Liaison Offices for the City of Vienna

Vienna's city network is one of its kind the world over. Apart from the Vienna House in Brussels there are now representative offices in eleven Central and Eastern European cities, set up for the purpose of establishing valuable business contacts and covering public relations activities of major relevance to the city. As lobbying guru Wolfgang Rosam puts it: "The Vienna Offices are

a brilliant idea! These days there is nothing like networking." The objective of such densely knit networks is to secure Vienna as an international business location, to strengthen the city as a world brand in the long term and to support local businesses in their export activities.

This breakthrough strategy proved highly successful during the city's performances in the Russian capital of Moscow. Mayor Yuri Luzhkov was thrilled at the kaleidoscope of culture, business and city administration he saw: "Moscow has learned a lot from Vienna already. Prospects for future cooperation are promising."

Joint Lobbying

Capitals need to find suitable lobbying partners if they want to draw attention to the urban issues at stake and find common solutions. Services of general interest, local public transport, integrating with decision-making processes at European level, and innovative financing tools for urban structures in particular require decisions relevant to cities. Vienna has been a member of Eurocities, a network of 100 European cities, since 1995. Yet Vienna is also strongly committed to cooperation among cities and regions in



Cooperation with capitals in South and South Eastern Europe relies on city networks, project-oriented agreements, the exchange of experience with specific issues, joint EU funding programmes and presentations by cities both here and there.

The relations of Vienna with neighbouring regions and countries would, of course, be far from complete without a wide range of cultural activities: culture days and culture weeks of concerts, arts and architecture exhibitions, workshops and seminars, as well as social events such as the "Vienna Balls" have long been part of our international activities abroad, while neighbouring cities have reciprocated with similar events in Vienna.

string along!

City Networks

Europe beyond the European Union, a fact reflected by its participation in the Assembly of European Regions (AER) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) of which Dr. Michael Häupl, Mayor of Vienna, is currently the president.

Vienna Dialogue Forums

In the coming years "Dialogue Forums" will be held regularly to inform neighbouring cities on a variety of urban issues, including the environment, urban technologies, modern city administrations and integration, amongst others. Their aim is to encourage an exchange of ideas and success stories that will help cities learn from each other. First in the series of "dialogues for cities" was a forum on waste management in May 2007 held with the participation of seven European cities including Sofia, Prague and Istanbul.

All of the above activities are to instil a sense of friendly neighbourhood in a Europe we will all be sharing. Vienna wants to play an active part in shaping this "Future Project" of ours alongside its European neighbouring cities.



*Michael Häupl,
Mayor of
Vienna, and his
counterpart
Yuri Luzhkov
from Moscow*

Photo: WTV/Heinz Angermayr(1), Compress (1)

COUNTRY FOCUS REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA / FORMER YUGOSLAVIAN REPUBLIC

Bridging After t

Characterised by wide ethnic variety, political influence and a huge number of regional, local and pirate stations – Macedonia's* media landscape.

By Kerstin Brinnich and Yvonne Heuber

“Oh, you go there?! Isn't it dangerous to go there by yourself?!, Macedonians often ask me when I am in Skopje and I have a meeting at the other side of the Vardar River, in the Old Town, which is by the majority inhabited by Albanians,” Nena Skopljanac says.

She is an activist with the organisation Medienhilfe based in Zurich, which supports independent media in former Yugoslavia. She has worked on empirical and theoretical media research for a long time.

According to Nena Skopljanac, Macedonians often stereotype Albanians as dangerous and violent. Contrariwise,

Macedonians often stereotype Albanians as dangerous and violent. Contrariwise, Albanians stereotype Macedonians as second-class citizens and less valuable.

Albanians stereotype Macedonians as second-class citizens and less valuable.

Reporting – A Stumbling Block of Macedonia's Media

“The main problem is the division of society. It's not a division by ethnic lines, but by political lines,” says Roberto Belicanec, Executive Director of the NGO Media Development Centre in Macedonia, regarding the parallel reporting of the two largest ethnic groups in his country. The existence of this social problem is visible whenever national political issues or events are the reason for the reporting. As a consequence the differences between the two largest groups of minorities – the Macedonians and the Albanians – are more considerable concerning their political background than their ethnical one. “The reporting was

often divided, because each side took its assumed national sight,” Belicanec states, describing the situation. The media is highly influenced by political parties and the government. As a consequence, political agendas are often calling the shots. Important journalistic values like objectivity and fairness in reporting are not a quality criteria. The result of this deficiency in the Macedonian media is simply an attempt of manipulating the audience in order to influence their political opinion.

