

deScripto

A Journal of Media in South Eastern Europe

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**“Public is waking up”
Country Focus Croatia**

**Media Reports
on all SEE countries**

Independent Media?

**Ownership & Editorial Freedom
in South-Eastern Europe**

imprint

deScripto

Media in South Eastern Europe
Published quarterly

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Mission Statement

deScripto is committed to the enhance-
ment of a climate of critical reflection
on media culture and communication,
in and among the SEE countries.
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is an independent journal of analysis
and opinion dedicated to the democrat-
isation of the media and the develop-
ment of civic society in the SEE Region.

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

Letter from Editor

Dear Readers,

First of all we are thank-
ful that there has been so
much international interest
in deScripto, and we are
also grateful for the feed-
back, of which there has
been a lot, both supportive
and critical. Above all, we have learned that this
magazine can (and will) become a forum for media-
related issues in South East Europe, and among and
between the countries of that area, if we give voice to
the experts who live and work there. We have also
discovered that a description (sic: deScripto!) of a
complex media landscape needs a complex appro-
ach, in order to know what and how to research. Last
but not least, we have learned to trust in the analyti-
cal competence of professionals at hand. There is no
need to neglect critical self-reflection. In that sense,
we have learned to count even more on the experts
and witnesses from the regions we are discussing as
partners in our mission.

The Winter 2004/05 edition takes a deeper look
at the question of media ownership. Ownership
structures in South East European countries are –
mostly due to the transition of media systems – in
vigorous motion, though foreign investments also
play a big role in this dynamism. These foreign
investors force national and regional markets to con-
front new options and market possibilities, with new
trends in media concentration a certain outcome.
This will have different and sometimes hard conse-
quences for small and big national players alike.

The country focus of this edition concentrates on
Croatia, which is – since being invited to start nego-
tiations leading to European integration – as a whole
very much in motion. There are big challenges to
overcome during this partnership transition between
politics, media, public institutions, and organisa-
tions of civil society. It gives an overview of what is
going on in Croatia's media landscape. I hope you
will gain further insight with this issue, and that it
encourages even more interest in media-related
discourse. With best wishes,

*Thomas A. Bauer, Editor-in-Chief
University of Vienna*



Photo: Thomas A. Bauer

Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers,

The hardest job is
behind us: we have already
published and distributed
the first issue of deScripto.
The first letters from rea-
ders have now come to our
SEEMO office in Vienna,
and from what we see, deScripto was positively
accepted by media professionals, politicians, and
regional experts, as well as by other, so-called “ordi-
nary” readers in South Eastern Europe and outside
of the region. Some of the letters provided useful
general comments and feedback, as well as very use-
ful remarks about concrete articles and book reviews
published in the first issue. For this I would like to
thank those who took the time to send something
in. It helped us a lot in producing this second issue
of deScripto that you have in your hands now.

Personally, I found two letters very important.
Not only because I received them from friends, but
because they are from two people who know the
situation in South Eastern Europe very well, but
have “a distance from the region”. The first is from
Dr. Gisela Rheker, former German Ambassador to
Belgrade and the second from Dr. Wolfgang
Petritsch, former Austrian Ambassador to Belgrade
and later part of the EU Special Envoy for Kosovo,
EU chief negotiator at the Kosovo peace talks in
Rambouillet and Paris, and High Representative for
Bosnia and Herzegovina. Why are these letters so
important? Both ambassadors have spent a part of
their life in South East Europe. And both are now
outside the region. Dr. Rheker is in Germany and
still very active in varying institutions, while Dr.
Petritsch is Austria's ambassador to the United Na-
tions in Geneva. However, both are still interested in
South East European developments. They have not
forgotten the region. That gives me optimism that
South East Europe has not been forgotten in gen-
eral. That's important not only for the future of the
region, but for the future of Europe as a whole!

Herewith, I would like to express my sincere gra-
titude to all readers of deScripto who sent us letters
and again encourage further feedback, comments
and suggestions. They should be sent to our
SEEMO office in Vienna (by e-mail to:
descripto@seemo.org or to SEEMO-IPI, Spiegel-
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be of assistance in preparing the next issue of
deScripto.

*Oliver Vujovic, Publisher
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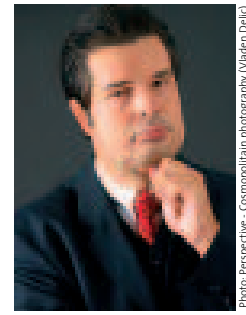


Photo: Perspective - Cosmopolitan photography (Walden Deic)

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Money makes the World go round!
Dossier Ownership from page 5



Aqiring a mind-blowing market, WAZ
Group expands to SEE. page 8



Country Focus Croatia from page 18

deScripto Dossier: **Ownership & (In)Dependence**

Two Schools of Thought

Europeanisation brings new dynamics into the media landscape of young democracies in South East Europe. Developments, options and hopes have become mixed with overwhelming challenges and problematic effects.

by *Thomas A. Bauer*

So it may (and often does) happen that journalists are challenged to research subjects that may not be in the best interests of people or organisations, which are stake or shareholders in the media.

Ownership is the position at which economy, quality, money, quota and public communication values meet and where all those factors come into a difficult crux in a democratic culture

When one considers the question of editorial or/and media independence, one always comes back to – among other contextual topics - the analysis of ownership structures. The media serves both a cultural and economic higher good. Since we are living in societies in which cultural goods - such as open discourse – are distributed through economic (media) organisations, it is plausible for us that ownership of media includes some right to define publicity conditions. That position conflicts, however, with the democratic requirements of editorial freedom and media plurality. Since the media requires two markets to survive economically (audience and advertising), it has to be interested in financially successful management, but at the same time it must irritate the economic status quo because of its duty to research such themes as part of investigative journalism. So it may (and often does) happen that journalists are challenged to research subjects that may not be in the best interests of people or organisations, which are stake or shareholders in the media.

Economically speaking, media ownership is not an easy position. On one hand, media entrepreneurship is encouraged in a very difficult and complex market, and on the other hand, it is the source of independence problems, often negatively impacting freedom, the open media market, and above all, media culture. Ownership is the position at which economy, quality, money, quota and public communication values meet and where all those factors come into a difficult crux in a democratic culture. The most difficult issue of them all is media concentration.

Communication research has shown that concentration processes have at least four variations in all market economy systems: In the first type, the same sorts of media, e.g. several newspapers, join forces to become a newspaper concern (horizontal concentra-

tion). In the second, different types of print media amalgamate (newspapers and magazines, for example) and become a press concern. The third type is usually characterised by an amalgamation among different media types and constitutes a multimedia concern. Communication concerns are the fourth type; they are enterprises that join together media and media-related industries. This systematic description is not only a theoretical system; it shows the threat of growing limitations on opinion plurality. Communications research reveals two different schools of thought. One assumes that media concentration has an effect contrary to the plurality of public opinion, which is the fundament of democracy. Included in this is also an assumption that big media concerns try to maintain the best relations possible to political systems and use their position (as public opinion monopolizers) in order to maintain their market interests.

The other way of thinking is that media companies are that much freer in their reporting the greater their economic independence is. The institution that is not dependent on the commercial market or sponsors is free to research, report and deliver opinions. As well, a strong concern is able to pay higher salaries for better-educated journalists, to employ correspondents and to subscribe to news agencies. US American researchers support this assumption with empirical numbers: the fewer owners a newspaper has, the more subjects it deals with.

The differences between these two schools of thought are enormous. Nevertheless, all the legislative basics regarding ownership (cartel, press subsidy) are related – due to historical tradition – to the first school of thought. The discourse is changing in the face of globalisation. The second school of thought will be confronted by the need to prove societal advantages that justify economic profit strategies. ■

Young Markets, Old Problems

What would happen in a world of stories, if there was only one storyteller left?

Would there be just one version of all stories?

Who would decide what to tell and how to tell it?

by *Stefan Apfl and Mathias Huter*

It is clear the media landscape profits from a diversity of topics, views and especially owners; it is equally clear that it suffers from analogue. According to media theory, in a free and deregulated market, media outlets tend to concentrate.

The media story of Western Europe is also a story of elevated concentration. But what happens to young incompletely developed markets, which in addition are flooded by foreign capital? What happens to the South-East European (SEE) countries? In most of these countries, young democracies are confronted by old problems.

The phenomenon of concentration is particularly observable in the media market. That is because the media industry is an economy of scale, meaning a reduction in the cost per item (unit costs) results from large-scale production, which is realised through operational efficiencies. The high costs of machinery, factories and distribution are spread across a greater number of units as more are produced.

The causes and effects of various kinds of concentrated media ownership slightly differ:

Horizontal concentration (or horizontal integration) is a term used to describe a media group that has two or more media outlets operating in the same field. An outstanding example is Macedonia, where Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) owns the three major daily newspapers with a huge market share (read more about WAZ's engagements in the SEE countries; page 8). The power that rests in one hand endangers pluralism of opinions and diversity. Wide segments of the market are covered, making it difficult for other competitors to be successful in this market.

Vertical media concentration occurs when a media enterprise controls more than one area in the production and distribution of media products. This

results in high entry barriers for new competitors and turns the free market into a closed market bit by bit. There are many examples of investments in SEE countries in which not only newspapers and magazines but also printing houses have been acquired, such as the Austrian Styria company in Croatia.

We speak of diagonal or cross-media concentration when a supplier - a publisher or a broadcaster - also moves into the field of other media types. In

Different kinds of investors have varying main interests for their exposure in media outlets.



“Media concentration often leads to recycling of journalistic articles and other materials, as well as a worsening of journalistic working conditions”, says Beata Klimkiewicz

Romania, two persons hold shares in a TV station, a radio network and weekly magazines, as well as in a news agency and national press distributor. Similar examples are in other countries. In cases of cross-media ownership, owners have the indisputable potential of controlling and influencing published content and therewith a major possibility of setting agendas.

Different kinds of investors have varying main interests for their exposure in media outlets. On the one hand, the media industry is interesting for investors who own major companies in industries other than the media industry. They are attracted by the possibility of presenting themselves and their companies in a positive way, and above all, by big profits that can be made, especially in under-developed media markets.

“The less a market is developed, the bigger it’s potential is on the one hand, but on the other, the bigger the risk,” explains Horst Pirker, CEO of the Austrian Styria Media Group, which is intensively expanding in Slovenia and Croatia.

The media market often attracts investors with a political affiliation; because of the power they gain to transmit their views through the ownership of media outlets.

Zeljko Mitrovic, owner of the highly profitable Pink radio and television network was associated some six years ago with the party led by Slobodan Milosevic’s wife Mira Markovic.

The effects of media concentration

“Media concentration often leads to recycling of journalistic articles and other materials, as well as a worsening of journalistic working conditions”, says Beata Klimkiewicz, assistant professor at the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication in Krakow. But she also points out good effects “connected with a strengthened position of publishers or broadcasters against pressure from politicians.”

Another problem regarding media concentration is unknown ownership. The specific challenge that researchers encounter in various SEE countries is obtaining exact data on ownership; data on second-level ownership relations is extremely hard to obtain. Hidden concentration because of sleeping partners is even more dangerous, as it is essential in journalism to know about the owner interest of each media outlet.

“There might be hidden ownership relations across the media sector that we do not know of,” says Tarik Jusic, executive director of the Media Center Sarajevo.

On the long term, multiple SEE countries are tending towards joining the European Union (EU), which still has its own problems with media concentration.

Article 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights says: “The freedom and pluralism of the media shall be respected.”

A look into the EU’s media market suffices to show how reality beyond well-formulated charter phrases actually works. Countries like Italy and Austria suffer from a highly concentrated media landscape.

In fact, the SEE countries are even more endangered as their (media) markets are young, and as yet only partially developed and engaged. In these cases, there is even more need for strict market rules and regulations. Otherwise, a free media market gradually becomes a closed one, with little chance for new competitors to enter.

Horst Pirker is convinced, “concentrated ownership is a hazard to pluralism and democracy. On the

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library of 47,000 vols and 2,400 periodicals and documents;

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publications: OSI-Aktuell (newsletter), Österreichische Osthefte (quarterly), Schriftenreihe des Österreichischen Ost- und Südosteuropa-Instituts, Wiener Osteuropastudien, Atlas of Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

other hand, it is better to have a few companies involved in media concentration than only one.” In an interview with deScripto, Pirker argues for a retroactive legal limitation: “In my opinion, de-concentration laws, if they are valid for everyone, are not a bad idea from the point of democracy and society.”

Big Change

It was a big change for SEE countries when political systems of the late 1980s and early 1990s were displaced by democratic governments. Previously, many media outlets had been under the control of totalitarian states, whose main interest was having control over published content. Not because of financial interests, but because of propaganda. As a result, in most of the SEE countries, private people were legally prevented from founding media outlets.

When the political system changed, the process of adopting new media legislation turned out to be long and complex. Legislators lacked vision (and experience) in their development of useful media regulation and media ownership laws.

“As a result, the opinion that the newly acquired freedom of expression should not be limited by restrictive media legislation prevailed in most of these countries. Public debates were based on the assumption that media legislation was not necessary at all,” says Sandra Basic Hrvatin, author of the book *Media-Ownership*, of the earlier situation.

Consequently, most countries did not intervene in the media sphere until the effects of an unregulated market became manifest.

“Unfortunately, this intervention came too late,” Hrvatin states.

Since there was little help from the European Community at that time, many South East European (SEE) Countries enhanced legislation based on that existing in West European countries, without adapting it adequately to fit their specific situations. Permanent reforms of media legislation in those countries were the result.

To improve the current situation of concentrated ownership in SEE countries, Hrvatin and her co-authors make recommendations: media legislation should include provisions stipulating restrictions on concentration and media ownership data should be made publicly accessible. The recommendations also include active intervention by the state with the aim of ensuring media pluralism as well as regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms to ensure editorial independence and prevent the abuse of journalism by media owners who only want to advance their political and economical interests.

Governments that are expected to anticipate such problematic phenomena are usually addicted to major media companies. Yet it is up to them to construct the public media sphere. ■

Interview

Looking for Foreign Money

SEEMO’s Oliver Vujovic on the Role of Western Investors in South Eastern Europe

deScripto: What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of foreign capital investment in the media sector in South Eastern Europe?

Vujovic: The big investors coming from abroad play, first of all, a very positive role. They come with money, technology and knowledge. Second, and also important, is that they bring the West European way of thinking, which is also very positive.

One of the problems is that the investors are buying in particular yellow press, or, let’s say, papers that often lack a certain level of journalistic quality.

SEE media companies are looking for Western investors, is that what you say?

Of course. The SEE economy is still very weak and the price of a newspaper is quite high in comparison to the people’s level of income. Advertising, on the contrary, is cheap, so there is little money coming in, but the level of the production costs is quite the same as in Western Europe. Without money from outside, a lot of media companies would not be able to survive. But owners could play a more important role, supporting also more quality papers.

Why should foreign investors be interested in low-circulation, high-quality papers? They are interested in earning money..

Yes, but think in the long-term. In the long-term, it is very important for investors to ensure the democratic and economic

development of the countries they put their money in. That is why it would be important to support those voices that are helping democratisation to go forward.

There are examples of the important role critical media have played in pushing democratic development all over SEE. Unfortunately, most of Western Europe’s media groups do not look further than the next day.

Without money from outside, a lot of media companies would not be able to survive.

Aren’t you concerned about the ongoing concentration in the region through investment by foreign companies. Couldn’t that lead to a decrease in media diversity?

Well, that is an international tendency, so it is nothing special for South Eastern Europe.

One of the problems we experience is that when a couple of newspapers are in the hands of a single company, they start to get closer and closer in style and content.

Each owner will have its own standards, and it seems quite clear that all the media belonging to a certain group have the same standard of journalism.

Talking of standards. Did new owners bring in some kind of “Western” standards for journalism.

Some West European publishers set up westernised standards for reporting, editorial management etc., while others leave it the way it was; the specific regional way of journalism and media management. ■

Acquiring a Mind-blowing

In Germany everyone is talking about the economic recession and the crisis of the media market. Advertising revenue and circulation are decreasing and many papers have to tighten their belts. Meanwhile, the Media Group Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) is constantly growing.

*“In Macedonia, they run a virtual monopoly.”
Aidan White, IFJ.*

They are acquiring South Eastern Europe (SEE) and investing billions. How does that work? And why the Balkans?

“First, it is an enormous growth region,” says Markus Beermann, who is in charge of WAZ’s operations outside Germany, “and second, it is just a mind-blowing market there. It’s full of enthusiasm, pioneer spirit and a lot of ideas.”

Today, WAZ owns several print media in Serbia, Croatia, and Hungary, as well as one daily in Montenegro and one in Romania.

In Macedonia and Bulgaria they are already in a leading market position. Many observers criticise the dominant market position of the WAZ in SEE. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), for example, has stated that pluralism of voices is endangered when a majority of daily press publications are owned by one single company.

WAZ plays monopoly

“In Macedonia, they run a virtual monopoly,” says Aidan White from the IFJ. The WAZ owns controlling interests in three daily newspapers of the country: Dnevnik, Utrinski Vesnik and Vest. Together, these three newspapers had a market share of almost 90 percent in 2003, according to the Macedonian Monopoly Authority, which had researched the WAZ-entrance into the Macedonian market in 2004, and approved it.

A similar market situation can be seen in Bulgaria, where the WAZ entered the market in 1996. The two largest dailies, Trud and 24 Casa, and the largest weekly, 168 Casa, are part of the WAZ family.

In past years the group has been involved in a

series of legal battles with the Competition Protection Commission (CPC) of Bulgaria. But as in Macedonia, WAZ managed to emerge as winner. WAZ has a share of more than 63 percent of the total advertising revenue in Bulgaria, according to the CPC.

The ultimate WAZ-model of becoming market-leader

How can one company have a leading position in so many press markets? Branislava Opranovic, journalist at the Serbian daily Dnevnik from Novi Sad, which is also owned by WAZ, says: “For many papers foreign investment is the only chance to survive, due to the very difficult market situation.”

But why can foreign capital ensure growth where regional owners fail? It has to do with the so called “WAZ-model”: they buy several print-media products in the same region that have diverse editorial policies and political approaches. Often, they buy or build printing houses also. The papers’ editorial departments stay independent and separate, but the management, including distribution and advertising for all of the titles, is done by one single company. So they can offer relatively cheap joint-advertising packages with great coverage for all their regional papers.

“That has the effect,” says Beermann, “that advertisers only deal with one professional representative instead of many.” This strategy was first applied in the Ruhrgebiet, a region of Germany, in the 1970s. It has also been very successful in Austria for more than ten years, and recently WAZ has practiced that strategy in Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia.

However, many experts, like the Slovenian Mirovni Institut, see one danger in the WAZ’s engagement in Macedonia: that the WAZ will attract most of the advertising money and slowly starve all the other print media.

Indeed, the market share of WAZ’s daily competi-

The German Media Company WAZ and their dominant role in South Eastern Europe

by Wolfgang Luef

Market

tors in Macedonia plunged from 16 percent in 2002 to 11 percent in the first six months of 2003. Beerman does not regard that as a problem: "Indeed, we have a strong market position in Macedonia, but only because our journalists do the best work – independently. If any competitor can do it better, he will still hold his own in the market."

In 2004 the situation has changed since new daily newspaper Vreme, which is not owned by WAZ, appeared on the market.

Business interests vs. editorial independence

The WAZ claims to be more interested in circulation and advertising revenue than in editorial policy. In fact, there are constant accusations about editori-

al influences of the WAZ. Journalists that claim influence often want to stay anonymous. So the criticism is expressed by NGOs and even from competitive papers.

Many journalists working for the WAZ's papers contradict: "Nothing has changed since the WAZ

"If any competitor can do it better, he will still hold his own in the market."

Marcus Beermann, WAZ



“We published articles about it, and the WAZ did not care.”

has interests in our paper,” says Zana Bozinovska from Dnevnik. Goran Mihajlovski, Editor-in-Chief at Vest, also reports: “The WAZ does not influence us in any kind.”

However, some international organisations see editorial influence especially in cases where WAZ’s business intentions may be affected. IFJs Schroeder reports that Macedonian journalists claimed that

not practicing good journalism. “Articles have to be double-checked and re-checked. Sometimes, journalists in SEE just write what they hear, or even worse: what they get bribed for by someone. We do not tolerate that.”

Opranovic thinks that along with the WAZ-investment came more professionalism into their paper: “We have increased our circulation and our number of pages. WAZ also promotes young journalists in Serbia.”

Schroeder puts this into perspective: “Indeed, they have helped developing journalistic standards. But on the whole, much more would be necessary.”

The WAZ replies that they are the only major player in SEE that has committed to the OSCE-standards for freedom of press. Roland Brunner from the Swiss organisation *medienhilfe* discounts these standards cynically as “the Sunday sermon that heralds another week full of sins.”

It’s all about the money

Another matter that is often criticised is the personnel policy of the WAZ. In Macedonia they selected Srgjan Kerim, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, as the executive manager. Bodo Hombach, an executive Board Member, is also a former politician and former head of Stability Pact for SEE.