As a former part of the Republic of Yugoslavia, Macedonia is a country with a communist past. Although it has been independent since 1991, there is still a connection to its former governance: When the boom of media started in 1995, the political influence of the government decreased. Private media corporations developed and engaged in competition with the state-owned ones. So the government and politics lost part of their influence and it was then possible to establish a new critical basis concerning reporting and skilled journalistic work.

Inter-Ethnic Communication

“All stations with national licenses only report on national subjects like activities of the government, ministries, the EU, and so on. 90% relate to the capital Skopje, to highly political affairs,” Nena Skopljanac from the Medienhilfe organisation says. ‘Makedonija na dlanka’ means ‘Macedonia on the palm of your hand’. That is the name of a news magazine broadcasted fortnightly on Sundays at 10.30 p.m. with coverage of about 120,000 people. “The potency of ‘Makedonija na dlanka’ is that the programme is regional and local: It is about people's closest problems and interests!” The project was originated in 2002 after the crisis came close to a civil war in 2001. It aims to con-

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

the Thaw

* Due to technical reasons we use the simple form 'Macedonia' when referring to the Republic of Macedonia / Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia

tribute to the conciliation of Albanians and Macedonians. TV stations all over Macedonia, namely three local Albanian ones (TV Art, TV Era and TV Hana) and four local ethnic Macedonian ones (TV M, TV Tera, TV Vis und TV Zdravkin), try to controvert negative ethnic stereotypes and demonstrate that bi-ethnic cooperation is possible. Each station contributes to the magazine, with subtitles in the other language. The Swiss media development organisation Medienhilfe covers 40% of the production costs. Except for coaching and advice, Medienhilfe does not interfere in the project.

Another positive influence on the approach of Albanians and Macedonians has been ALSAT-M. The commercial TV station originally was only broadcast in Albanian; now it broadcasts news also in Macedonian. TV Tera, originally a local, ethnic Macedonian TV station, now also broadcasts in Albanian. "At first, people thought that was strange: Why do they talk Albanian now? Can't they talk Macedonian?! But then they got used to it. And it is an advantage if you hear and notice the other language in public," Skopljanac explains.

Nena Skopljanac thinks that the communication between the different ethnicities is getting better but not only because of some positive influence from the media. She gave an example of Veles, a city in Central Macedonia. In the former Yugoslavia, Veles was a city of heavy industry. There was no family that was not in some way related to it, and people could live well from it. But with the conflicts in the 1990s and in 2001, the industry lost its purchasers, and so it collapsed. Now there is a high unemployment rate, and especially for young people it is hard to see any perspective. Compared to the rest of Macedonia, there is an economic boom in West Macedonia which is mainly

Ethnic Minorities in Macedonia

From the SEEMO publication "Media and Minorities in South East Europe".

Macedonia has a total population of 2,022,547 inhabitants.

64.2% identify themselves as of Macedonian ethnicity, 25.2% of Albanian ethnicity, 3.8% of Turkish ethnicity, 2.7% of Roma ethnicity, 0.5% of Vlach ethnicity, 1.8% of Serb ethnicity, 0.9% of Bosniak ethnicity and 1% as others.

This multiethnic composition of the population is further accentuated by linguistic diversity

Macedonian language: 66.6%;
Albanian language: 25.1%;
Turkish language: 3.5%;
Roma language: 1.9%;
Vlach language: 0.3%;
Serb language: 1.2%;
Bosniak language: 0.4%;
Others: 1%

and religious diversity

Orthodox Christians: 64.8%;
Moslems: 33.3%;
Catholics: 0.3%;
Others: 1.6%

Source: Census 2002, State Statistical Office, Macedonia

inhabited by Albanians. Many Albanians who lived and worked in Germany, Switzerland and so on have now returned and brought capital into the region. Albanians have always been underrepresented in jobs in state institutions. So they were forced to build up businesses on their own initiatives. Nowadays, these people offer better jobs – and to get them, you have to be able to speak Albanian, of course. This is why the willingness among Macedonians to learn Albanian increases.