Observers fear that politicians as media managers would get in the way of editorial independence, or just would not have comprehensive understanding of the media and how they work. Schroeder from the IFJ adds: “They have even installed bankers as media-managers. Is this a sensitive personnel policy?”

“It’s certainly the criticism that helps us on,” says Beermann, “but we pay the journalists adequately and we inform the people well.” For him, success means primarily market shares and circulation: “Critique aside, one thing is clear: The best will be the market-leader.” The IFJ strongly criticises this attitude. They fear a “sacrifice of journalistic standards to maximise revenue,” says White.

But maximising revenue does not have to mean strict belt-tightening for the concerned papers. Mihajlovski reports, that their infrastructure has been generally modernised since WAZ’s accusation. Bozinovska tells that many journalists felt apprehensions about rationalisation of jobs. “But everyone stayed.”

And what about the role of the WAZ in SEE in the future? “In some countries our growth is inhibited by monopoly laws, but in others we want to make further investments,” says Beermann. “We do not aim to become monopolists in every country. But we aim to constantly provide good media products everywhere we can.” ■



they were not allowed to write articles about the research of the Macedonian Monopoly Authority concerning the WAZ. According to Mihajlovski, this is not true. “We published articles about it, and the WAZ did not care.”

Advancing journalistic standards: Less than necessary?

Beermann admits that the WAZ may interfere when the perception exists that their journalists are

Top: WAZ Building, Essen, Germany.
Bottom: Entrance of WAZ Building.
Photo: deScripto

Foreign Ownership in SEE Region

An Overview by *Daniela Süssenbacher*

Countries-Focus: *To sum up the SEE media situation is quite difficult. It is extremely variable according to each special cultural setting. It is not very easy to get actual information, although different studies have been written during the last few years. Most countries lack transparency of ownership shares. The SEE media market is characterised by transition and change, so the text below is an attempt to map some actual information. The big European media concerns are mainly targeting the print media sector, while American media organisations focus on the electronic media sector.*

Important foreign owners (FO)

Ownership regulation by organisations and/or special law (OR/L)

ALBANIA

A growing media market under the law of media self-regulation.

FO: Italian ownership in print media and TV (Edisud JSC). Ownership shares between 15 and 45 per cent on titles.

OR/L: National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT). No limitation at all regarding foreign ownership.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The media market is extremely over-saturated but still underdeveloped. Neither significant cases of foreign investment nor cases of media concentration.

OR/L: The problem is very little interest in BH market.

BULGARIA

There is a lack of transparency in licensing of broadcast media and allegations of corruption. German-originated media domination.

FO: Foreign corporate monopoly composed of German print (WAZ - bTV, Eurocom) as well as American (News Corporation - Murdoch) and Greek TV broadcasters (antenna Group - Nova TV). Ownership shares between 60 per cent and 100 per cent, most titles close to 100 per cent foreign-owned.

OR/L: Radio and Television Act, Council for Electronic Media (CEM), Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC), Union of Bulgarian Journalists (Podkrepa).

CROATIA

Media ownership information is one of the most hidden types of data. Germany is a big player although there is no foreign concentration.

FO: German (WAZ, Burda, RTL), Finnish (Sanoma Magazines International) and Austrian (Styria Media Group) owners. Europa Press Holding Company (50 per cent owned by WAZ) and RTL (bought one of the official channels - HRT.) Ownership shares between 20 per cent - 65 per cent by title.

OR/L: The Law on the Media, Council for Radio and Television (regulation and supervision), Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (TUCJ).

CYPRUS

Parallel existing media markets caused by linguistic and cultural diversity. A distinct lack of media development. International satellite television plays an important role.

FO: As a centre for international media agencies it is difficult to draw a distinction.

OR/L: Law on Print Press, Radio and Television Stations Law.

GREECE

Television is dominating the press. Print media sector is highly concentrated.

FO: Actual information not available

OR/L: Greek Constitution, National Council for Radio and Television (NCRTV), legal limits to concentration of ownership.

HUNGARY

Foreign ownership is a big factor in the whole media landscape. The focus is on the print media sector (the national newspaper market stood in 2001 at 83 per cent). Problematic media situation.

FO: German (Bertelsmann, Axel Springer, WAZ), Finnish

(Sanoma), Swiss (Ringier owns one of the three biggest dailies 100 per cent) owners. National channels owned by Scandinavian Broadcasting System (SBS) and Bertelsmann. Ownership shares between 50 per cent - 100 per cent by title.

OR/L: Anti-Concentration Provisions and Special Ownership Rules in the Broadcasting Act of 1996 as well as in the Competition Act of 1996 - no effective laws to regulate foreign ownership.

KOSOVO

Media pluralism with tendency to overstock. The media market is still missing economic orientation.

FO: NGOs

OR/L: New Law on Broadcasting, Independent Media Commission.

MOLDOVA

A media landscape divided in sub-markets but far from pluralism. Sudden appearance and fall of media outlets. A market without economic orientation.

FO: Traditional links with eastern (post-Soviet) partners. Mainly Rumanian and Russian media organisations.

OR/L: Press Law, Audio-visual Law.

MONTENEGRO

A media landscape characterised by concentration, cross-media ownership and monopoly (six major media groups).

FO: German (WAZ - 50 per cent of the Daily Press Company and one daily, Vijesti) and Serbian owner (Pink TV). Ownership shares about 50 per cent by title.

leader), Germany (WAZ, Springer and Burda), French (Lagardère Group), Finnish (Sanoma) and US-American (Viacom, Walt Disney, Time Warner, UPC, CME, SBS) owners. Ownership shares between 40 per cent and 80 per cent by titles.

OR/L: Audiovisual Law, Media Monitoring Agency (MMA).

SERBIA

Media ownership is continuously changing but concentration is highest in the big media (Blic, Politika, Dnevnik).

FO: German (WAZ, Bertelsmann), Swiss (Ringier) and US-American (Media development Loan Fund Inc MDLF) owners. Ownership shares between 49 per cent and 100 per cent (Blic) by title.

OR/L: Broadcasting Law, Public Information Law and Law on Telecommunications.

SLOVENIA

Foreign ownership is present under the control of strong local players. The foreign focus is on magazines.

FO: German (Burda, Motorpresse), Swedish (Bonnier) and Austrian (Styria Verlag) owners. Ownership shares range between 49 per cent and 80 per cent by title.

OR/L: Mass Media Act adopted in 1994 (stakes in a media enterprise cannot exceed 33 per cent). Ownership amounting to 20 per cent must be reported. Restrictions only exist in the area of cross-ownership.

TURKEY

FO: Actual information not available

OR/L: Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (TGS); Television and Radio Law 4756. Restrictions on ownership (Turkish or foreign) but not less than 51 per cent equity by Turkish citizens.



MACEDONIA

Parallel media markets caused by linguistic and cultural diversity. Electronic media still play an important role.

FO: Strong position in print media market by German WAZ (three dailies). Ownership shares between 50 per cent - 100 per cent by title.

OR/L: Law on Broadcasting Activity but still no law on mass media.

OR/L: Association of Young Journalists, Media Law, Broadcasting Law, Law on the Transformation of State Television into Public Service Television - no effective laws to regulate foreign ownership.

ROMANIA

Extensive liberation and privatisation tendencies in the media sector. Media concentration a clear tendency. Foreign ownership across the entire media landscape.

FO: Swiss (Ringier as leading foreign publisher and market

Sources: Adrien Collin / Granville Williams: Eastern Empires - Foreign Ownership in Central and Eastern European Media: Ownership, Policy Issues and Strategies

A Step Back

Dimitris Charalambis, Vice President of the Greek National Council of Radio and Television on Media Ownership in Greece

In Greece recently is running a huge debate on ownership transparency. The government decided for a legislation which provokes strong contradiction at the side of European minded experts. One of them is in the same time the most prominent one, Professor Dimitris Charalambis, Vice president of the National Council of Radio and Television. In almost all relevant Greek media the public could follow the debate going on since a couple of months. Beyond a popular discussion the academic discourse on media ownership has to argue on a more sophisticated level.

That is why deScripto invited Prof. Charalambis to deliver an outline on the discussion out of a political-scientific point of view:

The emergence of private radio and television stations during a period when special legislation was not yet in existence (1989) has created an unusual situation in the development of the media market, with a great number of stations operating at the national, regional and local levels. State radio and television still broadcasts over three TV stations and five radio stations. There are no cable operators in Greece and the penetration of digital television is still restricted.

The 1975/1986 Greek Constitution contains two articles concerning the media, added during its modification in April 2001: Article 14 deals with the freedom of expression and is related especially to the press, while Paragraph 9 focuses on the promotion of transparency and pluralism in the media sector (press and broadcasting).

What Law Says

Article 15 Paragraph 2 says that radio and television shall be under the direct control of the state and defines both the competent authority (ESR) and the purpose of this control.

In the radio sector, the licensing procedure foreseen by law no. 2328/1995 has only been completed

in the Attika region, where 35 stations are licensed. The law will nevertheless to a large extent be applied to all other stations considered legal today (defined as those that were operational on 1 November 1999). However, the precarious situation at the moment may be seen as contributing to the creation of a climate characterised by 'non-regular' developments in the market.

Encrypted radio and television services have a legal framework for market organisation through law no. 2644/1998, but in actuality only a few digital satellite services have been legally licensed.

In the broadcasting sector, legislation dealing with media ownership aggregation (particularly new legislation) can

sometimes have an impact on the market definition of the media.

Article 14 Paragraph 9 of Greek Constitution (1975/1986/2001) states that ownership of more than one electronic information media of the same type is prohibited.

This rather strict regulation follows an approach different to that taken by other European countries (the legislation of which often focuses on the 'real' power in the market of each media), and contributes to what is already considered a negative climate by many media companies.

The Greek legislation bans companies from owning, for example, more than one television or radio station.

In Greece, the main media operators use free-to-air, terrestrial television. The size of the area to be covered has led to three categories of broadcasters: the national broadcaster, the regional broadcaster (covering in general an area comprised of more than two regions) and the local broadcaster (maximum of two regions).

Private radio stations exist in only one category: local (one region) radio stations, which can distribu-

The precarious situation at the moment may be seen as contributing to the creation of a climate characterised by 'non-regular' developments in the market.

ad personam



Dimitris Charalambis

is Professor of Political Science at the University of Athens, Department of Communication and Mass Media and

Vice President of the National Council of Radio and Television

Recent publications:

Democracy and Globalisation. Human rights and Modernity: Real Abstraction and Reason, Athens, 1998 (ed.) Recent Social Trends in Greece 1960-2000, McGills-Queens, Montreal Canada, 2004

to Statism

te programming from other stations for a maximum of only five hours a day.

To Overcome a Discrepancy

In the name of transparency and clean relations between politics and economy, Article 14 Paragraph 9 forbids main shareholders of media companies (according to the Media Law 3021/2002, a main shareholder is a person or a company that owns at least five per cent of total shares) from being main shareholders (also set at five per cent) of companies that are active in public construction or public services (using public tenders).

This includes not only the shareholder in question (the law requires shareholders to be named), but also his or her spouse and relatives. With Media Law 3021/2002, the PASOK government (1993 – 2004) has tried to overcome discrepancies between this article of the constitution and a) human and civil rights guaranteed in the Greek Constitution itself and b) the European Treaty, the European Directives and the Decisions of the European Court (fundamental rights and provisions for the free movement of people, capital, goods and services).

According to the old law, if a spouse or a relative could prove his or her financial independence, then this person could have shares in the media, or in a company active in public construction or public service.

But according to the new law, which was approved by a parliamentary majority on 24 January, with supporting votes from the ruling party (the conservative New Democracy Party – ND, which won the March 2004 elections) the main shareholder of a media company and his or her spouse and relatives are banned from cross-ownership in companies active in public construction or public service or other media companies (the ban applies not only to Greek companies, but also to foreign and European companies!).

The European Commission reacted negatively to the new law, and Greek academics publicly criticised

it. Under this law, for example, a main shareholder can either be active in a state construction business or in the media, but not both (the same for his or her spouse and all relatives).

According to the new law, spouses and relatives are automatically “front men” (a view which goes against the fundamental rights of personal autonomy, self-determination and human dignity).

In addition to this, a main shareholder, according to the new law, is anyone owning even one per cent of the shares or more.

These developments are a step back towards traditional Greek statism: the old relationship between the market and the state, in which the state tries to control the market.

Freedom That is Less Valid?

A crucial argument presented by the conservative government is that freedom of expression and freedom of information are less valid for television and radio.

According to this argument, frequencies are a public good; so broadcasting is nothing more than a public service that the state forwards to private companies.

Thus the state remains the regulator (through the ESR) and the controller of the broadcasting sector. This is viewed as being similar to the privatisation of other services, such as public transportation or garbage collection.

The government has tried with this law to fragment big private enterprises and companies (construction is the main industrial sector in Greece) and to ensure the power of the media (both written and broadcast) will be limited, so that the entire media sector will become more dependant on the state.

A law on media concentration is still expected (concentration is already much lower in Greece than in other European countries), and it is believed the intention of government will be to create even more dependency.

These developments are a step back towards traditional Greek statism: the old relationship between the market and the state, in which the state tries to control the market. That was generally the goal of Greek conservatives and also seems to be the main intent of right and left populist politics in Greece. ■

ad ESR

Ethniko Symvoulío Radiotileorasis

(ESR = National Council of Radio and Television).

Established in 1989 as an independent authority, the ESR has changed its legal status three times. Only recently, following the publication of law no. 2863/2000, has the ESR been attributed the power to grant licences and impose sanctions on broadcasters infringing the legislation in force (advertising, production rules etc).

Since 2001, the ESR has been recognised as the only competent body with regard to the preservation of the following: pluralism, respect for the value of the human being, protection of children and youths, and transparency of the economic elements of media companies, as stipulated by the constitution. Its decisions are no longer subject to supervision relating to compliance with legislation, as was the case until 2000 (the minister of the Press and the Mass Media was in charge).

The independent authority enjoys a particular legal status attributed to it by the Greek Constitution, and consists of seven members who perform their duties with personal and functional independence.

Optional Accessory

Just a Footnote in Media Jungle: Editorial Independence

By *Solmaz Khorsand*

Publishers know very well about the miserable security of the working conditions for journalists and the unilateral dependence relation

Many newspapers claim one particular word on their head: “independent”. But in the fewest cases this word accords to the editorial reality. In many SEE countries – a general overview is difficult because of their heterogeneity – the economic situation, the weakness of the Trade Unions and the lack respect of basic rights is a perfect hotbed for owners to meddle in the editorial content. Publishers know very well about the miserable security of the working conditions for journalists and the unilateral dependence relation. “They(journalists) think first about if they gonna have a job the next day before they gonna have an argument with the publisher about the content in the particular article”, substantiates Oliver Money-Kyrle from International Federation of Journalists to deScripto.

In 2003 the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (SNH) organised an anonymous polling among 1200 journalists – just 234 dared to answer the polling question on how free Croatian journalists feel. In reply to the question who exerts the most influence 45 per cent of the editors answered the owner, 27 per cent stated politicians. As a method of influence the main part (44 per cent) described bad working conditions, financial pressure and as a consequence self censorship. “What strikes us the most is the fact that polling questions touch issues which journalists in civilised countries and civilised media discuss openly in line with the provisions of the editorial statutes. Journalists in Croatia do not dare to talk about these issues even with a piece of polling paper, afraid that editors would recognise them by handwriting,” complains the SNH Secretary Marinka Boljkovac-Borkovic. After Money-Kyrle’s estimations the worst conditions concerning editorial interference and pressure in the Balkan region tend to be local media, where local newspapers and radio stations are quite heavily controlled by local government or used to be owned by it. But also the local media owned by wealthy businessmen with political ambitions potentially endanger the press freedom. The problem is media are seen “as a tool of influence, helping the owner to accomplish other commercial or even political interest,” explains Manuela Preoteasa from online media EurActiv in Romania the situation in her country. This (mis)use of media is a general practice among many media owners, even among multinational

companies as the WAZ or the Swiss group Ringier. It works after the “triangle”- pattern: media channel - public authority - other business. “The media owner offers “friendly coverage” to the (politically controlled) public authority which grants access to public procurement contract to the other business of the media owner,” says Ioana Avadani, secretary of the Centre of Independent Journalism in Romania. She guesses that the main difference between foreign and locally owned publications was that people working for the foreign-owned ones dare to protest publicly. “I am not aware of such protest from publications owned by Romanians. But the recent scandals at the newspapers owned by Ringier and WAZ proved that nobody is invulnerable to pressure.”

Although experts concede multinational companies advantages like a higher credibility, stability and also independence, there have been in the last time some cases of editorial interference, like in the case of the Romanian broadsheet Evenimentul Zilei (EvZ). Since the takeover of the government critical EvZ in 2003 by Ringier, the editorial staff has had problems with the owner on the editorial line of the newspaper. “We have different views of journalistic quality and the organisational order in the editorial office,” says Silvia Lepiarczyk, responsible for the South European Countries in Ringier. In December 2004 Ringier replaced the editor-in-chief Dan Tuturica. “I think Ringier drop away Dan Tuturica, because they want to change the editorial line of the newspaper, they probably want to make a tabloid or a semi-tabloid of Evenimentul Zilei,” worries Dan Tapalaga, the head of the political department of the newspaper. Tapalaga – who left the newspaper voluntarily just some days after Ringier’s decision – does not want to put the controversial action in a political context but he estimates that the former ruling party still has power to impose such changes in EvZ. Lepiarczyk justifies the replacement of Tuturica by agreed measures, which have not been fulfilled by him or even communicated to the editors. Despite different nationalities, political ideologies and economical interest, media owners around the world seem to have one strategy in common: Editorial interference. Their motives are various, the consequences are the same: journalists lose direct or indirect their jobs and media products their reliability and quality. ■

Despite different nationalities, political ideologies and economical interest, media owners around the world seem to have one strategy in common: Editorial interference.

Corporate Pressure

Albanian Newspapers Controlled by Business Interests

By Endri Fuga

While Albanians may lack many things, they certainly do not have any shortage of political parties, or of newspapers, which are in abundance. In a country of only three million people, there are more than 70 parties and 20 dailies.

One might think that Albanians simply read too much, which would explain everything. But the figures show something different. Out of the four most popular newspapers, only top-ranked Shekulli claims a significant circulation, selling around 24,000 copies per day. The other three, namely Panorama, Korrieri and Gazeta Shqiptare sell closer to 15,000 a day.

Considering this very low circulation, one wonders perhaps if all the papers exist due to high profit. Maybe though not so many people buy newspapers, those who do pay a lot. But again, this turns out not to be true. Out of the 10 most popular dailies, half of them cost only 15 cents per copy.

The two most popular ones, Shekulli and Panorama, cost this much, while most intellectuals agree that the more expensive Korrieri and Gazeta Shqiptare, at 30 cents per copy, are the most reliable newspapers.

Advertising does not really help since the rates are too low, far below those elsewhere in the region. Most newspaper publishers admit their publications' monthly balance is negative.

So the question is, how do the dailies survive?

Most media analysts are concerned about this unexplained boom in daily newspapers. To most of them, it appears that this news industry is not market driven, but rather influenced by interests, which usually means corporate interests.

The fact is that behind most of these daily newspapers, that cost so little and are bought by so few, there are big corporations. That is how these "below cost" dailies are financed and how they survive.

Does it matter? Two main problems arise: unfair competition and corporate dependence.

In the spring of 2004, when the Albanian Legislature started formulating a special law dealing with print media, two MPs asked parliament to introduce an amendment that would end once and for all newspapers' dependence on business interests. The amendment would set a floor price for dailies and new rules for those owning media. This shift in

function was regarded by many in the media as dangerous. In fact, newspapers have changed their goal from informing the public to pressuring the government, in effect taking the role of lobbyists. Thus a new phenomenon has been invented: newspapers have become a "stick and carrot" tool.

Obligated to Company Goals

Big corporations own newspapers. In most cases those owned by such large companies sell very well because they are cheap, the cheapest in the market. Clearly, these newspapers and their owners are not interested in the true purpose of journalism, but rather in serving their own interests by running a media business at a profit. Whenever the parent corporation needs something from government, its medium writes nice editorials and carries extensive coverage of the executive's activities. And of course, the opposite, whenever the corporate body needs to pressure the government, its medium reflects the same spirit.

Nikolle Lesi, owner of Koha Jone, one of the higher-priced Albanian dailies, feels pessimistic about the current media situation in the country, and believes that the below-cost dailies have ruined the whole newspaper industry. "The competition is simply unfair," he said in an interview for Gazeta Shqiptare. "As long as corporate interests are mixed with those of the pure newspapers, media will never be a fourth independent power."

But those businessmen who also own media think differently. Most of them regard the new law as a further limitation to freedom of media.

Koco Kokedhima, owner of Shekulli, the lowest-priced and best selling daily in Albania, believes that the introduction of the new law allows the Albanian prime minister to influence and possibly shut down those media that are considered truly independent. "It's only a trick," Kokedhima argues, "a trick to control public opinion, and it is all done just months before the coming general elections."

The parliamentary debate will continue for several months, according to the head of the Parliamentary Commission on the Media, Musa Ulqini, while round tables with interest groups will be held in February. International partners such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe have been asked to assist during this important process. ■

It appears that this news industry is not market driven, but rather influenced by interests, which usually means corporate interests.

A new phenomenon has been invented: newspapers have become a "stick and carrot" tool.

A Question of Transparency

Public Broadcasting in transition - Editorial independence in Romanian and Slovenian public television

by Hannes Goegele

Since European audio-visual policy has highlighted editorial independence as a crucial contribution to freedom of the media, access to public information and transparency has improved. But still both EU applicants and member states face significant problems, evident in the cases of Romania and Slovenia.

On a European level, audio-visual media policy is generally based on common values: media pluralism, freedom of expression, the protection of minors and the promotion of a multi- and intercultural identity.

Only a few days prior to the release of Romanian presidential polls in December 2004, Romanian Television (TVR1) reporter Alexandru Costache took it upon himself to expose public editorial interference at the station. In a letter to the daily *Evenimentul zilei*, Costache stated that TVR1 is connected by “an umbilical cord, not just to the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD), but also to Prime Minister Adrian Nastase”.

On a European level, audio-visual media policy is generally based on common values: media pluralism, freedom of expression, the protection of minors and the promotion of a multi- and intercultural identity. In the realm of public broadcasting, the European Union’s (EU) key ideology is the commitment of governments to their citizens to safeguard journalistic independence and plurality.

Romania is due to join the EU in 2007. The country’s Audio-visual Law was adopted in 2002 and is mostly in harmony with EU regulations. But, still some problems are in the practice.

Manuela Preoteasa from EurActiv Romania reports: “Public television has internal codes, which have been used against journalists: for instance, journalists are obliged to first address station management before speaking publicly about issues concerning the institution. According to a recent change, employees who speak to the press will be fired immediately.”

Another experienced TVR1 journalist*, who wants to remain anonymous due to a binding confidentiality contract imposed by the employer, empha-

sises: “Media are not independent; but as a result of history and social traditions, journalists in Eastern Europe do not miss a broader freedom.”

Romanian Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) stated in a recent press release that “lack of debate about the election is worrying, since television is the main news source of news for 73 per cent of Romanians.”

According to “Media Ownership and its Impact on Media Independence and Pluralism”, published by Slovenian Peace Institute in 2004, Romanian public TV channels reach 99 per cent of the Romanian population.

The unnamed Romanian journalist calls this fatal connection between an insufficiency of critical and investigative reports on government activities, and the broad reach of public broadcasting an “elegant manipulation: on paper, government officials respect the law, but they use every public event for their own propaganda, and as long as their media presence is below two minutes, it does not count as such.”

It results in great difficulty in closing this back door: “There are a few heroes in our working field, but most of us need to follow the rules of superficial journalism in order to survive in a competitive and corrupt labour market,” the Romanian journalist states.

Slovenia acceded to the EU in May 2004. One year before accession, the country adjusted and coordinated its Mass Media Act in order to address controversial issues such as ownership and high media concentration and “fulfil European directives, such as Television Without Frontiers”, states Marko

* Name is known to the Editor

Milosavljevic from the Department of Journalism at Ljubljana University.

Nevertheless, political pressure and self-censorship persist due to libel legislation and journalistic inexperience. The social status of journalists, although granted in collective agreements, is not fully respected in practice. According to SEEMO in the IPI "World Press Freedom Review 2003," not even the law on employment, which took effect in 2003, brought the expected results.

"Journalists work under same circumstances as public servants. In the public broadcasting sector they need to negotiate their salary with the Council of Radio and Television. But this does not interfere in the independence of reporting," Milosavljevic says.

The problems undermining editorial independence are on a higher level. Milosavljevic explains to deScripto: "Political demands in Slovenia have an economic character. Broadcasting is expensive and financial aid is often related to the naming of editors and editors-in-chief, as their designation remains the duty of the government."

In April 2005, the contract of the public radio's general manager expires and needs to be renewed. Since Slovenia's government recently changed, media experts fear an observable change in the duties and hierarchy of the newly named chief.

Today, it is hoped young journalists will be strong enough to fight deficiencies in editorial independence. Ljubljana's journalism department does not offer classes on editorial independence as such, but does teach students to report as independently as possible.

"Young colleagues are aware of communication theories," the Romanian journalist confirms, "but often they do not know about journalism practices. Consequently, editors are obliged to read and control their contributions. This situation turns out the same as in former times, except that now foreign experts call it control and not censorship anymore."

This story alone proves that in both member and applicant EU countries editorial independence in public broadcasting needs to be continuously monitored and guaranteed, since "the solution lays in a fair application of the existing law," says the Romanian journalist.

Both Slovenia and Romania are on their way; while the Trade Union of Slovenian journalists organised a four-day strike in October 2004 (see Media Report Slovenia on page 40), in order to move negotiations forward for better social status, in Romania, newly elected President Traian Basescu set the reinstallation of media freedom at the top of his priorities, because editorial independence is an indication of a democratic and free European society, and because the transition of public broadcasting is not yet complete. ■

Public Broadcasting in South East Europe

Albania

Albanian Radio and Television (RTSH);
Radio: Radio Tirana; TV: TVSH
<http://rtsh.sil.at>

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Sarajevo:
Public Broadcasting Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina (PBS BiH)
<http://www.pbsbih.ba>
Federal Television
<http://www.rtvfbih.ba>

Banja Luka:
Radiotelevizija Republike Srpske (RTRS)
<http://www.rtrs.tv>

Bulgaria

Bulgarian National Television (BNT)
<http://www.bnt.bg>
Bulgarian National Radio (BNR)
<http://www.bnr.bg>

Croatia

Croatian Radio Television (HRT)
<http://www.hrt.hr>

Cyprus

Cyprus Broadcasting Corporation (CyBC)
<http://www.cybc.com.cy>

Greece

Hellenic Radio and Television (ERT)
<http://www.ert.gr>

Hungary

Magyar Televizió (MTV)
<http://www.mtv.hu>
Magyar Radio (MR)
<http://www.radio.hu>

Kosovo

Radio Television Kosova (RTK)
<http://www.rtklive.com>

Macedonia

Makedonska Radio Televizija (MRT)
<http://www.mr.com.mk>

Moldova

Teleradio Moldova (TRM)
<http://www.trm.md>

Montenegro

Radio Televizija Crne Gore (RTV CG)
<http://www.rtcg.org>

Romania

Societatea Romana de Radiodifuziune (SRR)
<http://www.srr.ro>
Televiziunea Romana
<http://www.tvr.ro>

Serbia

Radio Televizija Srbije (RTS)
<http://www.rts.co.yu>

Slovenia

Radio Televizija Slovenija (RTV)
<http://www.rtvlo.si>

Turkey

Türkiye Radyo Televizyon (TRT)
<http://www.trt.net.tr>

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Country Focus **Croatia**

New Player New Game

Croatia marks the start of a new television era with the launching of RTL

By Izvor Moralic and Karla Bavoljak

Due to the entrance of German media giant RTL, Croatia's television community is facing serious reconstruction.

Likewise, it is possible for RTL to lose its license for the show because of gratuitous scenes of sex, inappropriate language and alcohol while on air.

The historic surfacing of RTL occurred on 30 April 2004. Prior to this, RTL had acquired HTV 3, the third channel of HTV which mainly featured sports, and challenged HTV's domination by producing domestic talk shows and soaps. Its greatest asset though, was the introduction of the reality show monstrosity "Big Brother."

RTL managed to break through HTV-dominated viewing habits, proven by viewer-rating reports published in the *Globus* and *Nacional* weeklies. RTL's above-mentioned reality behemoth "Big Brother" finished in second place with a popularity of (31.1 per cent), right after HTV's daily news (41.4 per cent) in December 2004.

Despite that, RTL is facing problems due to the fact that interest in "Big Brother" is far lower than expected. According to a *Nacional* article published on 2 November, a large portion of the six million Euros invested in the project will likely be lost. Likewise, it is possible for RTL to lose its license for the show because of gratuitous sex scenes, inappropriate language and alcohol being displayed while on air.

Public Broadcaster HRT challenged

HTV, the oldest TV network in Croatia, has responded unlike any other public TV station to the

intrusion of RTL into the market. Its programming started to resemble a commercial TV station in reaction to the production of reality and talk shows, which are more typical of private media than of a public broadcasting network. Furthermore, HTV has been neglecting its duty as a public service and has diminished its educational and informative programming which, being a public medium, it has to include according to Croatian law. This is important because HTV receives 60 per cent of its income from subscriptions, which it could lose if it continues to neglect its duties.

Nova TV - The first competitor

RTL is not the first to attempt to start a commercial television network in Croatia. The first rumours of a privately owned television station started to surface in 1999, after former HTV staff members talked about the possibility of founding a competitive television outlet. The main advantages of Nova TV (the resulting station) was the introduction of new sitcoms and an informal and friendly presentation of information to the audience, which provided a refreshing alternative to people, who had lived for 10 years with the bland structure of state-owned media, adapted from former Yugoslavian media.

The owners of Nova TV chose just the right time

to launch the new station. The end of the Tadjman era coincided with its emergence, and at the same time HTV began to undergo the slow and delicate transformation from a state-owned to a public medium, being forced to clean its board of executives from strong HDZ party influence in the process.

Although it possessed all the attributes required to become the leading TV station in the country, Nova failed to do so. This was partially due to the fast action taken by HTV, which performed its executive reconstruction with remarkable speed and competence. The new directors added some new sitcoms to its repertoire and introduced the game show hit "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?". Another reason for Nova's failure was because of the private medium's dwindling variety in programming and lack of informative content.

Nova TV was also struggling with legislative changes behind the scenes, which played a large part in the depleting popularity of the station. These changes occurred, to put it mildly, under peculiar circumstances. Ivan Caleta, former head of the channel, bought most of the shares of Nova TV. Later he sold the station, and today's owner is American media conglomerate Central European Media Enterprise (CME).

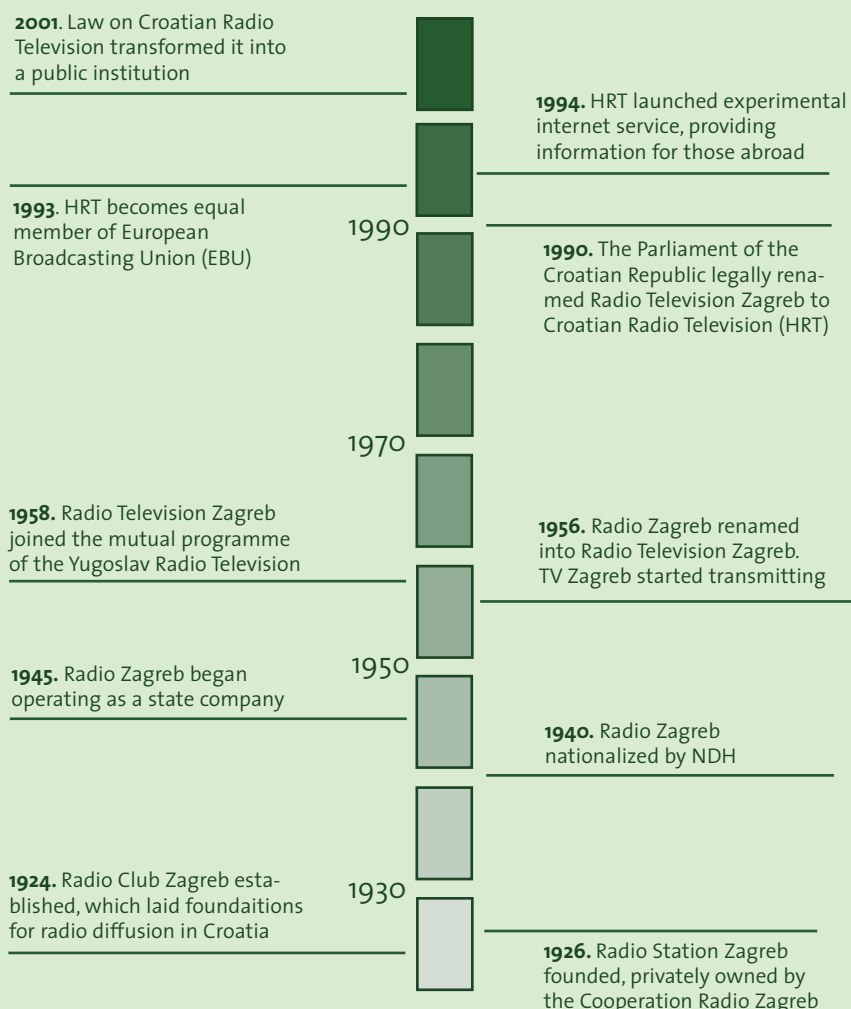
According to a Nacional article from 31 August, Caleta is planning to sell his other TV acquisitions - Bosnian channel OBN and TV3 of Slovenia - to RTL, which would give the German media group a large piece of the South European pie and bring it closer to fulfilling its conquest of the Balkans.

The Transition of HTV

HTV was previously accused of being controlled by the Tadjman regime. However, the network has performed a highly skilful transition from a polarised government medium to an independent public service. Recently, many foreign media monitors have conducted investigations on programming and the reporting of news and politics by Croatian Television (HTV). The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights states that HTV "has generally freed itself of political bias, but retains a strong bias in terms of topics covered". They state there is still a lack of attention given to post-war issues (such as refugee return, respect of human rights, etc.). To fill the gap, the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) stepped in by financing an independent documentary series aired in March 2004. "Somebody's Land" was produced by the Serbian

Lauder himself said that Nova will probably need "six months to a year to catch up" with HRT and RTL.

A Short History of HRT - Timeline



deScripto

A Journal of Media in South Eastern Europe

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

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Democratic Forum, and it focuses on war-affected areas and the lives of people living there. The competition created by new TV channels, such as Nova TV, the regional Croatian Commercial Network (CCN) and RTL, has also pushed HRT to improve its economics and content.

Ever since the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) has returned to power in Croatia, legislation has been marked by constant clashes with the media. The party has been extremely sensitive to media scrutiny since the end of the Tudjman period; before there were extremely harsh media regulations banning any reports critical of the government, part of the regime's efforts to keep a tight grip on the flow of information. After the end of this era, previously withheld information saw the light of day, making HDZ's reformation even more strenuous and costing the party even more public support. The party has ever since been extremely critical of the media, not leaving much space for positive cooperation.

A case illustrating how tense this relationship is occurred in September, when the HDZ attacked HRT in the name of veterans of the 111th brigade. The reason: HRT did not send a team to film the presentation of a monument in Drenov Klanac, a village in Croatia's little-populated Lika region. As Nacional claims, HDZ's agenda can be followed back to earlier protests by Vladimir Seks, head of the parliament, who claimed that, "HRT is not paying enough attention to the work of the parliament". Seks continued by stating that the national television network "cannot be freer than other public services". However, Seks claim has absolutely no judicial basis according to Croatian expert on media law, Vesna Alaburic, who pointed out in Globus' 1 October 2004 issue that Croatian law states that the public broadcasting service "is financially autonomous in respect to the government and protected from all political pressure exerted upon it." ■

Television Companies & Market Shares in Croatia

NATIONAL BROADCASTERS

HRT - The Croatian Radio Television Network

is a hybrid of the Zagreb Radio, founded in 1926, and Zagreb Television, founded in 1956. The network is legally owned by the Republic of Croatia and consists of two television channels and three radio channels. A former third HRT television channel was acquired by the German-owned network RTL. HRT-TV 1 carries all the public programming required under Croatian law, including the educational, news, science and culture programmes. The second channel features entertainment and sports programmes. The station is directed by Marija Nemcic, and is 60 per cent funded by subscription fees. The network reaches 99 per cent of the country.

RTL

Broadcasting in Croatia since 30 April 2004. RTL programming is present in approximately 40 countries worldwide; in Europe the network operates 30 TV stations in ten countries. The Luxembourg-based RTL group was founded in the spring of 2000 and is primarily

owned by the German conglomerate Bertelsmann AG, which owns an overwhelming 90.4 per cent of the shares. The remaining 9.6 per cent are publicly owned. RTL is planning to rethink its strategy and rely less on advertising as a source of revenue. In the future it plans to expand further into Eastern and Southeastern Europe, as indicated by its presence in Croatia and Hungary.

Nova TV

Croatia's first privately owned Television station was launched in late 2000, reaching 75 per cent of Croatia. In June 2004 was sold to the Central European Media Enterprise (CME), headed by Ronald Lauder, for 24 million Euro. CME adds Nova TV to its media holdings in Romania (PRO TV, Acasa), Slovakia (Markiza TV), Slovenia (POP TV, Kanal A) and the Ukraine (Studio 1+1). CME's strategy is simple: the goal is to produce local versions of prominent international entertainment shows and assemble programming according to regional preferences.

REGIONAL BROADCASTERS

OTV Zagreb, launched 1998

STV Osijek, launched 1992

ATV Split, launched 1996

VTV Varazdin, launched 1998

NIT Pazin, launched 1998

RI TV Rijeka, launched 1998

TV Nova Pula, launched 1996

Pro-Media Cakovec, launched 1996

Televizija Moslavina, launched 1995

Gradska TV Zadar, launched 1992

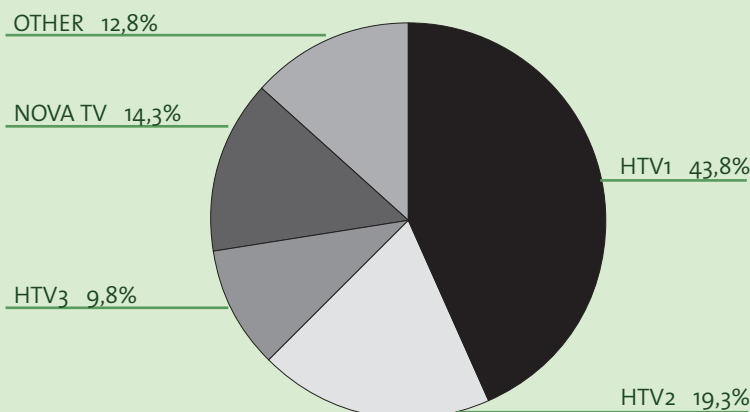
Vinkovacka TV, launched 1994

Kanal RI Rijeka, launched 1998

Korak Split, launched 2002

AUDIANCE SHARES, Adults +15, all day

Source: AGB Plus, 2004, statistics still exclude RTL





“Public Is Wak

Professor Stjepan Malovic on the Croatian Media Market and its Problems

Interview by Thomas A. Bauer

ad personam



Stjepan Malovic

is Doctor of Communication Science and Vice Dean of Faculty of Political Science Zagreb University, responsible for international relationship and scientific projects and

Director of the International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ)

and SEEMO Board Member

Recent publications:

The People, Press and Politics of Croatia, Praeger Publishers, Westport, Connecticut, London, 2001;

A Long Way to Freedom, published in Exit from Censorship, European Journalism Training Association, Council of Europe and Albanian Media Institute, Tirana 2001;

Internet: New Interactive Communication Channel for Civil Society, published in Communication Culture in Transition, publisher Akademiai kiado, Budapest, 2000.

deScripto: Recently, Croatia has entered into preliminary negotiations with the European Commission concerning Croatia's membership in the European Union (EU). It seems that political institutions in Croatia and Croatians themselves are willing to accelerate this process and, at the same time, to accept the European values required for joining the EU. This will have severe consequences for Croatian media systems and also for the political culture of public opinion. In your opinion, which media issues will be affected most by these European requirements?

Stjepan Malovic:

Euroscepticism of the Croatian public was unpleasantly expressed just before the EU decision on preliminary negotiations. It was a clear alert to the government, but also to all involved in political subjects. EU membership is now the key issue and a consensus is a must. HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union), the ruling party, is ready to cooperate with the opposition and Miomir ?u?ul, the foreign minister, was the first victim of the new policy. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader is trying to get public support, stressing how EU membership is a victory for each Croatian party and each citizen and that there is no place for standard political fights and debates about this issue. The role of the media became extremely important in creating a positive environment. Unfortunately, up until now, media decision-makers leave this topic in the foreign section only (thus away from the public eye). Only journalists and foreign experts are really well-informed about the EU accession process. In the future, it should become an issue for all media and all journalists. Otherwise, Euroscepticism will continue to grow.

To what extent has discourse about European values

been dealt with in the Croatian media - and to what extent does the media engage in self-reflective reporting about public media culture?

Not very much. The media covered very well the political and diplomatic aspects of the EU process, but not the real topic: European values. In some media one can even find a very negative approach: they ask why we have to join Europe; we were Europe in the 7th century. Or, they fear we shall be limited in our national identity now, after fighting for it. The media did not explain what the EU really is and what European values are. The reason for this is that the coverage has been limited mostly to the foreign section (in the Croatian media).

The media are not informing us on what is happening in Europe, journalists are not travelling enough and are not reporting on real life achievements.

We are not properly informed about what is happening in two neighbouring countries, Hungary and Slovenia, which became EU members, and how it influenced their everyday life. What an average Croat knows about EU is that prices are going up and salaries are staying the same.

Since the political system changed, it appears the Croatian media, particularly the print media, has been in a difficult and uncertain transitional state. In this state, considering the high rate of foreign investment, two major problems can be identified. First, the apparent high rate of "tabloidisation", and second, the lack of development of a distinct media identity which is relevant to the nation.