Macedonia's Independence and the Ohrid Agreement

After Croatia and Slovakia, Macedonia declared its independence in a referendum (boycotted by Albanians and Serbs) in October 1991. The young republic was shattered by conflicts between the ethnicities. The Albanian's fight for an expansion of their political and cultural rights led to inner conflicts. In 2001, it came to a conflict between Albanian rebels of the "National Liberation Army" (UÇK) and the Macedonian government. NATO intervened and in 2001, both sides agreed to the Ohrid Agreement. Abbreviated, Albanians declared not to pursue separatist aims as Macedonia declared to acknowledge more rights to the Albanian minority.

Translated from the Harenberg Länderlexikon

Political and Economic Influences on Private TV Stations

From the South East Europe Media Handbook 2005/2006

Velija Ramkovski is the owner of TV A1 and a trade company; people from A1 TV became members of the new "Party for Economic Revival".

TV Sitel's main shareholders are Ljubisav Ivanov (President of the Socialist Party) and his son Goran Ivanov (director of TV Sitel and five other companies).

Kanal 5's main stakeholder is Emil Stojmenov (is also founder of BS Holding), his father Boris Stojmenov is leader of the VMRO-Macedonian party.

TV Telma is owned by one of the biggest companies dealing with oil trade and distribution (MAKPETROL) in Macedonia.

Political Influence

Representatives of the media sector have been waiting for appropriate solutions concerning the improvement of independent reporting.

In November 2005, three weeks before Macedonia became a candidate country for the EU in December 2005, a new Broadcasting Law was passed by parliament. Additionally, a Broadcasting Council had been established to represent the different communities adequately. But nowadays, political parties and especially the government try to win back their authority over the council and the law. Their intention is to install their own people to control the granting of licenses. For that purpose they are planning to change the existing law. Macedonia has about 2 million inhabitants - and around 180 TV and radio stations. Many of them are regional or local stations - or pirate stations. With the Broadcasting Law of 2005, they all have to go through a re-licensing process. But which stations should get a license and which should not? "Such decisions, made by the Broadcasting Council, have to be based on objective analyses of the Macedonian media market, also related to the economic development. But this is not the case." According to Nena Skopljanac, the problem is that media NGOs (as the Macedonian Media Development Center and the Macedonian Institute for Media) and journalistic organisations distrust the members of the Broadcasting Council and doubt their competences in the media sector. The NGOs fear that there is the danger that state institutions and political parties will have an influence.

The public broadcaster Macedonian Radio and Television (MRT) is characterised by the Europe-wide unique circumstance that it broadcasts in nine different languages. These are Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Romani, Vlach, Bosniak, Bulgarian and Greek.

"Only about 50% of Macedonians pay license fees, the rest is financed generously through donors and government coffers," Skopljanac says. "The station is called 'public', but it is very much under political influence. And people don't want to pay for a product they don't call good or objective." The Macedonian audience is primarily looking for entertainment. In order to assuage their thirst, Macedonian people prefer watching foreign cable-TV programmes. Particularly those from Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro are favoured among the audience because of their highly technical production standards.

"Two years ago I would have thought that it would get better," regrets Roberto Belicanec, Executive Director of the Media Development Centre, the non-existing develop-

ment of the Macedonian press freedom. From his point of view the political influence is still too big. Aggressiveness and animosity are characterising the situation.

Especially journalists who are critical of the government have often been victims of prosecution and harassment, as the case of Zoran Markozanov from the weekly *Zum* shows. He was given a two-month suspended prison sentence and a year's probation on 16 September 2003 for libelling Liberal Party leader Stojan Andov, a former President of the Parliament. He had written an article on 19 October 2001 about the attempted assassination of the former President Kiro Gligorov in 1995 headed "What

Will the New Investigation Come up With?" and saying Andov might be involved in the crime, which other journalists had already suggested.

But Roberto Belicanec tries to stay optimistic. He hopes that the cooperation between the media, politics and NGOs will improve without any serious incidents endangering the important development of press freedom. "We will see if we manage to maintain the bad level of the media in the next two years. If not, there is just pressure from outside necessary to minimise the governmental and political influence." "So if you are asking, are you satisfied with the Macedonian media you can say: 'So, So.'" ■