How do you assess the situation?

Tabloidisation is new in Croatia. We are facing a new phase of media transition in Croatia. Three

Euroscepticism of the Croatian public was unpleasantly expressed just before the EU decision on preliminary negotiations. It was a clear alert to the government, but also to all involved in political subjects.

We are facing a new phase of media transition in Croatia.

ing Up”

major players in the field of print media are foreign companies: WAZ, Styria and Sanoma. Styria is starting a new tabloid in May. WAZ is buying a daily newspaper, and publishing and printing company Slobodna Dalmacija. At the same time, WAZ sold Dnevnik, a serious daily economic newspaper, to a local media company! So, two international companies are making the decisions about the print media. Unfortunately, they are not implementing their standards. Profit is the main interest.

Journalism values are of great interest to worried local journalists and media experts, but not to the publishers. Even the traditionally high-quality daily newspaper Vjesnik is renewing its layout, changing its format to A3 and adding a family supplement in the hopes it will attract buyers.

TV is still the most influential media. Three national TV stations are fighting for the same audience: HTV, (the state TV, which is transforming into a public station), and two commercial, international TV channels: Nova TV and RTL. All three channels have similar entertainment-based programmes.

Such developments are not encouraging quality journalism. European nations utilise a number of diverse systems and instruments to aid in the development and maintenance of journalistic quality, the securing of editorial independence and, for example, the development of a journalistic code of ethics. Which developments are under way as far as media politics and media rights are concerned?

Croatian journalists were seriously and successfully engaged in a media freedom fight. We can say the media is no longer as controlled as it was a few years ago. Now the main problem is independent journalism. The journalists' position is fragile. They have no real working rights, no national collective agreement, and no sufficient social and work security. Journalists who are dependent on media owners and managers cannot be free. Politicians are still manipulating the media, but not directly. Now, they are

using much more sensitive methods, such as having secret connections with owners and media managers.

Journalists are aware of their situation, so they are trying to develop better self-regulation and legal regulation. The Croatian Journalists Association (HND) has a good Code of Ethics and very active Ethical Council. But it is not enough, because media owners are excluded from any responsibility. The media community is discussing a new model, based on international experience.

The latest developments are more optimistic. The public is waking up and starting to openly ask questions of and expect responsibility from politicians and government. The media investigated several huge scandals, and due to that influential

politicians and governmental officials resigned or were replaced. Such media coverage was characterised as aggressive, and officials were seen as “victims” of a media lynch, but the results are encouraging.

The transitional mode of the Croatian media system demands new education and curricular approaches to, and addressees for journalism. Which particular approaches do you plan to engage in?

Education is crucial for a better image of the Croatian media. Existing journalism schools are changing their curriculum and adopting the Bologna standard for university education. Vocational training is present. The EU has recognised the need for quality education; thus the TEMPUS programme accepted project JETiC, proposed by the Vienna University, the International Centre for Education of Journalists (ICEJ), the High School of Journalism in Lille, part of Zagreb University, and the Kaltenbrunner Media Institute. The aim of the programme is to raise awareness of the role of the media and improve the quality of media training. Such initiatives, when supported by the EU, can make all the difference.■

(Editor's note: for details on JETiC see page 47)

on ICEJ

The International Center for Education of Journalists in Opatija, Croatia, was founded in the summer of 1998 as a self-supporting, non-governmental and non-profit organization. Its main objective is the education and improvement of professional skills of the journalists.

ICEJ has been dealing, and expects to continue in the same manner, with issues, which vary from the ethical questions, from biased and unbalanced reporting to computer based reporting and the new media. As a non-profit organization, ICEJ is welcomed by many international institutions as an excellent venue to deal with the complex questions as independent journalism continues to develop in the Eastern and Central Europe.

(from ICEJ promotion)



A Loss of Respect?

Media Education in Croatia

By *Karla Bavaljak*

On 26 October 2004, members of the Croatian country-defense league physically and verbally attacked photo reporters and journalists. The attack occurred during the church ceremony honoring Ante Pavelic (one of the leaders of Ustasha Regime during WWII), and according to the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND), it marked one more in chain of similar attacks on journalists, and therefore on the freedom of the media and the right of free assembly.

The ranking of the journalistic professions has fallen on the social scale since the Croatian-Serb conflict, and has not really changed since. During the era of Tudjman and his government, media providers were considered second grade journalists, and if they worked for the opposition, they were often accused by government of being traitors. Then President of the Croatian Supreme Court, Milan Vukovic, reports that five cases of criminal charges for libel or slander were brought ex-officio against journalists in October 1998. The journalists were allegedly threatened with 1-3 year prison terms. Some 70 proceedings were initiated against the satiric weekly *Feral Tribune* on more than 40 different occasions by top government officials, the President of the Republic, and his family. The independent weekly *Nacional* faced 73 charges and had to pay compensation of 10 million Deutsch Mark (DM). Some 170 trials against the weekly *Globus* brought fines of about 12 million DM for various cases of emotional anguish.

These and many more large suits for emotional anguish and libel during the first and second Croatian governments brought a very visible decline in the respect for journalistic profession in Croatia at the end of the 20th century. Since the beginning of the new century, many steps have been conducted to prevent such cases occurring again. In addition to new laws, the further education of journalists and media professionals seems to play an important role in the progress towards higher standards. Freshly minted journalists just graduating from the 3-4 year journalism programmes at the University of Zagreb are already familiar with the international journalistic standards, and means of reporting – the five Ws (what, when, why, who, & where) and when to ask them, how to accurately record the answers, and how to report eye-witness events. The biggest problem lies with established journalists without the benefit of professional education in the field.

Recently, new educational opportunities and seminars for media workers have been expanded. The Society of Croatian Journalists, together with the International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ), has organised various workshops and seminars for media professionals ever since 1998. These activities have been established in order to promote journalism as a profession, and aim to raise the standards of the professionalism, in order to lower violence and loss of respect for the profession.

Similarly, the Helsinki Committee on Human Rights recently announced a seminar on investigative journalism for journalists from Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Serbia & Montenegro. The lack of experience in investigative stories, they felt, has lowered the quality of Croatian journalism. If investigative stories do emerge, they are usually not handled at high professional and ethical standards. The 5-month seminar is held in Sarajevo, and all 10-15 participants are granted scholarships.

In March 2005, two of the Croatian media professionals will be sent to the United States, and become the scholars of the Eastern European Professional Media Exchange and Training. Program held by IREX (International Research & Exchange Board) for Cultural Affairs Bureau of State Department will gather 17 media professionals from Eastern Europe in order to spend 4 practical weeks among US media houses.

The loss of respect for the profession, however, also requires the education of society itself. The public needs to recognise that, in general, journalists are not the enemy bent on exploiting their privacy, but rather the watchdogs of government, working for public itself. Government here has taken some recent steps to bring about such a transformation of public opinion. Government initiations in organising seminars for teachers and professors in public schools, like those held in Castle Trakoscan, are leading towards better mutual understanding between society and media. The media, in turn, still needs to follow certain codes of conduct. However, the education of the public about the media also plays an important role in the process. Education here is thus a key factor, which will help future generations of journalists to master violence in the region, and to gain social respect. Hopefully the Croatian government will also contribute to the process that is to bring Croatia closer to democracy. ■



New Willingness Required

Pending E.U. Membership Brings International Media Standards

By Karla Bavoljak

As top European diplomats and Croatian government officials continue to discuss the start date of negotiations for Croatia's entry into the European Union, European media standards are playing an increasingly larger role in shaping Croatian media law.

On 24 February 2004, a group of European media experts arrived in Croatia to advise Croatian lawmakers, government officials and community representatives on media legislation, including how to align Croatian media legislation with European standards. Long recommended by international institutions like the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, it looks as if the four new laws proposed in 2003 (and later passed) will still have to go through various changes and amendments. An expert mission sent to Croatia to help with legal changes, formed at the request of the Croatian government, was a sign of increasing cooperation to bring about quality legislation.

Thus 2003 marked a year of legal change for the Croatian media. The new laws authorise better legal security of the media, and better access to government sources of information. The Electronic Media Law, the Law on Croatian Radio-Television, a general Media Law, and new provisions of the Criminal Code were drafted with the involvement of non-governmental organisations, specifically the Helsinki Committee on Human Rights and the Croatian Journalists' Association (HND); it is the first time such a cooperation has taken place.

Regulating Ownership

Among other important issues, these laws address the issues of media ownership and monopoly. The Law on Media, for instance, restricts an owner to possess no more than a third of any media in a specific category. This same law prevented the selling of daily newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* to Europa Press Holding (a dominant media group), because with this transaction the company would have gained control of more than 40 per cent of Croatia's media.

On 1 October 2004, the new Media Law came into effect, regulating ownership, author rights, and

the reporting of media market earnings to the audience.

The law also delivered controversial articles concerning the right to privacy and protection of sources' identities. Privacy, one of the most controversial discussions in today's media, was regulated according to 'public interest'.

The new Media Law states that the right to privacy is not at issue if there is clear evidence the information is in the public interest.

Amendment Weakens Journalists' Right to Protect Their Sources

A long-debated amendment to the Criminal Code, passed in July 2003, delivered a regulation obliging journalists to reveal a source if called on by the court to do so, which violates international standards.

State secretary in the foreign ministry, Jadran Antolovic, justified the regulation as a tool in the fight against international antiterrorist activity, and not as an attempt to impede investigative journalism. Amendments to the Criminal Code on libel were invalidated by the Croatian Constitutional Court in November 2003, because they did not receive an absolute parliamentary majority.

The OSCE Mission to Croatia and the Council of Europe disagree with some elements of the new Media Law. They believe the law unnecessarily regulates the work and ownership of Croatian media, while "the previous Law on Public Information, which it replaced, was generally in line with international media standards."

The OSCE Mission and other media watchdog organisations also expressed concern about the July libel amendments to the Criminal Code, arguing they remove safeguards from prosecution which journalists had previously enjoyed if their intention to commit libel could not be proven.

As new media legislation in Croatia is emerging, the international community has also expressed concern that it is not always compatible with "the standards". However, the Croatian government's desire to enter the European Union as soon as possible is bringing about a new willingness to cooperate with foreign experts. ■

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Albania: “Think Negative” or Panic Journalism

The power of public opinion in Albania has reached such a level that it can transform a worthless news report into a scoop, or the other way around, according to one's interests. The news process has, in a sense, switched from manufacturing to industrial fabrication.

This did not happen overnight. For 10 years the Albanian print media, and later the electronic media, have experienced an era characterised by growing pressure by the public.

With the birth of free press, the media market consisted primarily of newspapers that were dominated by analytical content, editorials, news articles, and idyllic reports.

But soon enough, a new culture muscled its way in, one of crime reports and topical daily news, which have turned newspapers into a medium that voices the most negative events that occur around the country.

“Think negative” has thus become a mode of successful journalism. It is a kind of permanent pessimism and, worst of all, uninterruptedly educates the public in a culture of cynicism, thus preparing the ground and planting the seeds for a market that will be difficult to uproot.

In a country like Albania, just now coming out of isolation, “yellow journalism” is often especially successful because public opinion has not been allowed the necessary space to become acquainted with its own internal processes.

Looking back over 50 years of communism, there was little or no crime reporting in the media. It seems that no murders, no crime and nothing shocking ever took place. This “peaceful Albania” seemed bent on building the belief of an established order as the cornerstone of the nation and, as long as it kept this aim in its sights, it served it with determination.

Thus it is easy to imagine how astonished and susceptible an Albanian is to the exaggeration of a crime report. An Albanian “digests” this kind of news – say a violent murder in the southern city of Korca – with eagerness and fear, intertwined with curiosity. His appetite whet, this reader looks forward the next day to more such horrifying deeds.

The newspapers satisfy this eagerness, not only offering fresh murders in Puka, Lushnja and Durres, (Albanian cities) but also extracts from the murder that occurred the previous day, including interviews with eye-witnesses, the parents of the victim, gossip from sources at the prosecutor's office, etc.

This kind of reader is a buyer, and as we live in capitalism, a reader that creates such a demand

should be offered the goods he is looking for.

So now we have a wider and wider variety of newspapers that offer first-page titles of panic. Even though an event might not be as tragic as hoped by such readers, it is sold as such.

“Five minutes of horror in the railway;” “The hours of anxiety before suicide;” “Last will of L.B., nurse in Librazhd.”

There is an increasingly widespread lack of critical judgement and the coolness needed to view things in the long term.

It is normal in a country the size of Albania, with 3.4 million inhabitants, that people are occasionally murdered, that some get beaten up, and that there are some robberies and rapes. The country has a crime rate comparable to any other European region with the same population.

The question is not whether the Albanian media should reveal these ugly incidents, but what leads them to be transformed into sensational media episodes when they are part of the normal ritual of everyday existence in a society.

The malady of the Albanian press, and one of the reasons readership is shrinking daily, is an almost total lack of a subscriber system. A newspaper that must always sell itself on a news stand, where rival media products compete with each other in a battle of bombastic titles, contrasts of colours and horrifying pictures, has no other way than to act according to the rules of this jungle.

The journalists themselves must make a morally high and extraordinarily ethical attempt to save their press from this disease.

For now it seems to be a very difficult undertaking because, although there have been attempts to change the situation by many renowned public figures with press presence, we can see that two extreme types of journalists are in the first lines of a “cold war”; the journalists of crime reports, and sensitive journalists.

In 10 years of Albanian “yellow press,” a great number of journalists have been produced and bred within this brand of reporting; journalists who can only function inside this framework.

Now the battle has moved to higher levels because some of these journalists have reached the halls of leadership in different media, and now have decision-making power over the kind of information that is revealed to the public. This means that the season of panic journalism will last for a while because this is not a matter of power, this clearly is a question of values gone astray. ■

In Short

Prime Minister Dialogues with Journalists

According to the Albanian Media Institute (AMI), Albanian Prime Minister Fatos Nano met with well-known journalists, analysts, and foreign media correspondents at the AMI in Tirana on 11 January 2005 to discuss the political question of ethnic integration - a topic of particular importance for Albania and its future - in anticipation of upcoming elections. The event was part of a series dubbed “Challenge 2005”, which includes monthly meetings between important Albanian and international personalities.

NCRT Decides to Withdraw Shijak TV's Licence

The National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT) decided on 23 December 2004 to withdraw the license of Shijak TV because of the station's debts to the council and its use of pirated programmes, says the Albanian Media Institute. Shijak's owner said it was “a political decision”, directed at the station after it had already concluded new advertising contracts. He called the charge of piracy “absurd”, claiming that Shijak merely broadcasts free of charge programmes other stations charged for. In the meantime, Shijak TV, the first private television station in the country, which celebrated its ninth anniversary last December, continues to broadcast self-produced programmes.

New Daily in Albanian Market

“Ekspres” is the latest arrival in the Albanian market of daily newspapers, according to the Albanian Media Institute.



in Short

The High Representative and Federal TV Clash

Paddy Ashdown, the high representative of the international community in BiH, turned down an invitation to be interviewed on the federal TV show '60 Minutes', saying in an interview on 21 December 2004 with private television station 'Hayat' that the programme "tells lies".

The federal television network responded with anger at Ashdown's statement. The federal TV station and the editor of the programme '60 Minutes' have already been sued a number of times for defamation. The programming on '60 Minutes', which leans toward the opposition, deals mostly with societal wrongdoings, and harshly criticizes politicians and institutions.

Petitions Against the RTV Tax

An independent initiative for civil disobedience was launched in Olovo in December 2004 to protest the legally binding RTV tax, according to newspaper Jutarnje Novine. Petition-signing to quash the obligatory RTV tax is receiving support in other places across the federation. It is not yet clear who the organisers are, but it seems their initiative has to do with a protest by the local SDU party, which is dissatisfied with television coverage of its activities.

Federal TV (the entity public service) has filed over 180,000 lawsuits for non-payment of the three Euro tax, and claims it will enforce payment by automatic deductions from salaries, pensions and seizure of property. Most Croats in the federation refuse to pay the tax because they believe that public television does not sufficiently protect Croat interests. Bosniaks and Serbs also increasingly refuse to pay the taxes, both for political and economic reasons.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Closer to Truth - New Journalists' Union Launched

Following two years of negotiations, the new Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina 'BH Journalists' was launched in Sarajevo on 11 December 2004, merging three of the six previously existing journalists' unions in BiH.

Calling itself a "non-sectarian, free and voluntary association of journalists," the union helps BiH journalists actively embrace internationally established standards of human rights and freedoms, ethics and "professional standards of journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world."

The union's launch was welcomed by numerous journalists in BiH and internationally. SEEMO sees the move as "a step forward for better communication between journalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and it makes it easier to fight for press freedom and the rights of the journalists." "One institution has more power than three small ones," says Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General.

Still a Lot To Be Done

The founding of the union comes at a difficult time for journalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although a great deal of ethnic strife has been put in the past and important improvements have been made in reconciliation processes, there is still a lot left to be done. Pressured by a background of old divisions, economic hardship and infant democracy, Bosnia and Herzegovina is struggling not to fall back into chaos and strife.

Constantly faced with the temptation to indulge nationalistic and financial interests, most observers agree that a free press is one of the most crucial elements in the struggle for a brighter Bosnian future. The establishment of the new union brings with it the hope that ethics and professionalism can overcome the forces that over 10 years ago led BiH and its journalism into a bloodbath.

The union has embarked on serious and difficult tasks in trying to improve media life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dedicated to the promotion and protection of professional, social and intellectual interests of its members, promotion of ethical standards and integrity of journalism, and protection of freedom of speech and the press, it seeks to improve the working and social conditions of journalists and will also try to protect the public from abuse at the hands of the media.

Efficiency and transparency are still weak spots in the field. Regional activities are not sufficiently developed, and suffer from problems in communication

and technical coordination. Journalists on the field often lack organised support or available services. Legal protection of journalists is still often inefficient and the Free Media Help Line needs much more support to function properly.

As well, the education of journalists in both professional and ethical aspects should be better standardised and promoted, and better cooperation between educational institutions established. Public meetings, seminars and debates should be made an important part of civil life, education and the development of democracy.

A Step Into the Right Direction

All of these challenges now stand before the newly founded union. They will not make it easy to preserve this fragile new alliance of journalists from three entities, and they will not be quickly or easily overcome. However, one can say that the union is certainly a step in the right direction, a beacon of light brightening the still gloomy Bosnian media landscape.

The three former unions, which joined forces, include the Independent Union of Professional Journalists of BiH from Sarajevo, The Association of Journalists (APEL) from Mostar and the Independent Union of Journalists of Republika Srpska from Banja Luka.

Amela Rebac, editor of Radio Studio 88 in Mostar was elected president, while Antonio Prlenda, a journalist from the *Oslobodjenje* daily in Sarajevo, and Tanja Topic of *Vreme* from Banja Luka were named vice presidents. The centre of the BH journalists' union is Sarajevo, with regional centres in Mostar and Banja Luka.

The three associations, which refused the invitation to join the new union, include the Union of Journalists of Republika Srpska from Banja Luka, the Union of BiH Journalists from Sarajevo and the Association of Croatian Journalists in BiH from Mostar. It is widely believed that their decision to abstain from membership was shaped by nationalistic resentment, allegiance to local national parties and particular financial interests.

However, the new union has left open the possibility of their joining later, which is stated in the union's statute. Negotiations on the possibility of joining and on cooperation in certain projects will continue between the union and the remaining associations. Membership is open to all professional journalists with acceptable education who work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ■



Bulgaria: Archaic Laws Tamper with Press Freedom

A number of recent events have turned attention in Bulgaria towards a law that can be considered a direct breach of press freedom. Two cases against foreign journalists have already been filed, both for using concealed cameras to acquire information. This, according to Article 339a of the Penal Code, is considered “using tools of espionage to acquire secret information,” and when not specifically authorised, is penalised with up to three years in prison.

Charges have been pressed by courts in two different districts against BBC reporter Justin Rowlett for using a concealed camera and for inciting corruption, and against Romanian Pro TV journalist George Buhnici, again for using a concealed camera without prior permission.

According to Article 339a of the Bulgarian Penal Code (1997): “Those who, without a proper permission as required by law, produce, use, sell or keep special technical means intended for concealed gathering of information are punished with up to three years of confinement.”

In the case of Rowlett, the investigative reporter used the concealed camera for the BBC programme “Buying the Game”, in which he exposed Ivan Slavkov, head of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee (BOC) and member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) discussing the selling of his vote in support of London’s bid for hosting the games in 2012. After being suspended from both BOC and IOC, Slavkov decided to take the journalist to court, using archaic Penal Code Article 339a.

Buhnici and his driver were arrested on 16 November, at the border between Bulgaria and Romania, for using a concealed camera. According to Romanian Pro TV, Buhnici was taping a piece about cigarette trafficking at the border. Charges were immediately pressed in the Ruse local court and the journalist faced up to three years of prison. On 6 December, he was fined 500 Euro and released.

These two cases led to reactions from local and international media observers. SEEMO sent a protest letter to officials in Bulgaria. Media organisations in Bulgaria began pushing for a change in the law. In light of Bulgaria’s attempt to join the European Union, a law that restricts press freedom in such a way raises serious concerns about the country’s readiness.

“This article of the Bulgarian Penal Code is definitely not in line with internationally accepted standards,” says Barbara Trionfi, a Press Freedom Adviser for the International Press Institute (IPI) in Vienna,

“as it criminalizes journalists for carrying out one of their most important functions in the society, which is to uncover issues of public interest.”

Debates are now underway in Bulgaria over changes to the Penal Code, but such a change, though long awaited by journalists, might turn out to be uncomfortable for those in power. Media officials in Bulgaria and abroad feel that the point of this article is to “prevent investigative reporting which is always annoying to influential people both from the political and business fields,” Trionfi said. A change in the penal code is urgently needed. According to the new Ethical Code of Bulgarian Journalists, journalists “will gather information by fair and lawful means, without hiding that [they] are journalists.”

However, elsewhere the code provides that “tricks, concealed cameras and microphones, or other special technology [...] can only be used if there is no other way to obtain information of exceptional interest to the public.” The code further stipulates that journalists “indicate in the information that such methods have been used.” The potential contradiction between these articles leaves the area unclear.

So far, everyone is acting cautiously and public statements have been indefinite, especially those by politicians. Minister of Interior Affairs Georgi Petkanov, who had told Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) that Buhnici was guilty of breaking a current Bulgarian law, also suggested that a change was possible, but added it is a matter for parliament. Though he acknowledged that journalists might find it impossible to acquire certain information without special technology and that the law seems to be an “anachronism,” the minister also claimed ignorance of European practices in this area.

Nevertheless, the Bulgarian media all agree on the need for a change in the law, said a representative of the Bulgarian Media Coalition, Georgi Lozanov, to news portal Vseki Den (Every Day). He said he hoped that upcoming elections might trigger politicians to act in a more “populist” way and help speed up promulgation of the media amendment. “The Bulgarian Media Coalition will support the proposal and introduce it to parliament,” Lozanov said.

Until the law is changed, however, the problem remains, leaving Bulgaria’s preparedness for EU membership in question. As the European Court of Human Rights states: “Freedom of expression has an essential role to play in a democratic society, helping to foster the development of an open, tolerant society in which human rights are respected.” ■

In Short

Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) Turns 70

Bulgarian National Radio was created on 25 January 1935 through a decree by King Boris III, which ratified an ordinance law adopted by the government a week earlier. To celebrate its anniversary, BNR has wrapped the whole building in a huge plastic net bearing the station’s logo and tied on it a red ribbon more than 100 meters long, honouring not only the network, but also Kristo Yavashiev - a Bulgarian artist who gained international fame with his “wrapping” building projects. Yavashiev, also known as “Kristo”, is currently working on a project involving the placement of huge coloured gates in New York Central Park.

New Media Agency Created in Bulgaria

The international company Media Planning Group will open a branch in Bulgaria dealing with media strategies and communications programmes. The creation of this branch was announced by Jacques Seguela, vice-president of advertising company “Havas Advertising.” The agency will provide a whole scope of services in the areas of corporate communications and public relations.



by Michael Ledl

in Short

Meeting of European Press Councils

The sixth annual meeting of the Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe (AIPCE) took place in Cyprus in October 2004, with the participation of more than 40 delegates from 20 countries. The creation of new councils, the handling of complaints, relevant EU laws and regulations, and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights were discussed.

Radio Stations in Cyprus

How many radio stations are trying to survive in Cyprus? Nearly 60. Some of them are holding on to their podium positions and others are slowly disappearing. "The only radio stations that are gaining ground are music stations," says Yiannis Adilinis, DJ and editor-in-chief of Time Out magazine. The number one radio station today in Cyprus is Super FM, which plays Greek hits and uses the secret weapon used by every radio station in the world: play lists.

Can Cyberspace Break Down the Divide?

Advanced technology has had a direct affect on bringing Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots closer together, making Cyprus a prototype around the world for conflict resolution, according to two media experts from New York, Professors Gary Gumpert and Suzan Drucker. Both the American specialists are very familiar with Cyprus and have been following developments in technology, media and bi-communal relations there for the last 10 years. The results of their studies were published in December 2004.

Cyprus: Threats and Attacks Against a Critical Journalist

Shener Levent, a man with rough edges and a critical mind, is somebody who does not keep his thoughts a secret.

In addition – as a leading journalist in northern Cyprus and editor of the Turkish Cypriot daily *Africa* (formerly known as *Avrupa*) – he is a person whose opinion is heard. Sometimes, a disadvantageous blessing, especially in a divided country.

Cyprus has been geographically and ethnically divided since 1974, when Turkey occupied more than a third of the island. The occupation happened in response to a coup by the military junta in Greece.

Cyprus is the only divided country in the European Union. In fact, only the southern, Greek part of the island joined the EU in May 2004. The north, under the control of the Turkish military, declared itself independent in 1983 and proclaimed itself a republic called "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" (TRNC).

It has not been recognised by the United Nations and is considered illegal. Turkish Cypriots, especially journalists, have not been allowed to express opinions critical of the authority. As far as law and freedom of the press is concerned, the mass media are very different in the two communities, with the Turkish Cypriot side being subject to considerable pressure and restraints from the authority, while the Greek Cypriot side is much more open.

The International Press Institute (IPI) alleged in its 2002 World Press Freedom Review that, according to SEEMO statistics, 41 press freedom violations occurred in the Turkish-controlled part of the island and two in the Republic of Cyprus.

A lot of explosives

When Levent founded his daily newspaper *Avrupa*, it was particularly critical of Turkey and the policies of the republic's authorities. In the context of the Republic of Cyprus's candidacy for entry into the European Union, it was easy to provoke authorities with tartly written articles.

Threats of annexation of the northern sector by Turkey and the dialogue between the island's two leaders – Glafkos Clerides and Rauf Denktaş – also provided for a lot of explosives. Denktaş, leader of the TRNC (the party ruling the Turkish Cypriot side), did not tolerate any criticism of his person by the opposition daily.

Death threats against Levent – according to him expressed by paramilitary forces – were not the only attempts at intimidation he has faced.

On 24 May 2001, a bomb exploded in the build-

ings housing the printing press of *Avrupa* in Nicosia, without claiming any victims.

In general, there are at least occasional threats against political personalities, newspapers and parties in northern Cyprus. Kutlu Adali, a prominent journalist who had also criticised the policies of Denktaş and Turkey, was murdered in front of his home in 1996.

"Returning to Prehistory"

Levent is still writing his articles and still publishing a critical daily now called *Africa*. But what happened to *Avrupa*?

Levent was accused by local authorities of publishing articles in his daily newspaper, which were "insulting and humiliating the dignity and the personality of the security forces." In December 2002 *Avrupa* closed down, constrained by court rulings and fines.

But Levent announced that the daily would be reborn under the name *Africa*, explaining that Cyprus was "no longer heading for Europe, but was returning to prehistory, towards Africa." He added the change of name is meant to illustrate that the law of the jungle is ruling in northern Cyprus.

2000 Years in Prison?

As Andreas Kannaouros, President of the Union of Cyprus Journalists, informed SEEMO, "with some 100 charges already made against Shener Levent, if those were sustained in a Turkish civilian hearing the total imprisonment term he faces could add up to 2000 years."

"This latest action against Levent is fresh evidence of a profound press freedom crisis in the north of the island," said Aidan White, IFJ and EFJ General Secretary.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General, sees positive aspects also: "I hope, that on the territory controlled by the Turkish Cypriot community, which is internationally not recognised, there will be some changes in 2005, and that local politicians will accept some basic press freedom standards. There were some positive statements from Mehmet Ali Talat, prime minister, who said in 2004 that as a first step his government will initiate a number of legal changes that would prevent civilians and journalists from being tried by military court."

Press freedom is always a parameter for political conditions and developments in a country. This issue will surely come up when accession negotiations begin between Turkey and the European Union. ■



Greece: Fighting For Fairness

In a country where courts are often all too eager to penalise reporters for libel, 13 October was widely hailed as a landmark date in Greece. On this day, an appeals court upheld a decision against Thessaloniki-based publisher Makedonia. The publisher, who had fired journalist Haralambos Bikas, was reprimanded by the court for attempting to infringe on freedom of speech and the press.

In 2003, Bikas had been covering the war in Iraq as a foreign correspondent. “When I returned from Iraq in late 2003,” Bikas reports, “I noticed that the [editorial] director of the paper had changed a part of my story.” When Bikas protested against this internal censorship to management, he was fired from his job. There may have been an additional reason for Bikas’ dismissal.

“He is one of the leaders in the journalists’ movement,” says Georgios Papadakis, SEEMO coordinator in Greece and editor of the Athens-based financial daily Express. “He had occasionally been a representative of this movement within his newspaper, though he did not hold this position at the time of his dismissal.”

The Editors Union of Macedonia and Thrace Daily Newspapers (ESIEMTH) is a group that is actively concerned with applying pressure to various publishers in order to improve journalists’ working conditions in Greece; many journalists are not paid on time, are underpaid, and/or forced to work longer hours than originally agreed upon by their employers.

In reaction to Bikas’ dismissal, ESIEMTH immediately contacted the now-defunct Ministry of Press and Mass Media. The minister personally called the director of Makedonia in response to its actions. When this proved ineffective, the staff of Makedonia, with the backing of ESIEMTH, staged a 24-hour strike, in response to which the publisher filed a lawsuit against the union.

The case, heard on 13 May 2004, was ruled in favour of ESIEMTH. This was not, however, the end of the legal battle. On 13 October, Bikas and the staff of Makedonia were forced to appear before the Court of Appeal. This court upheld the primary ruling that Bikas’ dismissal had been illegal and was driven by “reasons of vindictiveness” on the part of his employers.

In what is considered a historically important move, the court also declared that the union had the right to protest against the employer as it was, according to Bikas, “defending the collective value of freedom of the press, which is superior to the value of any private interest.”

“The judges unanimously voted in favour of the

editors’ union within half an hour of the appeals hearing, as they knew Makedonia did not have a substantial case against Bikas or its other employees,” says Georgios Papadakis. “Moreover, public opinion was strongly in support of Bikas, which can be an important factor when judges make their decisions [in Greece].” The Greek media had closely watched the hearing, and the demand for a fair trial was substantial. The courts also stated that the management of Makedonia did not have the right to change the reports of any journalist, especially if the information in the report is confirmed by the source.

Nevertheless, there still remains a lot to be done to ensure journalistic freedom in Greece. “To be honest, I do not think the situation will ever be completely OK,” says Papadakis. Greece’s tough libel laws criminalize the publication of direct allegations against a person. Journalists are threatened by prison terms, fines, and job loss in retaliation for reporting perceived to be defamatory.

“Journalists have often been punished for referring to somebody as a ‘possible receiver of laundered money,’” Papadakis remarks.

Things are slowly changing, however. In March 2004, the Ministry of Press and Multimedia was abolished. (see InShort, this page)

“The problem is,” says Papadakis, “that this law is not even ready [to be introduced into parliament] yet. Perhaps we will see it in parliament by this summer. But it seems at the moment, the government has other priorities.” Papadakis thinks that, with constant pressure from journalists, the issue will eventually be given the necessary attention, but “things take time in Greece”.

As for journalist Haralambos Bikas, he was elected representative of the Makedonia union in early September, and has since gotten his old job back. “It is a strange climate here... They [the management] cannot touch me, because the two court decisions went in my favour, but they are placing pressure on me to leave,” he says, noting that management no longer publishes his name in the paper’s Sunday edition, and routinely changes his writing assignments.

He insists that the journalists’ strike was less about him, and more “a strike for the code of ethics”. For this reason, he will stay with his paper, though he is not quite sure what he is going to do.

“I am preparing a civil prosecution against my publisher in May of next year,” says Bikas. “It’s a good fight, and I am very satisfied with the work we have done.” However, Bikas and Papadakis both agree there is still much room for improvement in the Greek media landscape. ■

In Short

Sports Editor Attacked

Phillippos Syrigos, sports editor of the Athens daily newspaper Eleftherotypia, was attacked and brutally beaten in a parking lot after finishing a show at the Super Sport FM radio station on 18 October 2004. One man hit Syrigos on the head with a metal bar, while the other stabbed him in the back with a knife several times. Both attackers escaped, and Syrigos was rushed to the hospital, where he received immediate emergency surgery. He was released from hospital a week later. Syrigos had received threats via telephone; unknown people had called the radio station and his newspaper about his continuing coverage of drug use by athletes. Syrigos became well known after he reported on a doping case in the 2004 Olympic games. SEEMO was the first international NGO to react to this case by sending a protest to officials in Athens, and by initiating an international protest.

Media Ministry Dissolved

In March 2004, the newly elected Greek government dissolved the Ministry of Press and Mass Media, declaring it “not a modern institution” and stating it appeared undemocratic, because such establishments have been known to interfere in media independence, especially in the case of regimes that do not have international respect. Greece has assigned the Press Ministry’s powers to a government spokesperson, Theodoros Roussopoulos, who has promised a new multimedia reform law, yet to be introduced into parliament.

Application Details for the

Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe 2005

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) is pleased to announce the Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe 2005.

Sponsored by Erhard Busek, special coordinator for the Stability Pact for South East Europe, the 2,000 Euro award will be given to a journalist, editor, media executive or person educating journalists in South Eastern Europe (SEEMO region), thus using the media to promote a climate of better understanding among people in the region and to work towards ending minority problems, ethnic divisions, racism, xenophobia etc.

In 2002, the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) and its international jury chose Croatian journalist Denis Latin as recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe 2002, in recognition of his outstanding efforts in journalism, which contributed toward better understanding in South Eastern Europe. In 2003, the award was presented to Kemal Kurspahic, former editor-in-chief of the Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje.

If you know of anyone who would be a worthy recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe, please send a letter to SEEMO with basic details about the person you would like to nominate (along with a professional CV, describing why she / he should receive the award), as well as the contacts of the person you are nominating (media organisation, address, phone, fax, email). If your nomination is supported by an organisation / media outlet, please send us the name of the contact person supporting your nomination, as well as basic information about the organisation / media outlet. If your nomination is supported by other individual / individuals, please send us the necessary details and contacts of the other supporters. We also need your basic details and your contacts (address, phone, fax, email, mobile phone).

Any additional material about the nominated person (such as TV reports on video or DVD, audio reports on cassette or CD, or articles in newspapers), if possible with a short English translation, are welcome. Please send them with your nomination.

Please send all to:

SEEMO/IPI
"Busek Award"
Spiegelgasse 2/29
1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +43 1 513 39 40
Fax: +43 1 512 90 15
E-mail: busekaward@seemo.org

Material will not be returned, so please always send copies of documents, CVs, reports, articles, videos, audiotapes, DVDs or CDs.

The application deadline for the Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe 2005 is 1 May 2005

in Short

Interactive TV Coming to Hungary

Interactive television production will bring to an end the traditional linear recording of political events of anything happening in the world. iTV will allow the viewers to choose how the story will unravel. To demonstrate the tool's potential MECiTV staged an iTV Docu Drama called Vision Europe. Filming began on 12 April 2003 in Budapest when Hungarians voted for EU accession and ended 1 May 2004 when Hungary finally joined. The project nears completion in February 2005, they are just adding the final touches to the authoring software's usability. Non linear reporting would be useful in the times of events such as elections or the Olympics. (alpaghalileo)

Hungary: Big Players In a Small Market

A trend that started with the breakup of the Soviet Union in Hungary is still present in the country today. More and more media and media-related services are being bought up by foreign investors, leaving the country with virtually no media owners of Hungarian descent. The introduction of the market economy after the breakup of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of these dramatic changes affecting the media sector and ownership layout.

Of the 24 local newspapers, Axel Springer owns 10; Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung owns five; Funk GmbH owns three; and Associated Newspapers owns three. There were attempts at creating rival local papers, but all were unsuccessful due to lack of capital. Swiss company Ringier controls over two-thirds of the national newspaper market, including broadsheet Nepszabadsag, sports daily Nemzeti Sport and tabloid Blikk. Up until November 2004 Ringier also owned Magyar Hírlap.

Ringier Publishers sold the publishing rights of defunct Hungarian daily Magyar Hírlap to A Pont MH Kiadói Kft, a company partly owned by the former staff of Magyar Hírlap. Ringier announced at the end of October that it would shut down the paper because its losses rose to nearly HUF 2 billion since 2001 and the number of copies sold has gradually declined. Magyar Hírlap, launched in 1968, was last published on 5 November. The daily's chief editor Pál Szombathy announced a week later that he would create a new daily with members of the paper's editorial. The new paper, called A Pont was first published on 9 November.

The trend toward foreign ownership can be explained by Hungary's relatively small market of 10 million, and the ever-present undercapitalization of the media sector by Hungarians, which has not changed much since the introduction of a market economy in Hungary. For example, today Hungary has 10 national and 24 local dailies. Western investors own seven out of the 10 national and all the local dailies. When the newspapers came onto the market, there seemed to be no Hungarian interest in or capital for buying them, and no restrictions were placed on foreign purchasing of newspapers.

To assess the impact of such ownership layout, deScripto turned to Charles Kovacs, the chairman of the supervisory board of Hit Radio RT, who agreed to comment on the trend in a personal capacity.

Apparently the trend began with the fall of communism in Hungary. "Under communism, the newspapers were owned by the State. After 1991, they were sold to the highest bidder and this was usually a foreign company. Television was not privatised, but licenses were auctioned off in the mid-90's and these

too were bought by foreign companies," says Kovacs. Mr. Kovacs believes that foreign ownership of the media has largely improved the media's quality, mentioning that, "this is clear from the number of pages in newspapers, the number of new publications, the use of color, superior printing." He credits the foreign owners, who in his view, "have also provided a lot of technical assistance to improve journalistic standards, albeit with varying results."

In Kovacs' opinion the foreign owned media is doing a good job of catering to Hungarian audiences. He explains this phenomenon by stating simply, "otherwise they could not stay in business." Although many Hungarian-owned newspapers came into existence after 1991, they quickly "went out of business, as they could not win readers away from the foreign-owned publications." We see the same type of layout when we turn to the television market, "the foreign owned TV stations have up to 80 per cent of the audience, while the government-owned stations have failed to respond to the needs of the Hungarian audience." Editorial policy, in his view, remains largely unaffected. This is explained by the fact that "...few people in the parent companies speak Hungarian, and in any case, all Hungarian political parties have virtually the same position on economic policies, and consequently, there is no reason for the owners to become involved in editorial policy."

When asked whether or not some themes or topics are being left out due to ownership layout, Kovacs replied, "the main objective for all papers is to increase circulation. That may affect content, but not the nature of ownership." In Kovacs' view, the Hungarian public seems to be largely content with the current media ownership layout. He elaborates: "What grumbling there is, is mainly about the preponderance of leftist opinion, and people on the right complain about the lack of 'balance'. They feel that there should be more papers and TV with a rightist view." According to Kovacs, it is a minority view, which is clear when one notes that "rightist papers started by Hungarians since 1991 have either failed or have only a very small circulation, in spite of government support and government advertising during the years when a rightist government was in power." There is one exception however, a newspaper with a circulation and following that "has been stable for years" - Magyar Nemzet. Kovacs states, "I think the status quo is a matter of quality rather than of ownership."

When he was questioned about public trust of foreign owners, Kovacs retorts, "I am not sure if Hungarians really trust anyone, but foreign companies tend to have higher professional standards, more objective promotion policies, higher pay, etc..." ■



by Baki Haliti & Daniela Süssenbacher

in Short

Cross Border Media Projects Supported by UNESCO

In January 2005, UNESCO supports cross border and cross culture media project in Kosovo. The project is based on cooperation between the news agencies KosovaLive in Pristina and Beta in Belgrad. Target: "to combat ignorance, bias and manipulation". The multilingual information transfer and exchange can be found at www.kosovakosovo.com

Settlement Agreements

In December 2004, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo pleased the settlement agreements between the broadcasters RTK, TV21 and KTV and the TMC. They had agreed to take necessary remedial actions in place of fines.

Kosovo:* Media Consumption

deScripto asked Kosovo journalist Baki Haliti, who is currently working on his dissertation in Vienna, to comment on media communication at home:

Kosovars interest in media was quite essential in the past considering the situation in Kosovo. Whereas in Western Europe newspapers are read in the morning with a good coffee, in Kosovo papers were treated with great importance and sensitivity. Nowadays, the interest of Kosovars in the Kosovo media seems to have changed. Kosovo's auditors and readers were before really sensitive to information from the media, they felt really involved, and days were spent talking about newspapers or TV headlines. Often a group of friends gathered in a coffee place to read the newspaper and discuss issues with enthusiasm. Moreover, it was impossible to walk through Pristina without seeing one or two people carrying a newspaper. The 7.30 pm Kosovo news on RTP (Radio Television Pristina) brought every Kosovar in front of its TV screen. Nowadays, there is less interest in everyday Kosovo news. In Pristina, people are no longer seen wandering around holding newspapers; the long-awaited news that Kosovo people sought with impatience is today meaningless. These changes in media interest by Kosovars is regarded sadly by Sylejman Dermaku, chief editor of the biweekly newspaper Shkendia, printed in Pristina. During an interview in December 2004, he declared: "Kosovar readers have become lazier. Obviously, I understand the daily difficulties they face, and financial problems are important for our Kosovar readers and that their income is really small. We also have problems printing the newspaper Shkendia for seven to nine thousand copies, because readers have less interest in reading our newspaper. This is the result of a general lack of interest in reading, states Dermaku.