A Short History of Macedonia

The ancient territory of Macedon included, in addition to the areas of present-day Macedonia, large parts of present-day northern Greece and south-western Bulgaria. This ancient kingdom reached its height during Alexander the Great. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the territory of Macedonia came under the control of the Byzantine Empire in the 6th century. In the late 14th century, Ottoman Turks conquered the territory; it remained under Turkish rule until 1912. However during the Ilinden Uprising of 2 August 1903, Macedonian revolutionaries liberated the town of Krusevo and established the short-lived Republic of Krusevo, which was put down by Ottoman forces after 10 days. After World War I, Macedonia was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War II, Yugoslavia was ruled by Josip Broz Tito, who died in 1980. Conflicts within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) became stronger and stronger. Macedonia was one of the most undeveloped of the Yugoslav republics. Macedonia has been independent since 8 September 1991 as Republic of Macedonia. The country was admitted to the UN in 1993 under the provisional name the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In February 1994, the country was recognised by Russia and the U.S., and it signed a normalisation agreement with Greece in 1995. Former President Kiro Gligorov was seriously injured after an assassination attempt on 3 October 1995. For a lot of international observers, Gligorov is one of the leading politicians in the region, because he managed in his role as president to save his country from a war. Conflicts in Macedonia between Macedonians and Albanians started in February 2001 and ended in August 2001 with the signing of the Ohrid framework agreement. The year 2003 was marked by political events, such as the implementation of the framework agreement and constitutional changes. Macedonian citizens received bilingual passports and identification cards in both the Macedonian and Albanian languages. Albanian was introduced by the Parliament as the country's second official language. In November 2003, the State

Statistical Bureau published data from the 2002 census, according to which the number of ethnic Macedonians decreased (to 1,297,981 or 64.18%) and the number of Albanians in Macedonia increased to 25.17% (the official number of Albanians is 509,083). The census results will continue to stimulate debate in the coming years, because Macedonian opposition parties claim the number is impossible, while ethnic Albanian opposition parties in Macedonia claim the number of ethnic Albanians living in Macedonia is even higher. Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski (president since 2000) died on 26 February 2004 in an aircraft crash near the city of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina, after which Branko Crvenkovski took the position. On 4 November 2004, the US recognised the Republic of Macedonia under its constitutional name. In 2005 Poland rendered a decision to use the Macedonian constitutional name in official communication between the countries, thus adopting the practice of several European countries, including France, Germany, Great Britain and Romania. Conflict with Greece over the country's name remained unresolved in 2005. Greek officials claim Macedonia is the name of Greece's northern province (the capital of which is Thessaloniki), and thus cannot be the name of a neighbouring country. Former Macedonian Interior Minister of the previous VMRO-DPMNE-led government, Ljube Boskovski, was transferred in March 2005 to The Hague from Croatia, where he had been incarcerated on charges unrelated to the ICTY. Earlier, Boskovski had been charged in but managed to flee to Croatia. However, Croatian authorities subsequently arrested Boskovski and charged him with murder. Since years there is a conflict between Macedonian and Serbian Orthodox Church. In the beginning of July 2005 a Macedonian court convicted Bishop Jovan Vraniskovski of inciting religious hatred by holding services for Serbian Orthodox Church worshippers in Macedonia, and sentenced him to 2 1/2 years in prison. He began serving his prison term on 26 July 2005. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica and different NGOs, religious groups and religion representatives world-wide demanded the release of the priest. The first Church-and-People

Assembly was held in Skopje in March 1945, when 300 delegates, clergyman and laymen from the whole of Macedonia declared themselves in favour of the realisation of the aims expressed at Izdeglavje for the formation of an autocephalous Macedonian Orthodox Church with its own church leaders. On 8th May 1946 a new Assembly of the Clergy took place in Skopje in reaction to the fact that decisions passed at the first Church-and-People Assembly had met with no understanding at the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Since representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church were attempting to postpone a solution on the Macedonian Church question, delegates to the second Church-and-People Assembly met in Ohrid on the 4th and 5th October 1958, and passed a decision in favour of the revival of the Archbishopric of Ohrid and of the Constitution of the Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Macedonian Orthodox Church is not recognised by other Orthodox churches. The case of Bishop Jovan, as well as conflict between the Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox Churches has strained relations between Serbia-Montenegro and the Republic of Macedonia. A pre-criminal investigation, conducted by the Vukovar-Srijem County's Prosecution Office in Croatia against Chief of General Staff of the Macedonian Army Miroslav Stojanovski was launched on 25 November 2005, after the Croatian media ran stories suggesting Stojanovski took part in the attack on Vukovar as a member of the former Yugoslav People Army in 1991. The accusing articles were published during his visit to Croatia in November 2005, during the 14th anniversary marking of the fall of Vukovar. Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski voiced optimism that the country would get a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) invitation in 2006, and that it would acquire European Union (EU) candidate-country status, which happened in December 2005. After the Republic of Macedonia received a positive answer from the EU regarding a November questionnaire, the Republic of Macedonia on 15 December 2005 officially became a country with candidate status to join EU.