Even Ibrahim Berisha, writer, journalist and sociologist, reckons one of the reasons for diminishing interest in the media is its focus on Kosovo's current evolutionary and political problems. These issues are not really interesting for Kosovar listeners and readers, who are more concerned about daily social and economic problems. Hence a sinking of interest in the Kosovar media. Ramadan Mehmeti, author and journalist, has the same theory.

He says: "The Kosovars in general are really tired of their daily problems; they are day by day confronted by electricity, water, and primary infrastructure problems, social stress, and a lot of other difficulties. The Kosovo media does not discuss these issues, and

thus auditors and readers become more sceptical. As far as I am concerned, I stopped reading some newspapers, and there are some TV programmes in which I am not interested anymore, because of the reasons explained above." One other reason can be the importance the internet has taken on for people in Kosovo since the war has ended.

Only in Pristina today there are more than 50 internet cafés open around the clock. There is greater interest in the Internet as a medium than media such as newspapers and TV. Following a survey by BBSS Gallup International from a sample of 1,120 respondents, 86.9 per cent of the male population and 91.1 per cent of the female population were found to prefer the media of television among traditional media choices. The older the people were, the more their tendency toward television grew. The assumed level of newspaper readers is less than 10 per cent of the population.

The survey shows that interest in print media comes primarily from the 36 to 45 age group. The importance of the media for auditors and readers in Kosovo is weaker than before; the structure of the media is in need of change, as is the everyday political system in Kosovo. ■

Boom and Implosion

Counting 112 broadcasters and dozens of print media products on one side and a related reading public of only two million people on the other side, the actual Kosovar media market can be described as overcrowded. Is this boom a typical post-war phenomenon or is there still a big bang going to come?

Through focussing on main tendencies of the developing process, the media market and its problematic situation gets clearer. The Kosova media development seems to be a quite uncoordinated process. Attempt to prevent "vigilante journalism" through a media commission or regulatory regime has not been effective till now.

As Isuf Berisha from the Kosova Foundation for open Society describes the situation, "outlets that did not enjoy support from donors disappeared soon after they were launched." As donors now tend to decrease media support, media outlets that could not achieve self-sustainability are affected. In this case it's important to mention that since the war OMIK and NGOs play an important role in the media landscape. Media dying can also be seen as a sign for the loss of international attention. ■

* Kosovo is administered under the civil authority of the United Nations Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244 from June 1999; We deal with Kosovo separately and not within Serbia, because the legal status of the two jurisdictions is very different.



Macedonia: Struggle for Survival

In 2004, both print and electronic media in the Republic of Macedonia have continued to struggle for their very survival and, through no fault of their own, have continued on a downward slide that has not yet reached the bottom. Almost nothing positive has been taking place in the Macedonian media scene in 2004. The aftermath of the financial struggles is much more bitter than anybody expected. The press, daily and weekly newspapers, private radio and television stations, including Macedonia's national broadcaster (which has been undergoing a prolonged and painful restructuring into a public service provider), have ended the year 2004 rather low compared to 2003. Expenditures are on the rise, while circulation and revenues have dropped significantly. Some newspapers no longer exist, and many others have hinted at the possibility of having to close down their offices.

An old anecdote „Nobody waits anymore to enter through the door“, frequently mentioned by local journalists, illustrates the downward momentum that has snowballed in Macedonia during this transitional period. During the Ottoman Empire, the ordinary people, known then as „raja“ used to enter into the quarters of the then head of the province, the „valija“, through the door. Then a bad „valija“,

who ordered people to enter his quarters through a window, replaced the good head of the province. They had been banned from using the door. The people objected against the ban, but could do nothing about it. A new successor, who was even worse than the previous one, then ordered the people to enter his quarters through the chimney. The people begged the „valija“ to let them use the window, which had become a better choice for entry than the chimney. Nobody asked anymore for the door. The question still remains - what will happen when a bad head of province takes power?

Most journalists work without a contract or on a short-term contract. The relationship between authorities and media varied all the way from tolerance to attempts at intrusion and „disciplining“ the media.

At the end, a reference to the aforementioned anecdote is appropriate. The media in Macedonia have slipped downward on the transitional seesaw and now have no other option but „to enter through the chimney“. Nobody can tell whether the media in Macedonia will manage next year to get back to the stage of „entering through the window“. The door is still long way off as far as Macedonia's media is concerned.

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balkan anders

BALKAN anders/ südosteuropäischer Dialog
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The aim of the magazine is to give a differential and detailed picture of Balkans, which might lead to a correction of the often negative impression of the region, based on prejudice and ignorance. Short clippings and quotations from already issued publications about politics, culture, science, religion, history and current problems, which are easy to read, should mediate a multi-coloured picture of South East European countries.

We do not only want to inform about Balkans, than also directly from Balkans, through help of our editors placed in the capital cities of the region.

Editorial staff: Christine von Kohl (responsible), Vedran Dzihic and contributors in all Balkan regions

The magazine is published 6 times a year

in Short

Experts Say Media Market Oversaturated

The Macedonian media market suffers from too many publications in too many languages, too few advertisers and too much political interference, experts told deScripto in December 2004.

According to a survey by the Centre for Media Development, over 150 media, most of them small and unprofessional, are a small part of a stagnant commercial „cake“.

„I do not know any European country, which has such a large number of national concessions,“ says Roberto Belicanec of the Centre for Media Development in Skopje. In order to survive, influential media operations hook up with political elites, who then often treat them as a means to make public their political and commercial interests, he says.

„You cannot get any advertising anywhere, for example for a new magazine, or any other medium that is not politically affiliated. The more independent you are, the less advertising you can get,“ says Jovo Ratkovic, a journalist at Radio Free Europe. He cited the example of generously sponsored Macedonian Television (MTV), which he says provides little public service. „MTV is getting lost, serving special interests and not the people,“ says Ratkovic.



in Short

Criticism of a National Register for Printmedia

The ruling Communist Party plans to pass a law that would require all periodicals and news agencies to re-register at the Justice Ministry's "Unified National Register". Another proposed amendment would have media outlets change their legal status and become non-profit organisations. Several NGOs, editors and journalists have voiced their concern that these actions might lead to the "weeding out" of critical newspapers. OSCE representative of Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, warned: "The distinction between commercial and journalistic activities is difficult and such a move might negatively affect the economic base of a newspaper. Such a move might be perceived as politically motivated, especially in a pre-election period."

New TV Network Founded

Four local TV stations (Telecanal 26, Albasat TV, TV Euronova and TV-Prim) agreed to establish a joint TV production and distribution network in October 2004. The new network, the Euronova Media Group, is estimated to cover over 55 per cent of Moldavian territory. Valeriu Saharneau, president of the Journalists' Union of Moldova and president of Euronova, expects the network to "save independent TV channels from extinction" and improve the quality of the stations' reporting.

Moldova: Propaganda & Censorship

The OCSE Representative for Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, visited Moldova in October 2004 and talked to politicians, journalists and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), about the current state of media freedom in the country. The main reason for the visit was to provide recommendations to the government on how media freedom could be improved.

In his final report, Haraszti gauged estimable developments in the situation of the Moldovan media. He praised the fact that the country had decriminalised libel, which few other OSCE participating states have done. However, the representative remarked, there is no limit on damages in defamation claims. Thus civil defamation suits remain a problem for privately owned media outlets.

Various other points were also criticised by Haraszti in his report, which was published in mid-December.

TeleRadio Moldova (TRM) and the problems it has encountered during its legal transformation from a state broadcaster into an autonomous public service institution, fill many pages in Haraszti's paper. Several problems related to the transformation are discussed in detail. Up until now, there has been no monitoring of TeleRadio's content carried out; despite the fact the new law prescribes it.

Meanwhile, two Moldavian NGOs, the Independent Journalism Centre (IJC) and the Centre for Sociological, Political and Psychological Analyses (CIVIS), have started to monitor the content of Radio Moldova and TV Moldova 1 on a quantitative basis, using the so-called stopwatch method.

"Too Much Government, Few Other Voices"

According to the IJC, the results show a "discrepancy between the real concerns of the people and issues featured in the broadcasts, a bias towards the authorities, (a) lack of diversity of information sources and sometimes even violations of basic human rights" as well as numerous reports containing "open pre-election propaganda."

Just a few days after the NGOs' release and the publication of the OSCE report, the supervisory board of TRM restricted reports about certain activities of the Moldovan Government during the 2005 election campaign.

The BASA-Press news agency reported that from 1 January 2005 campaign information has been limited to one minute of airtime per newscast and to 10 minutes a week. The government attempted to show with this move that it is implementing some of Haraszti's recommendations.

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In Short

Internet Usage Expanding

In October 2004, the Telecommunications Agency claimed that Montenegro could expect an expansion of internet services in the near future. An agency report stated that 12.5 per cent of Montenegrin citizens were using Internet services in 2003, offered by two service providers, MontSky and Internet Montenegro. In 2004, the signals of 13 radio stations, all members of the Montenegrin Association of Independent Electronic Media (UNEM), began live broadcasts over the Internet.

Greek Journalist Sued for Libel

On 9 November, the main hearing in a case against Greek journalist Andrei Nicolaidis, sued for libel by movie director Emir Kusturica, closed before the Podgorica Court. Kusturica had pressed charges against Nicolaidis and the weekly Monitor, alleging damages to his honour and reputation caused by Nicolaidis's April 2004 Monitor article, entitled "The Devil's Apprentice". On 12 November, the Basic Court in Podgorica sentenced Nicolaidis to a fine of 5,000 Euro, or six months in prison. A group of 17 Montenegrin intellectuals protested Nicolaidis' sentence and raised concerns over the condemnation of critical thought, which they called an immanent occurrence in undemocratic regimes.

Labour Dispute

Negotiations were dismissed in November between TRM management and the Committee for Protection of Human and Professional Dignity (CADUP). CADUP consists of a group of journalists who were not rehired after the transformation of TRM to a public broadcaster.

The background: In early 2002, protests against alleged censorship at TRM, supported by more than 300 TRM employees, started a debate on the need for reforms at TRM. After the legal transformation of TRM into a public broadcaster, 190 employees were laid off, while 140 positions remained vacant. There had been fear among journalists that the selection process would penalise employees who had campaigned for transformation.

After the announcement by the selection commission, (that the laid-off employees would not be rehired), dissatisfied TRM employees started to protest, demanding a rerun of the selection process.

In his report, Haraszi criticised the process, stating that "the selection criteria were not clearly defined, and the selection itself was not transparent." He also suggests the selection commission be recreated. As of yet, no agreement between TRM management and the journalists has been reached. ■

Montenegro: Waiting for the Last Man Standing

After almost six months of investigation and speculation into the background and motives of the murder of Dusko Jovanovic, director and editor-in-chief of the main Montenegrin opposition daily Dan, the court trial of main suspect Damir Mandic finally began on 22 November.

Mandic pleaded not guilty to the charges before him and accused the police, the prosecution and the magistrate of "dishonourable work". According to the Asia Africa Intelligence Wire, he was quoted in court testimony as saying he had been threatened and blakmailed for accusing police inspector Vuk Vulevic of the murder. Vulevic has been arrested in connection with the crime, which is being treated as a political assassination.

There has been a great deal of controversy about how much the government, the police and the secret service were involved in this tragedy. The Europe Intelligence Wire reported in July that Mandic had received weapons from the Montenegrin Interior Ministry (MUP).

"I cannot and will not deny that I received automatic rifles from the Interior Ministry," Mandic told Investigating Judge Radomir Ivanovic, according to Dan. "Some of the rifles I distributed to people I was told by the police to give them to. They told me: 'Give these to your comrades so there are more of us'."

Other reports confirm that the car used in the assassination of Dusko Jovanovic belonged to the police. Ekan Jasavic, head of the Podgorica police crime department, confirmed that the car had been impounded by police two years ago and admitted that policemen, including himself, had used it several times.

With this entire finger pointing it is difficult to tell fact from hearsay. Determining who is telling the truth, or who can prove that the other side is not, will be very complicated. The winner may simply be the last man left standing with his reputation intact.

However, no matter how the trial turns out, what remains important is that a fatal attack on a journalist is both an assault on a human being and on freedom of the press itself. Therefore, the case desperately needs to be solved in order to restore the integrity of the political system and to reopen the way toward a stable democracy. ■

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by Solmaz Khorsand and Wolfgang Luef

in Short

Romania Injures Freedom of Expression, Strasbourg Reacts Late

In December 2004, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg condemned Romania for infringing on freedom of expression in the case of the two journalists, Constantin Cumpăna and Radu Mazare. The editors of the newspaper *Telegraf* uncovered a bribe affair in 1995 involving politicians and judges in the city of Konstanza. In the same year, the editors were convicted of proffering insults and criminal libel, and sentenced to seven months imprisonment. Apart from these penalties, another order prohibited them from working as journalists for one year after their prison sentences were over. In November 1996, the Romanian president granted the two journalists a pardon, releasing them from their custodial sentences. It took until December 2004 for the European Court of Human Rights to attack these acts against Cumpăna and Mazare as violations of freedom of expression. The EU-candidate country has often been criticised for its lack of press freedom. Reporters Without Borders also states the growing number of assaults on investigative journalists is alarming.

Romania: Dissensions of a Battle-bent Paper

Romania Libera has always been a battle-bent newspaper. In the era of Nicolai Ceausescu, there had already been struggles around the conservative daily over its political coverage.

Petre Mihail Bacanu, one of the paper's founders, had most especially been a constant thorn in the eye of the ruling Communist Party. Once Bacanu wrote a very critical article about the dictator, which was not allowed to be published. Bacanu was jailed.

Tales of a German-Romanian Relationship

More than 15 years later a new conflict has arisen in the newspaper. Again Bacanu is mainly involved, but his foe has changed.

Now he faces a foreign investor, German *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ). Klaus Overbeck was installed as the executive manager of the paper two years ago.

"There were no problems with WAZ before, till Mr. Overbeck came. Then the problems started," said Romulus Cristea, editor and president of the staff association of Romania Libera in an interview with *deScripto*.

In particular, journalists reproached WAZ's attempts to cut and soften political coverage, and its giving of daily instructions on whom not to criticise. Overbeck was also accused of having opened letters addressed to the editors' offices.

Mutual Accusations

Marcus Beermann, in charge of WAZ's foreign operations, denies the allegations. He emphasises that the conflict started when Bacanu announced he would sell his interests in the paper to WAZ.

He wanted nine million Euros, but WAZ refused. "All that Overbeck did was criticise the quality of certain articles that were badly researched. And not because of their political content," replies Beermann to the accusations.

In September 2004, the conflict reached a peak when the majority of editors around Bacanu revolted. They instructed the printing house to change the front page of the paper on several days. As a consequence, the newspaper was published with critical and libellous headlines against WAZ and its representatives.

According to Cristea, the reason for these actions was the employment of editors not familiar with the paper who then gave instructions to the regular editors about which articles to write. WAZ insists it did not install any new editors.

However, the editors have accused WAZ of editorial influence benefiting the governing socialistic party PSD. In fact, the government is one of the biggest advertisers in Romania. It places various communiqués in papers, as well as ads for parties and state-owned companies.

Did the WAZ Convince Journalists to Report More Balanced?

Manuela Preoteasa, from the EU media portal *EurActiv*, considers this a possible reason for political interference: "I can imagine that even foreign investors could have been put under high pressure by the former Romanian government, and tried to convince the journalists to be more 'balanced'." Furthermore, she points out the necessity of modernising Romania Libera.

Modernising papers is exactly what WAZ claims to do. According to Beermann, WAZ intends to improve the paper's quality by keeping advertising issues separate from the editorial department: "Ad-raising by journalists bears the inherent risk that they will try occasionally to benefit from ads they have personally sold, which also could lead to bribes and unreliable journalism."

Preoteasa asserts that the moment of modernisation was badly chosen. She is sure that modernisation after elections would have facilitated communication and cooperation with the editors.

New Partners - Restored Order

Three months later, the situation stabilised. Bacanu resigned as editor-in-chief and sold his interests to his personal friend Dan Adamescu, a well-known businessman.

He and former major shareholder WAZ now own less than 50 per cent, while the rest belongs to small shareholders.

The owners claim great plans for Romania Libera in the future. They want to improve the technical infrastructure of the paper and publish different regional variations. ■



Serbia: A Question of Honour

Defamation lawsuits are daily events in Serbia. Despite recommendations by international organisations, libel is still prosecuted under the criminal code and punished with draconian sentences.

The draft law on Criminal Offences against Honour and Reputation is not likely to improve this situation.

Milos Vasic has hit the jackpot. The senior writer for the weekly *Vreme* in Belgrade is accused of libelling the prime minister, the justice minister and the interior minister. In a series of articles, he brought to light negotiations concerning the delivery of a suspect in the murder of Zoran Djindjic, former Serbian Prime Minister.

The ministers claim that freedom of media overstepped the boundaries of good intention, while Vasic states freedom of media is under pressure from the officials.

Characteristic Progress

When it comes to confrontations between journalists and politicians, the Vasic story can be seen as characteristic progress. Serbian law has been heavily criticised by organisations such as the European Council, Article 19, SEEMO and the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS). In fact, Articles 92 to 98 of the Serbian Criminal Code are immensely problematic.

According to international standards, defamation and libel should be treated by civil, rather than penal codes. In a joint declaration promoting freedom of expression, UN and OSCE representatives further stress, "defamation laws should reflect the importance of open debate about matters of public concern" and "civil sanctions for defamation should not be so large as to exert a chilling effect on freedom of expression." In Serbian legislation, none of these proposals, nor any others made by international organisations, have been adopted.

Is it all a major assault on the media by current authorities? Criminalisation of defamation is, in fact, quite old. The original Federal Crime Act of 1976 (from the old Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) is, despite some amendments in 1994, still in force.

After the abolishment of the repressive Public Information Law of the year 1998, when new media laws were designed, defamation was left within the penal code.

While in the new Public Information Law essential rights, like free access to information, are guaran-

teed to journalists, the menace of defamation accusations remains.

Reacting to criticism, the current government called into action a working group that was assigned to propose amendments to the existing law.

Conference held in November

This draft was the subject of a conference on libel and defamation held on 11 and 12 November 2004 at the Media Center in Belgrad. In their conclusion the participants, composed of lawyers, journalists and all types of organisations, demanded amendments to the draft before its adoption by parliament.

Besides the incremental abolishment of criminalisation of defamation, a central belief is that Articles 172 and 173, dealing with libel and insult, should be contained within the provisions of article 176. Article 176 does not allow punishment "if the statement has been given within a serious critique in the course of performing an official duty, journalistic profession" etc. Article 19 believes these proposals could be the compromise needed to quickly bring Serbian defamation law up to international standards.

But Serbian journalists have also failed to develop a code of ethics. Journalist Vladan Radoslavjevic points out that "in the large number of tabloids, one can write just about everything" and that "everyday one can find 10 or so articles containing elements of defamation or slander in the press."

However, most of the 300 ongoing cases against journalists are brought against "serious" media and concern articles over the involvement of politicians and businessmen in organised crime and corruption. As Article 19 and NUNS state: "It is a new means of punishing the media in the post-censorship period."

in Short

Helsinki Committee Survey on Media Reporting

Through an analysis of media reporting in Serbia from 26 December 2004, the Helsinki Committee has discovered that the reporting matrix in the country has not changed since the end of the former regime. Ongoing commercialisation of the media sphere is resulting in a decrease of educational information provided by media. Helsinki Committee President Sonja Biserko also stresses that the media does not satisfactorily treat issues from the past.

Draft Law on Advertising Criticised

At a public debate in December 2004 held in the Belgrade Media Center, law experts commented and criticised the most recent version of the Draft Law on Advertising. The working group states that the law does not regulate certain issues, such as the advertising of medicines. According to the law, commercial TV stations would have to reduce commercial programming to 20 per cent, while Serbia's public broadcaster (RTS) would have to step down to 10 per cent of such programming in its daily schedule. Advertising of products such as alcohol and tobacco, would be prohibited.

Libellous anagrams

In December 2004 Editor-in-Chief Zeljko Bodrozic and Editor Vladislav Vujin of weekly *Kikindske* have been sued for publishing several anagrams insulting to local lawyer Slavko Kolarski. According to the newspaper *Danas*, Vujin has been sentenced to pay 20,000 Dinars in damage.

* Serbia is part of the Federation of Serbia and Montenegro. We deal with Serbia separately and not within Serbia and Montenegro, because of the significant autonomy of each of the two Republics.

in Short

Slovenia Takes Over the OSCE Chairmanship

On 1 January 2005, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel officially took over the chairmanship of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe). According to the OSCE, the priorities of the new chairmanship were formally presented to the OSCE's 55 participating states at a permanent council meeting in Vienna on 13 January.

Slovenian Media Coverage of Violence and Crime

Dragan Petrovec is the author of a report, which sets out to prove that the Slovenian media focuses on the most spectacular aspects of violence, out of proportion with the actual amount of violent crimes committed. Petrovec has expressed his concern about this trend. According to his report, available on Ljubljana's Peace Institute web site, sensational, violence-related subjects dominate 79 per cent of all banner headlines on the front pages of Slovenian dailies. According to the International Journalists' Network, Petrovec believes media self-regulatory bodies are needed to control the representation of violence.

Slovenian Journalist Awarded

This year's award for life-long contribution to the development of Slovenian journalism was assigned to Janko Lorenci, acknowledging his dedication to editorial balance, and his scrupulous attempts to uncover all sides of public opinion. Lorenci is the editor of the "Sobotna priloga" section of the daily Delo.

Slovenia: Journalists' Silence Marks The National Parliamentary Elections Day

For the duration of four days, between 3 and 7 October 2004, the Trade Union of Slovenian Journalists organised a general journalists' strike, and Slovenia for the first time in its recent history experienced a media blackout.

By staging the strike on one of the country's prime news days, journalists in the Slovenian media were demonstrating their anger over the refusal of media companies, represented by the Chamber of Commerce, to even talk about renewing national agreements covering journalists' working rights. The intransigence of the employers caused the majority of media to take part in the strike, which primarily consisted of their refusal to report on topics related to elections and politics. The commercial POP TV and the economic daily Finance, both under foreign ownership, were the only strike-breakers.

The aim of the strike was "to preserve, supplement and amend the national collective contract, and to make the representative employers' associations respect it," said the document containing strike rules. The main changes demanded were editorial autonomy, the improvement of freelancers' status, the up-dating of journalists' authorial rights and adjustments of the collective contract to bring it in line with the new working law that came into force in January 2003.

According to the Media Plan Institute, the financial, social and professional position of journalists is especially difficult in smaller media outlets in Slovenia, especially where freelance and honorarium work is commonplace. The main problems for these journalists are low and irregular wages, and the

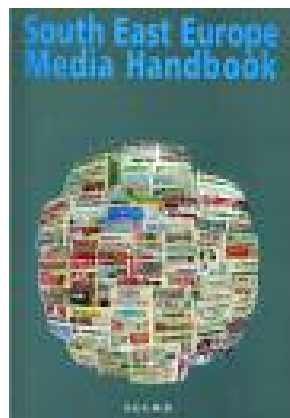
absence of social, health and pension insurance. "They are being exploited," says Iztok Jurancic, the employees' main negotiator, adding that freelancers are paid three times less than employed journalists.

Slovenian journalists had been warning of the necessity to adopt a renewed national collective contract for the profession - regulating issues from journalists' leave and work hours to libel responsibility and special protection of journalists - for a long time. The present collective contract, dating back to 1991, does not protect the rights journalists require in order to openly and independently realise the public right to information.

After some key employers had blocked discussions on a new national agreement in September, the Journalists' Union, representing editorial staff in both private and public media across the newspaper and broadcasting landscape, threatened an all-out strike across all media, beginning on 3 October - the day of national parliamentary elections.

In an attempt to avoid the strike, the union dropped all its demands except the request to start negotiating a renewal of the agreement. However, the Chamber of Commerce, representing the employers, refused.

On 5 October 2004, Slovenian President Janez Drnovsek received the delegation of the Journalists Trade Union, and on 8 October, the first meeting between the Trade Union and the Chamber of Commerce was held in Ljubljana. According to the SAFAX news agency, the negotiators decided talks will be held behind closed doors and expect them to last at least a year. ■



South East Europe Media Handbook 2004/2005

...is a new publication realised by South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). Its aim is to enhance better understanding of the media situation in South East Europe and to serve as a source of information concerning press freedom violations in 2004. Next to detailed country reports, the publication contains a database of all important media in the region. You can order "South East Europe Media Handbook 2004/2005" for a payment of 30 Euro.

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in Short

IPI Concerned About Situation at Star Newspaper

On 8 February 2005, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the International Press Institute (IPI) sent a mutual letter of protest to Turkish officials, expressing deep concern over the situation of the journalists and other workers at Star newspaper. In December 2004, Government took control of Star newspaper's upper management, for financial and political reasons. Immediately after the change of management, the new management fired 682 people without any notice or compensation. Following this action, several employees took this case to the courts and the new management was ordered to reinstate fired journalists and to pay them their respective compensation. However, the Government ignored the decision of the courts and blocked the due legal procedure to reinstate these journalists and media staffers leaving close to 700 Star employees jobless. Both organisations called for taking the necessary measures to reinstate over 650 employees and to pay their compensation.

12 Hours Interrogation

Reporter without borders reported of the case Sebati Karakurt of the daily Hurriyet who was held the 15 October 2004 for 12 hours at the headquarters of the anti-terrorist police in Istanbul. Some 10 policemen searched his home because of a report published a few days earlier that included an interview with Murat Karayilan, the military chief of the former Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), now renamed Kongra-Gel. The report included photos showing female rebels in combat fatigues in a favourable light, relaxed and smiling. Karakurt was released after being interrogated by the police and a prosecutor.

Turkey: A Means to an End - Press Law as The Golden Key to Open EU Doors

Effects follow efforts, so if the Turkish government decides to improve press laws, the EU will react benevolently at first glance. At second glance, one sees the resulting gaps that journalists might fall in.

As part of reform efforts to meet EU entry requirements, Turkey has made several changes to improve press freedom standards. Some of the most repressive restrictions against journalists and under which journalists were prosecuted, such as articles in the Anti-Terror Law and in the Penal Code, have been lifted. A ban on publication and broadcasting in foreign languages has been abolished, allowing the Kurd minority the possibility to air programmes in their own language on TV and radio. The power of the High Council for Broadcasting (RTÜK) has been reduced, but nonetheless, it still holds the right to confiscate TV licences for an "appropriate" reason.

Under the new press law, modified in June 2004, many imprisonment penalties were removed or changed to very heavy fines. Press freedom has been further improved via the adoption of a new Press Law, which abrogates sanctions such as the closure of publications, the halting of distribution and the confiscation of printing machines. However, "the frequency of prosecutions against journalists is a cause of concern," stated the regular European Commission report on Turkey in October 2004.

"Whether the new press law is exercised in practice depends on which newspaper and in which part of the country you work," says Cemal Tartan, correspondent for the German public broadcast group ARD in Istanbul. "If you work in Istanbul, you will have no problems, but the situation will change if you work in the area of Kurdistan," he adds. He emphasises one aspect that will remain difficult for journalists: media coverage of the military. There is almost no coverage of controversial military stories and if there is, the editorial office belittles the story and it is no longer covered in the following days, no matter whether it was interesting or important.

Although there have been a lot of amendments to press law, which have even been approved by the EU, organisations like Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Turkish Trade Union of Journalists (TGS) remain sceptical. "The legislative progress that has undeniably been made should not conceal the fact that the climate remains as harsh as ever for the most outspoken journalists," wrote RSF in a December press release. TGS supports the new press law, which TGS General Secretary Ercan Ipekci says is more liberal than the older one, but it is concerned, for instance, about Article 19 (inside the law) which for-

bids coverage of ongoing court proceedings. "That article may prevent journalists from writing any information about police questionnaires or attorney general investigations rather than only their comments," explains Ipekci to deScripto.

The main problem, according to his estimation, will be some articles in the new Penal Code, which will come into force on 1 April 2005. Articles such as 305 and 127 maintain some controversial aspects that complicate journalists' work and may endanger press freedom. Article 127 punishes insult by three months to three years in prison, with the sentence increasing if the crime is committed by means of the press.

Article 305 punishes alleged "threats against fundamental national interests", which according to RSF targets the freedom of expression, especially on issues like Armenia or Cyprus. Media coverage of Cyprus was specially censored in February 2004, although censorship is prohibited by the constitution. Ipekci reports: "The prime minister requested from editors-in-chief of newspapers and TV companies to apply auto-censorship to news about the Cyprus matter in February 2004." ■

The South East Europe Media Organisation

Staff & Board

SEEMO Secretary General is Oliver Vujovic. SEEMO Board President is Radomir Licina, president of the board of the daily Danas (Serbia). SEEMO Board members are: Remzi Lani, director of the Albanian Media Institute (Albania), Samra Luckin, director of Boram Network (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Stjepan Malovic, director of the International Center for Education of Journalists (Croatia), Georgios Papadakis, editor for Express daily (Greece), Risto Popovski, director of MakFax News Agency (Republic of Macedonia - FYROM) and Ognian Zlatev, director of the Media Development Center (Bulgaria).

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

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

Protecting Press Freedom

One of SEEMO's main activities is protecting press freedom by helping journalists and media outlets in South East Europe. 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 leading regional and international media, national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, politicians, and also public persons and institutions.

In the past, SEEMO has provided direct help to journalists in the region by giving them technical equipment and other assistance. SEEMO also provided the necessary aid to journalists, who received death threats.

Our Members

SEEMO has over 400 editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe as individual members, and over 100 media outlets and institutions as corporate members.

During the last four years, SEEMO has assembled over 3,000 editors-in-chief, media executives, leading journalists and public persons from the region in various meetings. Some of these meetings, like the meeting of editors-in-chief and media executives from Belgrade (Serbs) and Pristina (Kosovo-Albanians), were the first of this kind in history. No one before SEEMO managed to gather such high-level media representatives from Belgrade and Pristina in a meeting. Between 2002 and 2004 SEEMO organised 14 Dialogue meetings between editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe.

Cooperation

SEEMO actively cooperates with international, regional and national governmental and non-governmental organisations and institutions. SEEMO also actively cooperates with other international press freedom and media organisations, and it supports and participates in joint regional and international projects and activities. With partners, SEEMO has organised seminars and conferences promoting European values and ideas (2003, 2004, 2005), ecological philosophy and better transport possibilities in the region (Belgrade

2002 and 2004, Athens 2003 and 2004, Trieste 2004, Sarajevo 2004), a regional conference on investigative reporting (2002), a regional conference on minorities (2002), two conferences for editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists of Roma media in the region (2003), two conferences of editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists of Vlachian – Aromanian media in South East Europe (2004), several conferences on press freedom, the legal situation of media, relations between media and politicians, the public role of parliamentarians, access to information, the right to secrecy of information sources, teaching public relations and communications for governmental officials, Media and tolerance Conference (2004) etc.

Journalist's Education

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. The minority media workshops and seminars took place at the SEEMO Media Minority Center (MMC) in Opatija, Croatia.

deScripto - The Journal of Media in SEE

SEEMO regularly publishes deScripto, a quarterly media magazine for South East Europe, and the South East Europe Media Handbook (SMH), an annual publication covering media developments, which includes selected media contacts.

SEEMO Awards

SEEMO also gives awards for outstanding achievements in the field of media.

The recipient of the "Dr Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding" in 2002 was the Croatian journalist Denis Latin, for his TV-show Latinica (HTV). The 2003 Award was given to Kemal Kurspahic, former editor-in-chief of the Bosnian daily *Oslobodjenje*. He and his team managed to publish *Oslobodjenje* every day in the besieged city of Sarajevo.

The SEEMO Human Rights Award "SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe" is traditionally given on 10 December, International Human Rights Day. In 2002, the Award was given to Christine von Kohl, a fighter for human rights in the Balkan region and editor-in-chief and founder of the Vienna magazine *Balkan - Südosteuropäischer Dialog - Balkan anders*.

In 2003, the Award was given to Nebojsa Popov, one of the leading Serbian human rights fighters and founder of the Belgrade magazine *Republika*. In 2004, the Award was given to Fatos Lubonja, one of the leading Albanian writers, journalists and fighters for human rights.

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

Your Excellencies,

Recent SEEMO Protests

PROTEST KOSOVO, 6 Sep '04

To: Lieutenant General Yves De Kermabon, Commander KFOR and H.E. Bajram Rexhepi, Prime Minister of Kosovo

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), strongly condemns the recent attack on a photojournalist for the KosovaPress news agency.

According to information before SEEMO, on 30 August, Jahja Tmava, a photojournalist for KosovaPress, was covering a protest in Pristina led by the Association of Kidnapped Persons' Families when KFOR (Kosovo Force) police started arresting the protesters. Members of a Swedish KFOR unit seized Tmava's camera and deleted his pictures on the grounds that he was photographing members of KFOR. KosovaPress maintains that he was photographing police as they arrested protesters.

In SEEMO's opinion, this is a gross violation of everyone's right to "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers," as outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

SEEMO condemns the seizure of the reporter's camera and the obstruction of his work by the KFOR police. We demand an explanation for these actions and remind you that providing secure working conditions for journalists is one of the basic principles of every democratic society. KFOR, a NATO-led international force responsible for establishing and maintaining security in Kosovo, should be especially careful when respecting international standards and communicating with journalists.

PRESS RELEASE MOLDOVA, 8 Sep '04

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about the recent attack on a Teleradio Moldova journalist.

According to information before SEEMO, on 6 September, Dinu Mija, a cameraman for Teleradio Moldova, went with his Moldova 1 studio crew to do a report on the situation at the railway switchpoint in

Bender, Moldova, but paramilitary forces close to the Tiraspol regime stopped him from filming. Mija was beaten up and his camera destroyed. He was arrested and is now being held in custody.

We ask the officials in Tiraspol, Chisinau, the Russian Federation and European community to do everything in their power to ensure that Mija is freed, thus preventing the situation in the region from escalating. SEEMO would like to stress that it is crucial for journalists to do their job freely and that independent media are crucial for democratic development in any country.

PROTEST ROMANIA, 9 Sep '04

To H.E. Adrian Nastase, Prime Minister of Romania and H.E. Nicolae Vacaroiu, President of the R. Senate

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe, and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), expresses its deep concern over the attack on two journalists from Ziua newspaper.

According to information before SEEMO, on 3 September, reporter Petre Niteanu and photographer Laura Dobre from the Bucharest-based daily Ziua were attacked by bodyguards and employees of the companies, VGB and BRONEC. The incident happened while they were trying to take pictures of VGB headquarters in Stelutei Street in Bucharest.

SEEMO is further informed that the journalists, who presented their ID cards, were on public property when they were approached and threatened by the bodyguards. The journalists immediately called the police, who, after arriving on the scene, did nothing to protect them. After the photographer was physically and verbally attacked, the police advised the journalists to leave the scene.

SEEMO strongly condemns the attack on the two journalists and urges the Romanian authorities to give their closest attention to the investigation of this case and to find the responsible persons. We would remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental principle of any democratic society and we hope that the Romanian officials will solve this case in a timely manner.

PRESS RELEASE: ROMANIA, 15 Sep '04

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

According to information provided to SEEMO, several media owners have been interfering in the editorial policy of Romanian media outlets.

In SEEMO's opinion such practices are endangering editorial independence and putting journalists

under pressure. Media owners should agree with editors and journalists on media policy and managerial matters in internal agreements and media statutes.

SEEMO acknowledges the owner's right to define the editorial principles of media, but sees a need for internal guidelines, as it is important for journalists to do their job freely and without day-to-day interference or interpretations.

Independent media are crucial for democratic development in any country.

PROTEST BULGARIA, 23 Sep '04

To H.E. Simeon Saxecoburggotski, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria and H.E. Anton Stankov, Minister of Justice

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe, and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about a recent court decision involving the Sofia-based daily newspaper Trud. According to information before SEEMO, the journalist Svetlana Yordanova, editor-in-chief Toshko Toshev and publishing house "Media Holding" were fined 5,000 BGN (approximately 2,500 Euro) following a decision by the Sofia Court of Appeal (SCoA) on 27 July.

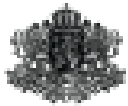
The decision, which was only published on 7 September, stemmed from two articles from the year 1996 about a court case against the former Ministry of Interior official, Nikolai Todorov.

In 1999, Todorov submitted an appeal to the Court asking for damages from Yordanova, Toshev and the publisher.

SEEMO would like to recall that the Sofia City Court (SCC) and the Sofia Court of Appeal (SCoA) rejected Todorov's appeal during the court proceedings (2000-2001), stating that the Trud articles were based on "meticulous investigative journalism." However, the Supreme Court of Cassation returned the case to the SCoA, which then found the newspaper and the journalists guilty of publishing "non-confirmed information."

SEEMO regards the court's decision as a clear threat to freedom of expression in Bulgaria, and asks Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to ensure that the decision is reversed. SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellencies that freedom of expression and a safe working environment for journalists are basic principles of any democratic society.

Justice Minister of
Bulgaria's reaction to
the SEEMO protest



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

1100 Sofia, 1, Slavovska Str., tel.: +359 (0)91 406(switch board), fax: +359 (0)980 92 23

Ref. No. 29-0-173 22. 9. 2004
(Please write)

Your ref. No. _____

MR. OLIVER VUJOVIC
SECRETARY GENERAL
SOUTH EAST EUROPE MEDIA
ORGANISATION (SEEMO)
VIENNA-AUSTRIA

DEAR MR. VUJOVIC,


With regard to your letter dated 23th September 2004 concerning the decision of the Sofia Court of Appeal in the case of the Bulgarian journalist Mrs. Svetlana Yordanova, working with the Sofia-based daily newspaper Trud, the Chief-Editor of the newspaper M.Tosho Toshev and the *Media Holding*, I would like to inform you about the following:

Fundamental principle of the Bulgarian Constitution provided for in its art.8, is the principle of separation of the state power in legislative, executive and judicial branches. According to art.117 (2) of the Basic Bulgarian law the judicial branch shall be independent. In the performance of their functions, all judges, court assessors, prosecutors and investigating magistrates are subservient only to the law. In conformity with the Law on the Judiciary, in their actions or when they decree their acts, the judges take up their stand on Law and the case evidence judged in compliance with their conscience and free belief.

In this context, as a representative of the executive branch, I could not intervene in any way or by any means in the process of the decision-making of the independent Bulgarian Court including the above-mentioned decision of the Sofia Court of Appeal.

As lawyer and citizen I conceive the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press as a corner-stone of any democratic society and I can assure that the Bulgarian Constitution and legislation contain full guarantees for the exercise of those fundamental human rights.

Sincerely yours,



ANTON STANKOV
MINISTER OF JUSTICE
OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

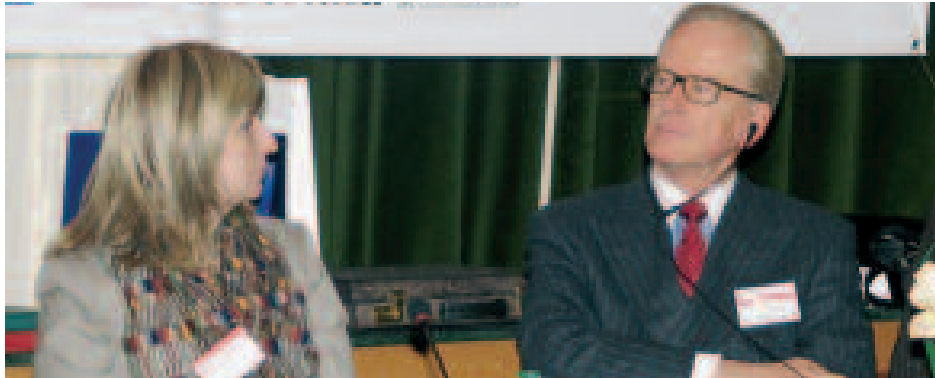
SEEMO Activity Report

SEEMO organised the SEEMO Dialogue Meeting with editors-in chief, media executives, deputy directors and leading journalists from Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Vojvodina (Serbia) between 29-31 October 2004 by Palic lake (near Subotica in Vojvodina, Serbia). Participants discussed the position of minority media and programmes in the public service, together with guests and observers. Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO secretary general, outlined in his opening statement the importance of examining the minority media situation not just in isolation, but in its relationship to the majority press, as well as how the situation differs in varying media spheres, where similarities lie, and how the majority media informs the public about the situation of minorities. Another topic was the privatisation of media in Vojvodina, including the posing of questions such as: "is it possible to privatise the minority media without damaging its existing traditions and how can this be achieved?" and "can a privatised minority media gain governmental support as it did before?" Participants presented problems faced by minority media in Vojvodina during daily work, as well as the successes of some print media in Romania (one positive example was the Jurnalul National). Then there was the story of Magyar Hírlap. Péter Ipper, editor of Magyar Hírlap, and vice-president of the Hungarian Journalists' Association (MUOSZ), received news on his way to the conference that Ringier Publishing House, a Swiss company which owns several papers, had decided to liquidate the paper without any previous notice, throwing 80 journalists into unemployment.

From 19 to 21 November 2004, a follow up to the SEEMO Dialogue Meeting between Editors-in-chief, Media Executives and Leading Journalists of Aromanian / Vlachian Media from South Eastern Europe was held in Tirana.

During the first meeting in Sofia, participants discussed many possibilities within a European context for preserving and promoting a cultural Vlachian identity in South Eastern Europe, while the second meeting came up with some concrete ideas on how this could be achieved. The participants stressed the need to undertake various initiatives to promote Vlachian identity and culture, such as the publication of an Aromanian Balkan newspaper and development of an Aromanian internet centre. Concrete ideas were also presented to the Council of Europe for the opening of a regional satellite TV. The main idea was to bring forward the role of Aromanians as a minority loyal to its roots wherever

members live and highlight their contribution to the material and intellectual progress of their countries. Well-known Austrian human rights activist Christine von Kohl said that in this case we have to learn how to deal with a peculiar minority, transnational in its character and without political claims, which aspires to cultural development. After the conferen-



ce in Tirana a meeting of the SEEMO board was organised.