From the SEEMO Media Handbook

Review

Recent Book Releases

Silvia Huber

Media Markets in Central and Eastern Europe

An Analysis on Media Ownership in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia

Silvia Huber, the scientific director of this study, and her research team present an analysis of media ownership and opinion power in Central and East European Countries. This publication follows the first research “Media in the new EU-member states, Central and Eastern Europe”.

The countries were not chosen by chance: At the time of the investigation, eight out of the ten selected countries recently entered the EU, and Bulgaria and Romania just finished negotiating with the European Union. Besides, the 10 countries researched are post-communist countries.

The research team mainly consisted of natives of the examined countries; some are graduates of the International Journalism Centre (IJZ) of the Danube University Krems (Austria) as well.

Silvia Huber, born in 1970, is department head of the IJZ of the Danube University Krems. She studied Communications Sciences and Roman Languages at Paris-Lodron-University in Salzburg (Austria).

For this research, the ownership structures of 220 dailies, 272 newspapers, 351 magazines, 279 radio stations and 162 television stations were collected. The top media are graphically presented in networks, whose structures are predominantly hierarchical.

In conjunction with media diversity and media concentration, opinion power is discussed in this investigation. By analysing the countries’ media ownership structure, the research team was trying to deliver insight on potential opinion power in the examined countries. Therefore, network analysis was used as an analysis instrument. Network analysis maps and measures the amount and nature of relationships in a network.

News agencies are strong powers in the media system. Huber and her team provide an overview of the ownership structures of these institutions. A lot of news agencies in the examined countries are still under strong political influ-

ence. What is very interesting about Huber’s research is the combination of the media field with network analysis, an instrument that is still pretty uncommon in the media research.

by Anna Stöger

Katrin Voltmer (ed.)

Mass Media and Political Communication in New Democracies

The origins of this publication date back to a workshop on “Political Communication, the Mass Media, and the Consolidation of New Democracies“, held at the European Consortium for Political Research in 2002. The underlying question is why some new democracies succeed in the process of democratisation (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia are here cited as positive examples) while some do not and what the mass media’s impact is in this field.

Following an introduction by Voltmer about the models of mass media’s role in the process of political communication, there are three groups of essays. The first part examines the working environment of journalists in post-totalitarian regimes such as Spain after 1975, post-communist Russia and post-apartheid South Africa. The second part looks at the role mass media plays in electoral processes in Taiwan, Russia and Latin America. The third part, finally, is about audience reactions to political messages in media. This third part is focused almost entirely on Russia.

One aspect which this book is lacking is the exclusion of East or South East European countries from the list of examined countries. This would be less problematic if it were not exactly these countries that are frequently given as examples for a rapid and successful democratisation process – for example in contrast to Russia. It should also be noted that a familiarity with Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (1991) is recommended for any reader of Voltmer’s book since many of the included essays take prior knowledge of Huntington’s work for granted.

by Markus Zuba

Your Excellencies!

Recent SEEMO Protests

Protest Serbia, 16 April 2007

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 at a recent assassination attempt on a Serbian journalist.

According to information before SEEMO, on 14 April at 2.50 a.m., a bomb exploded in front of the apartment window of Dejan Anastasijevic, an investigative reporter and editor for the Belgrade-based weekly magazine Vreme. The explosion destroyed the windows and the bedroom in his ground floor apartment in the centre of Belgrade, damaging the building and cars parked nearby. Fortunately, no one was injured. The assault may have been connected to his investigative reporting. In the last ten years, Anastasijevic has reported about criminal activities in Serbia, as well as war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.

SEEMO strongly condemns this bomb attack, which was clearly an attempt to kill the journalist and his family.

We urge Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to investigate this case and to prevent such cases from occurring in the future, as well as to secure safe working conditions for journalists. Journalists must be able to work freely, without their lives being threatened due to their reporting.

SEEMO further urges the Serbian authorities to bring to justice the killers of Serbian journalist Milan Pantic, shot dead on 11 June 2001 in the town of Jagodina. In addition, the Belgrade authorities must carry out full and proper investigations into the murder of Slavko Curuvija, director and owner of daily Dnevni telegraf and the magazine Evropljanin, shot dead on 11 April 1999, and the unexplained death on 8 April 1994 of journalist Dada Vujasinovic, a freelancer and contributor to the Belgrade magazine Duga.

South East Europe Media Organisation - SEEMO

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-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, news agencies and new media in South East Europe. SEEMO was founded in October 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia.

One of SEEMO's main activities is protecting press freedom. Over 60 per cent 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 more than 12,000 addresses: to leading regional and international media, national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, politicians, and also public persons and institutions. During the last four years, SEEMO has assembled over 3,000 editors-in-chief, media executives, leading journalists and public persons from the region in various meetings. Helping journalists means also furthering their education. Several workshops and seminars were organised in the field of education, especially for investigative reporters and representatives of minority media.

SEEMO regularly publishes deScripto, a quarterly media magazine for South Eastern Europe, which is committed to the enhancement of a climate of critical reflection on media culture and communication, in and among the South East European countries, and South East Europe Media Handbook (SMH), an annual publication covering media developments, which includes selected media contacts.

SEEMO also gives two annual awards for outstanding achievements in the field of media: "Dr Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding" and the SEEMO Human Rights Award "SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe".

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CONCLUSIONS

SEEMO CONFERENCE

PRIVATE NEWS AGENCIES

Vienna, 8 June 2007

The Association of Private News Agencies (APNA), comprised of 17 Members of the wider region of South East Europe (SEE), held a SEEMO meeting in Skopje, which was financed by Austrian Cooperation Eastern Europe, 1 to 3 June 2007, to discuss the situation of private news agencies across the region, including ways of enhancing cooperation. It adopted the following conclusions:

1. APNA calls on the Council of Europe, OSCE, Stability Pact and the local governments in the SEE Region to support Private News Agencies in their efforts to secure equitable access to the market and information sources in their countries.
2. APNA members have agreed to further promote their cooperation.
 - 2.1. APNA members have agreed that each agency should place a joint logo on its Website to facilitate access to original news, photos and other content. APNA will also ask for a domain name for their Website. By 30 June 2007 the members of APNA will be informed about the results of these actions, including proposals for graphic design of the Website.
 - 2.2. APNA members have agreed on news exchange on a daily basis to ensure that trust worthy and professionally made news of the private/independent news agencies is available to as many as possible, in the shortest possible time.
3. APNA members have agreed to promote future economic cooperation and joint a marketing approach.
4. As far as tax rates are concerned, APNA members have agreed to urge the authorities in the countries of the SEE region to ensure that news agencies have same benefits, as it should also be for print media. 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), supports APNA's desire to protect the copy right of the Private News Agencies and will work closely with it to ensure that private news agencies receive greater support.

Preview

Upcoming Events

Knight Foundation to provide funding for digital media ideas

Do you have an idea that uses digital media, involves new forms of news in the public interest, and focuses on a specific geographic community? If you answered yes, then your idea is eligible for funding from the Knight Foundation.

Submission deadline: October 15.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation will award a total of US\$5 million to individuals, organizations or businesses from any country to implement a project that will transform community news.

Applications for the “Knight News Challenge” can be submitted from July 1 until December 31. Winners will be announced in the first half of 2008.

For more information and to register, visit

<http://www.newschallenge.org>

Award to recognize promotion of free society

Recognizing journalists whose work promotes free society is the goal of a competition organized by the International Policy Network (IPN). Entry deadline: June 30.

According to the IPN Web site, the Bastiat Prize for Journalism seeks to promote public awareness of the institutions of free society: limited government, rule of law brokered by an independent judiciary, protection of private property, free markets, free speech, and sound science. Entries can be submitted via the Web, e-mail, fax or by post. Writers can submit up to three articles which do not exceed 4,500 words in total. All submitted articles must have been written and published in English between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

Instituted in honor of 19th-century French philosopher and journalist Frédéric Bastiat, the awards will evaluate entries on the basis of the intellectual content, persuasiveness, the type of publication in which the work originally appeared and the location of the author.

The total prize worth USD \$15,000 will be split among the top three entries.

For more information, visit

<http://www.policynetwork.net/>

Conference: The future of newspaper

12 – 13 September 2007, Cardiff, United Kingdom

The field leading journals Journalism Practice and Journalism Studies are launching a biennial conference, hosted by the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (JOMEC). The conference will focus on the highly contested future of newspapers with contributions from the international community of academics, along with newspaper executives, trade unionists, journalists and regulators.

For more information: www.cardiff.ac.uk

SEE Media Forum Zagreb by WAZ - KAS – SEEMO

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