SEEMO also prepared in past months a conference called Traffic Cooperation between Vienna and Trieste, together with publishing house Bohmann Verlag, TINA and the City of Vienna in Trieste on 20 October, and another conference entitled Traffic Cooperation between Vienna and Sarajevo, together with Bohmann Verlag, TINA and the City of Vienna in Sarajevo on 8 December.

The SEEMO office in Vienna has worked in cooperation with its members in the region since October on a new edition of the SEEMO Media Handbook, which will be published in English (2,500 copies) in March 2005. Copies of the 2004 edition were well-received after being distributed in South Eastern Europe, as well as to some institutions and media outside the region, and SEEMO expects success with the new 2005 edition as well.

Top: Samra Luckin, SEEMO Board Member and Boram, Sarajevo, and Rudolf Bohmann, Bohmann Verlag, Vienna, in Sarajevo, 8 December 2004
Bottom: Meeting of editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists of Vlachian/Aromanian media, Tirana, 19 November 2005

Photos: Slobodan Polic, SEEMO Photo Team, Belgrade - Vienna

Review

PUBLICATION REVIEW

OSCE's Internet Cookbook

by Stefan Apfl

It started in Amsterdam, in August 2004. When the Second Internet Conference was finished, the idea to publish a book about freedom of the internet was born. Four months later, in December 2004, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Hungarian Miklos Haraszti, presented the Media Freedom Internet Cookbook.

The 270-paged publication aims to help users and governments fight “bad content”, for example hate speech, without jeopardising freedom. Is there yet a need for such a guidance? Haraszti seems convinced: “Regulatory activism can lead to suppression of freedom regardless of whether this censorship was intended or came as a consequence of ignorance.” So the surprising feature of the guide may well be the underlying anxiety of the 24 experts contributing essays, that freedom on the Internet does need preservation.

The cookbook's conclusion: Regulation of the Internet should be limited to fields where it is unavoidable. An evaluation of the outcomes of the Media Freedom Internet Cookbook will take place during the Third Amsterdam Internet Conference in 2005.

The publication can be downloaded from www.osce.org

PUBLICATION REVIEW

Danko Plevnik: The Practice of Ethical Journalism

by Oliver Vujovic

This new book by Danko Plevnik is an important guide for every journalist. After publishing several books on this topic in Croatian, his latest effort is in English, opening the door for readers outside the former Yugoslavia region. Interesting headlines, like 'Journalism as corrupted show business?', 'Watchdog versus “war dog” journalism', 'Freedom of the media does not justify all means', 'Do you speak Hostile?' should make the book interesting enough for a professional to open it and read it from end to end. It is important to focus on ethics in journalism in South Eastern Europe, as Plevnik has done, because, as he says, “hate speech in the South Slavic political languages (including Albanian) has not dried up, it has only changed form. It is hushed up now and hiding behind old understatements or, as the case may be, a more modern lack of objectivity.” Those who would like to buy his book can contact Plevnik by email: danko.plevnik@ka.htnet.hr

PUBLICATION REVIEW

Stjepan Malovic (ed.): Richness of Diversity

by Thomas A. Bauer & Igor Kanzaž

Following several international conferences, workshops and research studies on media representation of minorities, Professor Stjepan Malovic from Zagreb University initiated the publishing of a book called “Richness of Diversity”. What happens if the public does not understand the issues of ethnic minorities? What if the public acts out its natural tendency to give power to the majority of people, but ignores its role as an equaliser and succumbs to its own interests in a way that is damaging to minorities? Media pluralism offers the guarantee that one-sidedness (generally of the majority) will not inflict damage on ethnic minorities, because it helps correct a collective lack of understanding. Malovic stated in his article that mass media is one of the key factors in forming a social climate for better understanding of minorities and it is necessary that the media be liberated from discipline and pressures, which limit or determine editorial policy. It is the only guarantee that minorities will not once again become the object of media manipulation.

Funded by the OSCE Mission to Croatia and released as part of the “Media and Society” project, this book provides a sort of a “status report”, revealing the main problems in Croatian reporting on minorities. A group of scientific researchers (who are also involved with the “Media and Society” project) together with the International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ) investigated the relationship between media and ethnic minorities (especially in the realm of presentation and media coverage of different aspects of minorities). The main difference between this book and other similar editions lies in the content structure, as well as in the “diversity” of authors. That is, Malovic managed to bring together scientists, journalists and researchers from different institutions, enabling him to tackle the issue from several different perspectives.

Professor Sinisa Tatalovic, a member of the Governmental Council for Minorities, accentuates the main problems in minorities' backgrounds in Croatia. Summarising the review of achievements in rights of ethnic minority members in the Republic of Croatia, Tatalovic stresses that the right to cultural autonomy (even as it is being organised) is best helped along by members of ethnic minorities that have already been through such a process, perhaps even before the establishment of the independent Republic of Croatia. Citizens of former Yugoslavia who live in the Republic of Croatia factually became

members of ethnic minorities by acts of international recognition. They are still in the organising phase, in the sense that they are still seeking complete achievement of their minority rights. National minority status in the Republic of Croatia is sometimes being developed only within Croatia and sometimes in cooperation with the international community. Among other things, such efforts have resulted in the passing of constitutional rights for ethnic minorities.

Professor Thomas Bauer from Vienna University provides theoretical orientation for the cultural practice of social cooperation. He concentrates on the cultural problems of diversity in reference to identity or ethnocentrism within the framework of a cultural explanation of communications or a communication-theory-based explanation of culture.

These theoretical fundamentals are followed by the study of real media reports. Particularly useful are practical experiences and media analysis provided by people who are both researchers and journalists, such as Stojan Obradovic from STINA news agency. As suggested in "Richness of Diversity", media coverage of returning refugees showed there are serious problems in media presentation, especially in the areas of everyday life where problems in communication between the minority and the majority still exist. This trend was easily recognised in journalists' reporting, thanks to a content analysis of Croatian dailies conducted within a three-year period by two young researchers, Berto Salaj and Igor Kanizaj, from Zagreb University. Text analyses of five daily newspapers show that minorities are represented in the political sections of dailies (meaning they are a political subject). Government representatives, minorities themselves and international organisations still exclusively refer to minorities as a political issue. However, the problems of minorities go far beyond political negotiations and the fight to vote; the cultural, social and economic aspects of their lives, which are a part of reality, have been completely marginalized.

Professor Alemko Gluhak, a former journalist himself, followed changes in meaning of the Croatian noun *nacija* (nation in ethnic sense, people) and adjective *nacionalan* (national, ethnic). Recently, they have been influenced by the English words *nation* and *national*, which has changed their meaning somewhat. Finally, using qualitative analysis, Gordana Vilovic analysed how weeklies report on minorities. Her results are illustrated by many provocative news reports published in Croatia's two biggest weeklies, *Globus* and *Nacional*. She attempted with her study to highlight the most common ethical traps, which become visible when one monitors the problems, work, life and events of ethnic minorities in Croatia. Attempts to provide correct, balanced

and unbiased coverage of ethnic minorities are still not satisfactory, yet there are encouraging steps on the path to fair and full reporting in the majority of eminent national media – including newspapers and electronic media. There are still intentional and accidental errors, but much less than during the last 10 years. Texts and headlines in newspapers that encourage stereotyping and prejudice are still present. However, the acceptance of Croatia as a candidate country for the European Union and the importance placed on systematic care to ensure the honest treatment of members of all minorities and protection of minority rights increases the responsibility of journalists reporting on minorities. Monitoring, analyses and research of media presentation of minorities so far conducted show that although the number of mistakes has declined, there are still a considerable examples of articles and texts which are ethically debatable.

Although "Media and Minority" is primarily directed at NGO activists, journalists and students, its popular style also makes it attractive to the wider public.

PUBLICATION REVIEW

Adrien Collin / Granville Williams: *Eastern Empires – Foreign Ownership in Central and East European Media: Ownership, Policy Issues and Strategies*

by D. Süssenbacher

Recognising the problems that arise in the collection of detailed information and analyses in a media landscape characterised by permanent transition, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) initiated a report illuminating ownership networks in post-Communist Europe. The report aims to clear away the opaqueness dominating media policy in many South East European (SEE) countries. The experts have tried to close an enormous information gap by highlighting main trends and policy issues, as well as their impact on media policy and ownership. The authors aspire to provide orientation and advance awareness for important aspects of global market colonisation. Focusing on Central and East European (CEE) countries, which will later form part of an enlarged European Union, the report provides an outstanding review of the widespread variation in "attitudes and policies towards media regulation, ownership, and the status of public service."

MEDIA AND JOURNALISM IN TRANSITION

by Ellen Mickiewicz

At Duke University, in North Carolina, I direct the DeWitt Wallace Center, part of the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy. I teach about media and national security, media and democracy, and media and change in Russia. Others in our Center cover such questions as Internet and regulation, media concentration, social and race issues, the political economy of news, technology, and a great deal more. Our Visiting Media Fellows Program for is the largest and most international in the United States.

It was a unique pleasure to take these exceedingly modern interests to Ancient Olympia, where the Kokkalis Foundation runs a seminar on media and Southern and Central Europe. Every day was a study in contrasts between the pervasiveness of digital satellite and cable signals in the media world and in the museum world the unchanging, balanced inner life of Athena's majesty and Apollo's inexorable judgment.

In July, I shall again direct the seminar, together with two outstanding faculty members: Slavko Splichal, the noted expert on media change under socialism and public opinion and the public space. Slavko is a distinguished professor in Slovenia whose work is well known the world over. Jan Culik teaches at the University of Glasgow, transplanted to Scotland from his native Prague, where he earned his doctorate at Charles University. Jan is both an academic scholar and a creative force in media. He has made animation

films, reported for Radio Free Europe, and done a documentary, *Orpheus Through the Ages*. Perhaps it's only fitting that he will come to teach in Greece.

Last year, the seminar was one of the most exciting and diverse I've taught. Professional journalists, academics working on their theses, NGO officials came from Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Belgium, Bangladesh, the United States, Bosnia - Herzegovina. They had many different ideas and experiences with newspapers and television—as well as with the suppression of media, the practice of censorship and governmental and commercial constraints on the ability of journalists to function in good conscience. The seminars were packed with significant and dramatic media questions. They did not have to be hypothetical. They were essential to making over a large part of Europe that had recently regained its own political space.

We bring together many disciplines and the reading assignments are demanding. But at the end of the two weeks, some common media myths have fallen under the weight of scholarly scrutiny; the importance of evidence and where to find it has surfaced; and trends in technology and global interdependence have enlarged the scope of the media world—for better or worse—far beyond national borders.

This year promises to be as meaningful and significant. Thinking rigorously about the press and journalism in all its forms is vitally important, especially for the leaders of the future.



Ellen Mickiewicz

Much of Ellen Mickiewicz's work has focused on prospects for media and transition. The Commission on Radio and Television Policy, founded by former U.S. president Jimmy Carter and directed by Dr. Mickiewicz, brought together leading media decision makers from the United States, the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and continues to meet in Vienna under the direction of co-chairs Dr. Mickiewicz and Dr. Erhard Busek. Dr. Mickiewicz continues her collaboration with President Carter on matters of media in transitional countries, particularly Africa and Latin America and works with Mrs. Carter on her advisory board on mental health journalism.

Dr. Mickiewicz was the first American to be honored by the 120,000-member Journalists Union of Russia for her contribution to the development of democratic media in the region. She is author or editor of numerous journal articles and of seven books including her most recent *Changing Channel: Television and the Struggle for Power in Russia* (published by Oxford University Press in 1997 and in an expanded paperback edition by Duke University Press in 1999). An earlier book, *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union* (Oxford University Press), won the Electronic Media Book of the Year award of the National Association of Broadcasters and the Broadcast Education Association. In 1997 Dr. Mickiewicz was given the Murray Edelman Career Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Political Communication by the American Political Science Association.

She is a graduate of Wellesley College and received her doctorate with distinction at Yale University. She held a Guggenheim Fellowship and is currently a trustee of the Wenner-Gren Foundation and a member of the Governing Board of The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX). She also serves on the editorial boards of the *International Journal of Press and Politics* (Harvard University) and *Political Communication*.

OLYMPIA SUMMER SEMINARS 2005

July 5-18

International Journalism, Communications, and the Media

in collaboration with

Duke University's DeWitt Wallace Center for Communications and Journalism

and

The Interscientific & Intercultural Center of Olympia

Using methods, models and insights from several disciplines—political science, political economy, political psychology, sociology, history, and philosophy—this is a concentrated and comprehensive seminar on one of the most pervasive and significant phenomena of our time: the relationship between mass media and democracy.

It seeks to illuminate how the media cover politics and public policy and will examine media institutions and their effects, particularly in Eastern and Southern Europe, where post-Communist transitions have provided both unique challenges and unique opportunities.



The seminar will also broaden the context to include global trends in technology and fragmentation of audiences. Underlying these changes are serious implications for the advertising model in the United States and in regulations of the European Union.

The program will help the participants to gain purchase on the most important theoretical and practical models likely to affect the region for some time to come.

Held in Ancient Olympia and set against the backdrop of the beautiful and historically-rich Peloponnesian region of Greece, the Olympia Seminars provide a unique opportunity for critical thinking and intellectual interaction in a relaxed environment.

The admission process officially opens on the 28 February 2005. The deadline for all applications is 20 May 2005.

Eligible to apply are graduate students, researchers, media practitioners, journalists, editors, young communications specialists, and NGO representatives who have a demonstrated interest in the topics of the seminar. Applications by outstanding senior undergraduates with relevant professional or internship experience will also be considered. A limited number of full and partial scholarships will be awarded on the basis of merit and need.

For more information about the seminars content, admissions procedures, and scholarships please visit the Kokkalis Foundation website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.kokkalisfoundation.gr" www.kokkalisfoundation.gr](http://www.kokkalisfoundation.gr) or contact the program coordinator Kristin Fabbe on +30 210 668 2724 or at [HYPERLINK "mailto:kfab@kokkalisfoundation.gr" kfab@kokkalisfoundation.gr](mailto:kfab@kokkalisfoundation.gr).

Review

STRUCTURAL DEVELOPEMENT

JETiC: European Tempus Program for Journalism

by Thomas A. Bauer

“Tempus” is a programme through which the European Commission supports societal developments in South East and East European countries. Within the TEMPUS framework, JETiC has been established as cooperation between the International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ) in Opatija, the University of Zagreb, the High School of Journalism in Lille, France, and the University of Vienna in Austria. It concentrates on sustainable journalism education and professionalism.

JETiC is initiating sustainable high-quality media staff training. It is a complex institutional building project, since it does not only develop a system of sustainable training, but also prepares the chosen environment for an increased quality in media reporting (for example, in Croatia). The project uses very democratic and decentralised techniques. For example, every “JETiC trainer” (20 trainees will have certificates endowed by the end of the project) can be an institution unto him/herself, but is at the same time under supervision and (quality) control by existing training institutions (ICEJ and the University of Zagreb, as well as other international institutions due to finance future upgrading projects). The main goal of the project is to establish a name for “JETiC Seminars”, so they are equated with quality in media reporting (in Croatia), which in turn should guarantee lasting and strengthening interest by media staff in education and training beyond the end of the project. To guarantee acceptance of this raised quality in media reporting among the general public (the end consumers in the media reporting process), JETiC is also providing lectures for the general public (in the form of 15 free, accessible meetings). It is also making special attempts to target politicians and other public people (who often have input into the media reporting process). Furthermore, JETiC provides two-day conferences intended to generate state-of-the-art knowledge in the fields of media reporting and dissemination among Croatian opinion-leaders and decision-makers.

If you are interested, please contact Professor Stjepan Malovic, ICEJ Zagreb at: smalovic@hnd.hr

Preview

Conferences, Seminars and Courses in the Region

SEEMO/IPI CONFERENCES

Info: info@seemo.org

Presentation by Johann Fritz, IPI Director

28 April 2004, Hrvatsko novinsko društvo (HND), Zagreb, Croatia

SEEMO Dialogue Conference Bosnia-Herzegovina Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro

June 2005, Opatija, Croatia

MEDIA CENTAR Sarajevo

Info: info@media.ba

Media Management Training

14 February 2005 - 18 February 2005

Communication Skills Workshop

28 February 2005 - 1 March 2005

Training for Youth Radio Stations

2 March 2005 - 4 March 2005

Training for Media Managers

14 March 2005 - 18 March 2005

Media Literacy Workshop

4 April 2005 - 10 April 2005

Investigative Reporting Blended Learning Program

10 April 2005 - 13 April 2005

Media Management Training

18 April 2005 - 22 April 2005

Training for Community Radio Stations

27 April 2005 - 29 April 2005

School of Strategic Communication

March 2005 - June 2005

PEACE INSTITUTE Ljubljana

Info: info@mirovni-institut.si

Freelance Journalists - Ways out of the grey zone - SEENMP media policy conference

The two-day conference will bring together 30-35 key stakeholders from SEE - representatives of journalists' trade unions and associations, freelance journalists, media analysts, researchers and experts, as well as policy makers and media managers. The conference will be aimed at raising awareness and discussion, and at encouraging all stakeholders to continue debate, examination and solving of the freelancers issue in their home countries.

1 - 2 April 2005, Ljubljana, Slovenia

ICEJ Opatija

Info: icej@hnd.h

UNIDEA European media training

25 - 27 February, Opatija, Croatia

UNIDEA European media training

11 - 13 March, Opatija, Croatia

Media Thursday at 19

17 March, Zagreb, Croatia

TEMPUS ToT course

18 - 19 March, Zagreb, Croatia

UNIDEA European media training

18 - 20 April, Opatija, Croatia

SEENPM Croatian national parks study trip

13 - 17 April, Opatija, Croatia

Specialized Libraries

21 - 22 April, Opatija, Croatia

Media Thursday at 19

21 April, Zagreb, Croatia

TEMPUS ToT course

22 - 23 April, Zagreb, Croatia

Microsoft Windays konferencija

24.-29. April

Media Thursday at 19

19 May, Zagreb, Croatia

HRT Workshop

23 - 28 May, Opatija, Croatia

HRT Workshop

30 May - 04 June, Opatija, Croatia

ALBANIAN MEDIA INSTITUTE

Info: info@institutemedia.org

Media and Citizens Forum

Training course, Balkan Trust for Democracy and Albanian Media Institute, Korca, February 2005

Webmasters' Course

Training course, UNESCO and Albanian Media Institute, February 2005, Tirana, Albania

Public Administration and MediaTraining course with spokespersons of the state police in different districts
February 2005, Tirana, Albania**Challenge 2005 Forum**Meeting of well-known journalists and analysts with key persons in the political sphere, such as Prime Minister, opposition leader, main diplomats, etc.
every month until summer elections, Tirana, Albania**Reporting Terrorism**Training course on reporting terrorism, with the participation of journalists from all countries in the region, SEENPM and Albanian Media Institute,
March 2005**ANEM Belgrade**

Info: anem@anem.org.yu

Investigative journalism

14 - 18 February, 7 - 11 March, 11 - 13 April, Belgrade, Serbia

Digital editing - students

7 - 9 March and 4 - 6 April, Belgrade, Serbia

Course for radio hosts

14 - 18 March and 4 - 8 April, Belgrade, Serbia

General course in journalism

28 March - 1 April

UNION OF CYPRUS JOURNALISTS Nicosia**European Neighborhood Policy - Trade and cooperation in the South-eastern Mediterranean**

The aim of the seminar is to introduce the journalists from EU member- states to the new European Neighborhood Policy, what it means and especially what it means for Cyprus as the bridge between Europe and the Middle East.

16-17 March 2005, Nicosia, Cyprus

Women Journalists in the EU - Integration ProcessWorkshop by the European Federation of Journalists
Women journalists nominated by the member-Union of the EU region and new EU countries are invited to participate. Representatives from the other European countries are very welcome as well. The participants are both journalists and trade-unions.

May, 2005, Nicosia, Cyprus

OTHER**Media Fair**

2-4 March 2005, Novi Sad, Serbia

Info: info@nsfair.co.yu

Sat TV Show

April 2005, Belgrade, Serbia

Info: satelitv@eunet.yu

Thessaloniki Documentary Festival

1-10 April 2005, Thessaloniki, Greece

Info: newhoirzons@filmfestival.gr

Belgrade Documentary and Short Movie Festival

Belgrade, Serbia, 20-24 April 2005

Info: kratkimetar@fest.org.yu

International Festival of Local TV Broadcasters

8-11 June 2005, Slovakia

Info: festival@festival.sk

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On November 1st 1928 aired the first program produced by the Radio-Telephone Broadcasting Corporation, as the public radio service was named in the official setting up papers, published at the end of 1927. From the very beginning, the public radio station addressed to all Romanian citizens, contributing to their education, to forming civic conscience and strengthening communitarian cohesion necessary for the democratic development of the Romanian society. Its mission is given by components such as: informing, educating, promoting culture, entertainment, promoting Romania's image and economical-social-communitarian unity.

www.srr.ro

Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation



Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune