

deScripto

A Journal of Media in South East Europe

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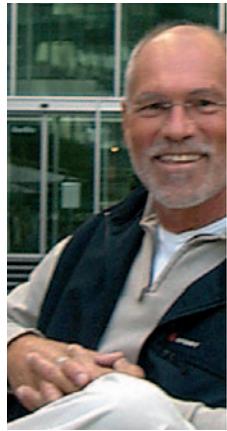


DOSSIER

Social Security

COUNTRY FOCUS

Moldova



Letter from Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

Interests need to be communicated and organised in order to become effective. Or even more: the communication of interests needs to be organised and the organisation of interests needs to be communicated. That is especially true for professional interests within media organisations, where journalistic interests often clash with economic and managerial interests. Journalists are equipped for the expectations of the public; managers are equipped for target groups and their willingness to spend money. Managers have to look after quotas; journalists have to take care of public opinion and quality conditions for constructing it. Not only in private media companies but also in public media institutions the fight for professional rights and interests necessitates a lot of attentiveness.

The deScripto editorial group thought it would be good to present you with the topic of social factor in media work, as it is a crucial feature for media quality, organisational quality and professional quality. Professional carriers in media - to certain extent - are dependent on social character of media organisations, organisational character of associated interests (trade unions), or even on associative character of people - journalists, editors, and managers.

Reflecting that topic deScripto hopes to contribute to the media-related discourse in the SEEMO-member countries and to enrich the discourse with ideas of a democratic media culture.

Thomas A. Bauer, Editor-in-Chief



Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers,

Bulgaria and Romania are, since 1 January 2007, new EU members. I hope that this means that investigative reporters in both countries will have it easier in the future if they would like to present in the publicity a story about corruption, smuggling or another criminal activity, but also that investigative journalists will receive more help from the state in a case of threats from some criminal groups.

However, the a disturbing feature of 2006 was that there are still groups, individuals, but sometimes also governments, in South East Europe, who prefer silence to journalists practicing their profession. Different methods are used to ensure that news never reaches those who have the right to the information. We have still a culture of secrecy. Also, although we do not need state-run media; the reality is that this is the media in South East Europe we have. As a former journalist I miss real and professional public radio and TV in most countries in the region. It means we need still a public broadcasting system that is independent from the state and government, and where a journalist can broadcast, if she or he has for example a story about the

president of the state, is free to publish it and not have any negative consequence.

In 2006 in the daily work in all countries of South East Europe there were lot of new on-line publications, on-line newspaper editions in addition to the regular paper. This is very good. What I see also as very important in 2006 is the fact, that use of blogs on internet became very popular in this part of Europe. A blog is a website generated by the user. Blogs are giving everyone a chance to report about an interesting topic. Blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject, but some function as personal online diaries. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of a blog. We should be aware that the emergence of blogging has internationally also brought a range of legal liabilities. Worldwide, several cases against bloggers have been brought before national courts. I think blogs will be an important topic in 2007.

*Oliver Vujovic, Publisher
SEEMO Secretary General*

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civic society in the SEE Region.

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

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The Dignity of Work

Work is a joint venture of all members of an organisation; and a question of socio-ecological conditions. But the firm believe in joint forces often just produces red blossoms.

by Thomas A. Bauer

Red is a wonderful colour. It signifies the absolute will of defence, of fight, and of revolution; in the context of labour market policies, it always has stood for the will not to accept unpleasant or unfair conditions or any disadvantages. Red is the colour of liberation and of emancipation, it anticipates the right of any dignity and assembles people

As we discover that our society becomes increasingly a media society, more than ever before we have to be aware that we need to take care of the conditions of social sustainability

living under similar conditions, and makes them see that they have to get associated, united, and organised in order to be strong against structural power or against the madness of despots. Through that interpretation, it became the colour of the left wing. A recent example for that is Hugo Chavez, the present president of Venezuela, who bathes any public appearance of his policy in red colours – thus stating his strong structural intervention against privileged classes through united forces of less privileged ones he is supposed to represent. It is an easy language to express sympathy, to communicate empathy, to share the fight against suffering, and to make people believe they participate in power. Red is a wonderful colour. It works wonders, performs miracles, and maintains myths.

Myths are an important tool for communicating ideas. They construct a thinkable reality, in which hopes come true, suffering gets sense, and the real existence gets embedded in a wider world of significance. Togetherness and unity often have been an object of myth. At least that! Social utopias need a form to survive, even if it is in myths

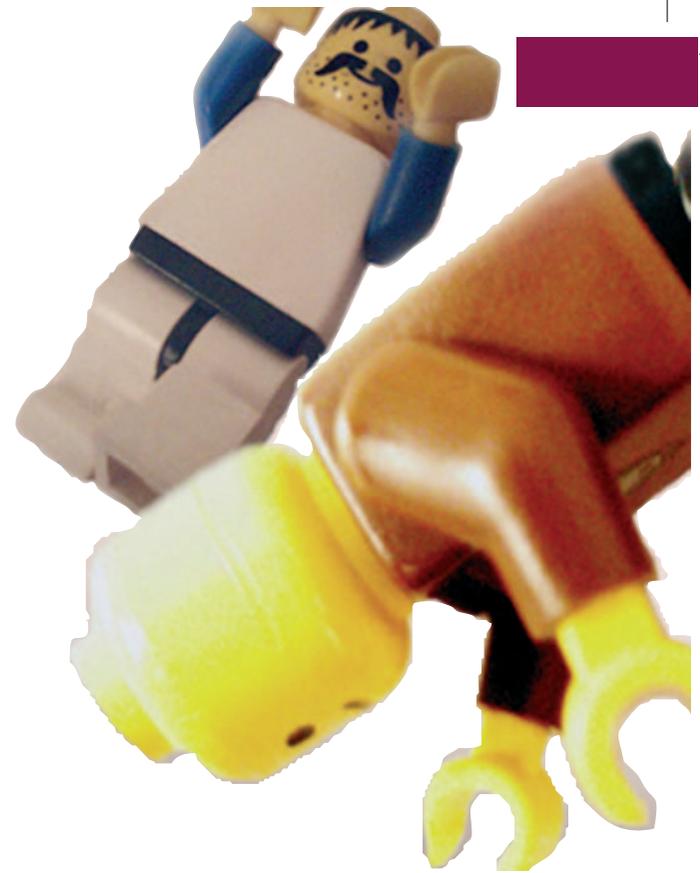
or in symbols, since they are not empirical facts by themselves. Justice, sustainability, dignity, autonomy, choice and freedom of choice – just to name some of the social key values – are normative concepts, which indeed need the connection to the world of experience but cannot be deduced from it. Concepts of values, models of perception and constructions of preference have to be defended against a reality that is satisfied with its own lot and against systems that are captured in and by themselves. And always the social dimension is a factor in it. Since values are not a matter of nature but one of culture, the social climate is the atmosphere, in which concepts of perception get generated or changed.

As we discover that our society becomes increasingly a media society - which means that we shift the construction of social relationship from direct to indirect and increasingly media-made relations - more than ever before we have to be aware that we need to take care of the conditions of social sustainability. That is, to ensure that the social (which is by far a media) development follows a scenario in which the cultural quality of social relationship is assured for our generation and in which, at the same time, the option of choice for the future generation is not gambled away. This concept of a fair distribution of wealth among and between generations, without accumulating social or cultural burdens which are then left to the next generation, is an integrative concept of value. In connection to that, here are some maxims to be acted upon:

Equity and distributive justice between generations, between workers and between social classes. To delegate any mortgages to next generations or to next neighboured classes is not only an act of social violence, it is also an act against one's own and others' dignity.



f Work



Covering a humane industrial environment is a necessary element of competence for social future. This is a claim which has been brought up in all historic fights for social justice and against the careless neglect of social factors of unemployment, of raising gaps between poor and rich, and of the borders of welfare growth.

All this shows that social sustainability is a question of three perspectives, taken into a cultural involvement of ecological, economic and social capacity of future. Of course there is a fourth one that always is present and that enables the other ones: the institutional perspective. Development needs institutional or at least collective mechanisms in order to become accepted. Institutions take care of goals and of their verification; they develop synergy and realise potentials of conflicts. As it is always possible that individuals compete for advantages at other's expenses and it is necessary that there is an institution that overtakes leadership in combination and concentration of interests. Constructing communities of interest usually does that.

What that has to do with the work-relationships? Quite a lot. Firstly, most of our societal relations are developed within the context of work, in organisations, companies, groups, and are therefore defined in roles, assignments of competences and expectations. Secondly, the work-relationships are to a wider range functionalised and serve the economy. This precondition causes us to forget to seek relations because we come into relation – which would be the intrinsic value of relation. In an organised environment we seek more for relations as a tool for interests – which are more an extrinsic understanding of relationship. The culture of relationship especially in media organisations is a highly sensitive factor, since there many persons – mostly journalists - working under pressure of assertiveness, credi-

bility and reputation, despite all challenges sometimes in a managerial environment where money, transaction volume and return always counts first.

Working in a media organisation is, as everywhere, a question of social circumstances. But working as a journalist within a media organisation is more than just that: it is also a question of circumstances that give free hand to research and to write what is what. Such a condition has to be pro-

The dignity of work is not only to be somehow of use, it is also to be within social relations and vice versa: social relationships protect the dignity of work

vided by the company or by the organisation but has to be done and made true by the system of mutual awareness among the journalists and media executives. Common values need a structure of community – which is the cultural model of social relationship.

The dignity of work is not only to be somehow of use, it is also to be within social relations and vice versa: social relationships protect the dignity of work. The belief in power gained through association and union is the precondition of will for organisation of synergy. Red is a colourful code for that condition of work dignity. Nevertheless, I strongly doubt that any colour, as long just used as a code for resistance, can mobilise the efforts that are necessary in organising conditions of life in dignity. Red is a wonderful colour. It works wonders and maintains myths. ■

In Search for the Truth

Social Reporting and Investigative Journalism in South East Europe

When one thinks of social topics and the communication about them in public, it is impossible not to come across journalism. Especially in the so-called transformation or developing countries, journalists are confronted with many issues which have to be explored, no matter if they are about secret archives or corrupt politicians. Therefore South East Europe is no exception to the rule. Based on interviews with reporters from the area, this article tries to explain the current situation of social and investigative journalism.

by *Armibe Ahmedi and Christoph Griessner*

Journalists in South East Europe, who want to inform the public about the reasons and backgrounds of different social topics, do not always have an easy task. They have to face various obstacles to get all

„You can become an editor-in-chief of the biggest newspaper in the country even if you have not finished secondary school“

Maja Milavic

the information they want and need. Sometimes, it is even necessary to take those organisations or institutions that do not want to give access to different documents to court. A good example for this is the story of Alexenia Dimitrova, who has worked for 22 years as an investigative reporter in Bulgaria. The institutions of the authority “don’t expect the journalists to be so brave and stubborn [...] to bring them to court because this is a very difficult and long procedure. They just expect that I will keep silent and forget the case. But this is not me, I prefer to go to court and to finish this.”

Although this example shows us how good and high the quality of journalism could be, it is far from being a regular occurrence in the area of South East Europe. As Maja

Milavic, a freelance journalist from Bosnia and Herzegovina reported, the majority of journalists in her country even do not have a proper education regarding their profession. So in these countries “you can become an editor-in-chief of the biggest newspaper in the country even if you have not finished secondary school.” As one can easily see this cannot lead to the development of a high quality journalistic system. Writing commentaries on political issues or other important topics demands in every case more than what is called general knowledge. Especially in the countries of South East Europe, where the societies are going through a huge transformation, there is a necessity for both well researched and well written articles, which try to go deeper into the subject and enlighten certain incidents, so the readers can make up their own mind about what is going on around them. Only in this way can journalism fulfil its main function which is to offer the basic input for the people to think for themselves and judge what is right and what is wrong. It seems Dimitrova and Milavic also follow these goals when writing an article, even if they are not always able to change something - for example within the political or social system. If at least one person in the whole country is moved by the article to change his or her

mind “in the right direction”, it was worth the effort. There can be various reasons for one’s decision to become a social or investigative journalist. It can be the wish to research and try to find as many sources as possible and to be able to put all that information into an article. According to Dimitrova, this is the only way to give every person and every different view concerning the topic the possibility to reach the public. On the other hand, for Milavic the war in her home country influenced her decision to become an investigative journalist, so she could inform society about the real background of the last decade and, for example, also hinder persons with a dubious past taking important and powerful positions in the political elite.

Dimitrova as well as Milavic are working for foreign publishers. In the case of Dimitrova it is the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitungen (WAZ) group from Germany which bought the daily newspaper 24 Chassa about ten years ago. Differently to this, Milavic used to work for the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), BHT 1 public television, Radio Deutsche Welle, Studentski FM Radio and Radio Kameleon, but nowadays works as a freelancer and writes analytical reports for the European Information Consulting Organisation with headquarters in Vienna. This organisation is a project set up by Austrian experts, with an aim of gathering analyses on political and economic topics from the potential EU member states. Although she now rather writes reports than journalistic articles, Milavic says that the preparational work and research does not differ at all to that of a investigative journalist. They both seem to be glad about the opportunity to work with foreign publishers as then no one can set limits on their work.

“I am lucky to have an Austrian employer who on the one hand gives me financial security and on the other hand the liberty to make independent research,” says Milavic who furthermore heard from colleagues working for domestic publishers in South East Europe that their working conditions are far from being supportive for their research or for anything that has to do with their job. There were cases where the reporters did not get wages for more than one year. According to Milavic this makes them susceptible to political corruption which means that they have to write false articles about certain politicians who finance them.

It is undeniable that the transformation and liberalisation of the market will bring an improvement to this situation but it still has a long way to go before the media system in South East Europe reaches a level that can be compared to other western countries. Also liberalisation and privatisa-

tion may not automatically lead to a higher qualitative level of journalism as we can recognise in liberalised democracies where journalists work under extreme time pressures and which makes thorough investigations almost impossible. But what can be said is that social reporting and investigative journalism will play an important part during the transformation and after it because both forms take a special place within journalism. They could be seen as the ideal forms, concerning the common definition of journalism: to identify deplorable states of affairs within society, uncover these and to let the society recognise these affairs through a journalistic article. Through social reports, one can more or less show the society a new point of view and thus make clear which things are going wrong and what has to be improved. These forms of journalism also make use of the clichés one might have about journalism: the idea of the

Through social reports, one can more or less show the society a new point of view and thus make clear which things are going wrong and what has to be improved

classic “outlaw hero”, who works and investigates on his or her own to uncover such topics. Also the criticism and control functions of the media can be seen in this tradition of journalism.

Social reporting is also marked by social science journalism, which is distinguished by the image of the reporter as a research scientist and follows a scientific approach within the research of facts. It concentrates on the report objectives and is neutral about a special topic which is, or should be, important for a society. A famous example for journalists in this tradition is the Austrian journalist Viktor Adler, who practised journalism with social science approaches aiming to initiate social reform as early as the 1880s. The social reporter searches for stories and topics in everyday life, tries to investigate those and present them in a way which makes it obvious for everyone that there is something going wrong. It does all this with the help of social science, journalism and the strategies of social reporting.

Alexenia Dimitrova and Maja Milavic can stand as an example for the definition of investigative and social reporting journalism as described above, especially for the region of South East Europe. Both of them agree that the sort of journalism they are practising has an important influence on the development of their society. And even if the conditions in the future will not support investigative reporters, they will continue to ask uncomfortable questions and write articles about topics that are taboo. ■

Wanted: New-C and Ambitious

Whoever wants to become a successful journalist, first of all has to gain professional experience. The young journalists therefore fight their way through internships and work as casual employees or freelancers. "Social security" is something they do not necessarily know.

By Lisa Frey

“

There are a lot of young journalists who are waiting for a permanent job in journalism. But it is more and more difficult to get a permanent job. They work as freelance collaborators for years," the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (Sindikata Novinarstva Hrvatske - SNH) exposes the situation of young journalists. According to labour law,

"We have a big mess in journalism - it has become almost impossible to protect the profession."

Marinka Boljkovac

young journalists in Croatia should be paid for their work even as trainees. The problem is that "some bad employers do not pay remuneration for the work of journalists," explains Marinka Boljkovac, SNH Secretary. In those cases, the SNH has to file law suits in order to make employers pay their journalists. "At one point we had a lot of such law suits and we won all the cases."

However, it seems as if the upcoming journalists would set no high value on social security and money. "I never heard people, who work in the media, complain," Laura Mitran, a journalism student from Romania, says. "Maybe it is the enthusiasm of entering this field, I do not know." One thing is clear, the money these newcomers get for their work will never suffice to finance their subsistence. Laura sees it as a matter of personal choice, "if you want to get experience and settle for a smaller salary at first in order to obtain your dream job, or if you will just get the job that

suits your student financial needs while you are in school." The young people of today are ambitious and bring a lot of optimism with them. "If you're persistent enough, you will get into the company you want to", Mitran is convinced.

No Easy Entries

Marko Kovac, who works at Croatia's Public Relations Agency Meritor Media for Information and Communication Technology (ICT), agrees: "I guess that easy career entries are quite rare." Kovac entered his career in the mid-nineties, at a time when, he explained, "it was hard to work in the media." Many of the media companies had no money to pay their employees. "Instead of being paid, I had to go to a shop that advertised in my media and take some clothes for the amount of my payment. Others would compensate through TV sets or washing machines. However, because I was still young and supported by my parents, money was not crucial. What was crucial was that I get some work experience so I could move on to another media and look for better work conditions," he reports. According to Kovac, "there is always a feeling among young journalists that they are being exploited." He himself fought that feeling by looking at how he could get the most out of the company he worked for. When he exhausted all options, he looked for another employer. "This always proved to be a good tactic. I have never regretted leaving any of the positions I worked in."

Now Kovac has achieved what many young journalists are

-Comers, Cheap

S Young Croatian Journalists Starting Their Career

still dreaming of. He was one of the stars of RTL Television's news programme before joining Meritor Media. Furthermore he gained valuable experience with electronic media while working at the BBC. "My experience has shown that patience and constant improvement of skills are the best tools that improve your working conditions. If journalists feel they are giving more than that they are getting from the employer, they should look for other

options or even become freelancers."

There are more choices than ever for young journalists worldwide. "This is also true in Croatia, especially with the emergence of new media, such as blogs, podcasts and vidcasts," Kovac says. He continued, stating that Croatian media companies "feature different projects that have the need for 'young blood'".

As the number of media increases - and the need for edi-



tors and journalists becomes greater - there is sometimes a tendency in Croatian media to put professional standards aside. "The media companies in the region are often in a serious breach of the labour laws. The practice of relying on not contracted, untrained young journalists is common throughout the industry and has become a force for dragging down the standards," the SNH complains.

Vecernji list, the most circulated daily newspaper in Croatia, does not know such conditions. "We differentiate three types of cooperation with journalists - journalists

who are in employment, licensed freelance journalists registered in the Tax Payers Register on the basis of their author's contracts, and part-time contributors on the basis of their author's contracts not belonging to Tax Payers Register," explains Elsy Vickov from the Human Resources department at Vecernji list. "All three types of cooperation are in accordance with the regulations."

As Croatia is a candidate for EU membership, it will have to comply with EU laws and regulations as well as adopt a certain work culture. "I believe this process will raise the

Tips and Tricks for Aspiring Journalists

DeScripto asked journalism students from South East Europe to comment on their experiences and career perspectives in the world of media. What are the common problems they encounter while searching for an internship or a job? Where do they look for help? What tips would they give to their younger colleagues? *By Anna Pogwizd*

Elena, 22, Sofia

**Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication,
University of St. Kliment Ohridski**

Since it is obligatory at my faculty to have internships every summer, I had a chance to get an insight into the Romanian media field. Such real life experiences can change your perspective indeed. I think if I started searching for a job only after graduating - without previous experience with internships - I would get distressed after the first job interview, and all my theoretical knowledge would not help. I have some friends that had great marks at university, but no work experience - they were very surprised that it is not the notes that count most during the recruitment.

But it is a whole different story that those internships are usually unpaid and that there are no government's subsidies or social help for students doing internships, as is the case in the western countries. So in order to combine both, realise your ambitions but have some financial backup as well, you work for free in your desired field during the day, and then have another shift at Mc Donald's in the evening or various weekend-jobs. You might think it is tough, but on the other hand it teaches us more responsibility and self-sufficiency from the early years, so the confrontation with the professional life later is not that much of a shock.

Jovan, 22, Belgrade

**Faculty of Political Science,
University of Belgrade**

In Serbia, it is pretty hard to get into the journalism field; I would blame it on our Communist past. Although the media market is well developed and there are plenty of western investors, the organisational culture remains pretty much like in the past when you had to have connections in order to pursue your career and once you got a certain posting, you could be sure you would stay there until your pension.

The big change came, of course, with capitalism and with everything that goes along: the difficulties of the free market competition. Now you always have to be on guard in order not to get eliminated by guys who are younger and willing to sacrifice more than you. But this is not only specific for Serbia I guess, but for all transitional economies. The question is how long will we have to put up with these precarious conditions till it gets somewhat stabilised? It looks as if we have a long way to go.

Paul, 23, Bucharest

**School of Journalism and Mass Communication Studies,
University of Bucharest**

I found out from my professors about this young journalists' training programme offered by the Center for Independent Journalism (CIJ). I thought it would be a good opportunity to find out whether this profession and lifestyle would really suit me. So for a year, I was editing The Bullet, the only university newspaper in Bucharest. Our main focus was the students' life - ranging from choosing your field of study and career path to more dramatic issues like corruption and bad living conditions in the dorms. We got a lot of support from the CIJ team, as well as from our mentor Larry Gerber - the American journalist who was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the CIJ at that time. So I had a chance to improve both my journalistic and language skills. As a Bullet's journalist, I made some acquaintances, which helped me to find a posting in Romania's biggest financial newspaper Ziarul Financiar. The competition is tough and they always require some previous experience when hiring, so internships are crucial. Unfortunately - as they are mostly unpaid - aspiring journalists have no choice but to see them as an investment in their future. As an alternative, I would say that trying to make your name recognisable through freelancing would be the right way to start out as well.

standard of journalism, as well as of the overall economy and work culture,” Kovac says.

In consideration of the declared quality loss, SNH advocates a university degree for young journalists entering the profession. SNH expects that it will then “be easier to protect the profession.” SNH has already agreed with the associations of media employers to enter this provision in the Draft of the National Collective Agreement for Journalists and Media Staff by adding words “in principle”. “This means that the majority will have to fulfil this condition, and some extra talented may enter without a diploma, but will have to graduate within a certain period,” Boljkovac explains. The management of the Croatian Radio Television (Hrvatska radiotelevizija - HRT) has already accepted this idea - a university degree as precondition for employment.

Young Journalists Promoting Professionalism

Moreover, some media companies now have plans for setting up their own journalism academies. In Kovacs’ eyes “this is a pioneering move, because media houses have so far had very limited understanding of young journalists’ thirst for knowledge.”

But Croatia is not the only country in the region which has realised that the young generation could contribute a lot to raise quality and cultivate values in journalism. Laura Mitran stated that “there was and still is some concern in Romania about the freedom of the press, so there are institutions of supervision that this freedom is observed.” There are associations and NGOs encouraging young journalists, offering trainings and internships to make them more aware of their role in supporting democracy.

Although Marko Kovac thinks universities – such as the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb with its radio and television workshops - give good basics to future journalists, he feels that there is a need for a platform like the Croatian Young Journalist Club (YJC). “There always will be such a need – because young journalists have to have an added-value platform that will teach them about ‘applied journalism’, rather than just about theory.” YJC served as a unique platform for young journalists to meet their colleagues, exchange ideas and knowledge, “as well as enjoy good fun together,” explains Kovac, who was a member of YJC himself. Supported by the International Republic Institute (IRI) from Washington D.C., YJC was a place where young journalists would learn about the basics of journalism through seminars, workshops and study visits, but also get

advanced knowledge through interaction with the lecturers.

Although there are no organised YJC lectures anymore, the basic principles still live on. Members of the Club still promote the values of journalism through their everyday work and transfer it to the new young generation of upcoming

“There can be no freedom of the media if journalists live in conditions of poverty, corruption or fear”
Motto of the SNH

journalists. “I saw YJC as a very important source of knowledge for young journalists in Croatia, a place where they formed their opinions and have applied them since in their work.”

Such conditions, unfortunately, are common to all South East European countries. In order to find illegal workers, the SNH invites inspectors of the State Inspectorate once a year to control all the media. “In five years inspectors discovered hundreds of workers without proper contracts. A number of them got employment contracts, some of them remained freelance collaborators and got a paid pension and health insurance, some of them leave journalism when they graduate, in search of better jobs,” Boljkovac reports. To protect basic rights of all journalists and media workers, SNH has prepared the text of the National Collective Agreement for Journalists and Media Workers of Croatia (NCA). Journalists in Croatia often have no contract and get paid with a delay or do not get paid at all. A National Collective Agreement, when signed, will guarantee freelancers some rights now reserved for full-time staff journalists only - paid pension and health insurance, a lump-sum for annual leave or sick leave.

Free, But in Permanent Fear

On the one hand, freelance contributors have the great privilege of being independent. On the other, they mostly have no social security. According to the legislation of the Republic of Croatia, they should in fact have an employment contract - fixed-term or permanent, full time or half-time. “Unfortunately, some journalists and other media workers work for over ten years without any pension or health insurance,” SNH complains. Those permanent freelance contributors are “economically dependant atypical workers who are working in the offices of their employers day-in-day-out, based on the employers’ demands and using their means of work,” is how SNH describes it. In the draft of the National Collective Agreement for

Journalists, SNH is offering a major compromise, as it is asking that only three necessary rights be protected for these journalists and media workers – the right to pension and health insurance, a lump sum for annual leave, and sick leave for a determined number of days.

Freelancers constitute about one third of the members.

“The majority of freelancers in Croatia are in fact unemployed journalists who cannot get a job and are forced to be freelancers”

Marinka Boljkovac

“The majority of freelancers in Croatia are in fact unemployed journalists who cannot get a job and are forced to be freelancers,” Boljkovac says. Only about 10% of freelancers really want to be freelancers.

Grey Area Work

Ivica Grcar, president of Freelance Journalists’ Association (Društvo slobodnih novinara – DSN), confirms the union’s claim that few journalists are satisfied with being a freelancer. “The main reason is that a very small number of journalists can sell enough of their articles on free market to earn enough to pay state and local taxes and contributions.” Grcar criticises the fact that journalists who have been laid off are presenting themselves as freelancers although they cannot “afford” to register as free professionals. “The freelancers’ representative in a board of SNH is a journalist who was dismissed and is desperately looking for a full-time job. The question is, how comes there is no representative of unemployed journalists in the journalists union?,” Grcar asks himself.

According to the Association freelancers should get a legal position, similar to that of artists and other professional occupations. Unlike the Union, DSN does not claim that freelancers should get the same legal rights full-time employed journalists have. “On the contrary, DSN thinks that full time employed journalists do not have appropriate rights a journalist should have, which means, they are too dependent on their employers,” emphasises Grcar. Journalists who are full-time employees are not independent since they perform their duties according to the instructions and supervision of the publisher, who is in return responsible for any risks emerging from journalists’ work. On the other side, freelancers registered as free professionals bare all risks of their work.

Beside unemployed journalists, students and young journalists who have just graduated and are working based on ‘contract of authors’, are referred to as freelancers. DSN

thinks such young journalists after two years of working without a full-time employment contract should be employed full-time, or if they are earning enough to pay taxes and obligatory contributions (state medical insurance and pension contributions) they should get the right to register as freelancers.

Ambition and Patience are the Formula for Success

According to Vecernji list there is still room for hope, “since the development of one’s career is individual and depends on the engagement and performance of each individual person.” At Vecernji list a new system has been implemented enabling it to monitor the performance of individual contributors more precisely and will serve as a ground for career development, explains Vickov. “Promotion is not gained automatically, or according to the years of service, but on the basis of person’s abilities, ambitions and quality of work.”

Kovac sees flexibility and patience as the formula for success. “New opportunities always open up for those who show interest and set clear goals for themselves. It is also

“New opportunities always open up for those who show interest and set clear goals for themselves. It is also important to be patient. Sometimes I have the feeling that young people of today want quick success”

Marko Kovac

important to be patient. Sometimes I have the feeling that young people of today want quick success. The truth is that success comes only with long-term determination. Once young journalists reach the level of professionalism and show commitment, the employer will recognise that effort,” Kovac is convinced. “I really do feel that there are many options, so anyone with skills and knowledge should have no fear in finding an appropriate place to work.” ■



ERASMUS EUROMEDIA AWARD 2007

Call for Application

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

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

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

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

ERASMUS EUROMEDIA AWARDS

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

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

AWARDING PROCEDURE

A two-stage award Procedure will be used:

1. stage (rating)

Erasmus Seals of Approval

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

2. stage (ranking)

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

Erasmus EuroMedia Award 2007 (EUR 3.000)

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

Erasmus EuroMedia Sponsorship Awards 2007 (in total EUR 3.000)

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

Erasmus EuroMedia Special Awards 2007 (each with EUR 1.000)

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

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

Erasmus EuroMedia Country Focus 2007

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

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

AWARD

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

PARTICIPATION

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

CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

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

JURY

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

REGISTRATION & INFORMATION

ESEC European Society for Education and Communication

Schopenhauerstrasse 32

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Collective Agreements in Cold Print

The Everlasting Conflict on Contracts for Journalists

By Linda Schürer-Waldheim and Michaela Wein

Basically, someone who works without a contract is, in the eyes of the law, an illicit worker. But many journalists in Europe sign collective agreements although they run the risk of not receiving health insurance, a pension, or, in case of being under contract, do not receive fair treatment. The question is raised if collective agreements really serve their purpose of protecting the rights of journalists.

The question is raised if collective agreements really serve their purpose of protecting the rights of journalists

Collective agreements in the media sector perform the task of managing the working conditions for journalists. The questions of adequate payment and the period of holidays are resolved, as well as the right of insurance for health. With regard to some countries in South East Europe, some differences among the contracts appear and explain the difficult situation of many journalists in Europe.

Already in November 2005, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) called on the European Union (EU) institutions and national governments to recognise, protect and enforce journalists' rights throughout the union. The aims were to bring journalists up to date with the latest developments in the field of authors' rights; to address concerns over the lack of authors' rights protection in Europe and to take concrete action to oppose media employers' constant attempts to grab journalists' rights and to impose buy-out contracts.

According to a study by the EFJ released in January 2007, the situation in many European Countries is deplorable because a great many journalists do not receive fair treatment.

Social Security: Choice or Fate?

In Croatia, during the last meeting of the negotiating teams held on 10 November 2005, members of the Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (Sindikata Novinara Hrvatske - SNH) alongside representatives of the print and publishing industry and also radio, television and newspapers associations, faced one another; the main subject was bargaining on the draft collective agreement for journalists and media workers in Croatia.

To this day, six unresolved questions still exist; amongst other things calculated were working hours, basic protection of permanent freelance contributors or basic salary. While having a look at the work time for Croatian journalists, it turns out that nearly every daily paper or radio and television institution has signed collective agreements in which the working week of 40 hours is differently defined and distributed over five or six working days. For comparison: the working time of journalists in other European countries rests with averaged 37 hours, distributed over five days.

The other point of contention is the basic protection of journalists who work as freelancers. In fact they are economically dependant atypical workers and according to the legislation of the Republic of Croatia, they should in fact have an employment contract, fixed-term or permanent,

ements

full time or half time. Unfortunately, some journalists and other media workers work for over 10 years without any pension or health insurance.

SNH thinks that this kind of work, especially for employers, is a grey area and a major hindrance to journalists. Once a year, they invite inspectors of the State Inspectorate to control all the media in order to find illegal workers.

Same time, same negotiating issue, another place

In Slovakia, the current situation does not differ much from Croatia: Zuzana Krutka, Chairwoman of the Slovak Syndicate of Journalists (SSJ) mentioned that working as a journalist without a contract is indeed not seen as an illegal employment but that most journalists tend to have a contract, and those who do not have one are, in the most instances, not well informed about collective agreements. The only important thing for them is to get the possibility to work and to receive some money for it.

According to research from the SSJ and the Association of Mass-Media-Science in 2005, 55.7% of journalists receive a contract of employment for an indefinite time, only 7.5% for a certain time. 36% of journalists are freelancers, three-quarters of whom work for internet media or journals with short periodicity. In comparison: freelancers in Croatia constitute about one third of the total number of journalists, who share the same situation like those in Slovakia: they are in fact unemployed and forced to be freelancers. Serbia is no exception in this discussion. "The negotiations in the local media are quite difficult. Employers are often not even willing to engage in the negotiations for collective agreements and unions are not skilled enough to bring them to the negotiating table," says Julka Pejovic from the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) and adds: "Thus,

the unions established on the republic level, including our Journalists' Union of Serbia, have something in common, and that is the draft collective agreement they are offering to the employers association for signature. If adopted, the mentioned contract would be valid in all of the media existing in Serbia, meaning that it would be applicable even in the media having no individual collective agreements."

It turns out that basically everywhere it is a question of the employers if their workers get the possibility to enjoy social security or not

Pejovic points out that some of the employers' representatives have shown their good will to sign such documents but negotiations upon this topic have not started yet. Again the problem is that employers are not satisfied with the representative requirement. Namely, in order to be representative, at least 10% of the total number of employers in the media sector of Serbia should be members of the employers association. It turns out that basically everywhere it is a question of the employers if their workers get the possibility to enjoy social security or not. Organisations like the EFJ try to push forward the process of fair treatment of journalists, while the affected countries are more or less willing to find solutions to this question. But it is not always easy to find a common denominator in such important issues and therefore negotiations will have to continue so that nobody misses out. ■

Media: Lucky Strike for Trade Unions

Trade Labour Unions and Their Fight for Media Coverage

Trade labour unions are increasingly engaged in communicative work. It is the media's attention and publicity that decide over an issue's importance.

by Jakob Feyerer and Thomas Leitner

On Friday, 15 January 1999, Albanian workers were led to a general strike by their trade labour unions. It was the first strike in the fight for more rights for Albanian workers and it was organised and supported by all the trade labour unions of the country. For the first time since the crumbling of the communist empire, all trade

“Media is mainly attracted by political issues, and propagandistic news. A special interest is shown when strikes and protests are organised”

Kol Nikollaj, President of KSSH

labour unions have overcome their political differences in the fight for social stability and worker's rights. And what is more: They have for the first time partly succeeded in proving to be a force that has to be reckoned with.

This success can partly be attributed to the support of the Albanian media, as Kol Nikollaj, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH) states: “Media did support trade unions at that time, strengthening the link between them and especially between the written press and trade unions as well.”

The general strike raised public awareness of the difficult social situation the country faced in these days and managed to improve some social standards. Furthermore, salaries of certain professions, like teacher's incomes, were raised.

Nevertheless Albania nowadays still sees a difficult situation. “Unfortunately this good initiative did not continue. The price of energy is continuously being increased, the price of oil is increasing too every year and the law on pensions could not be changed,” reflects Nikollaj. The core problems of the strike, however, are still valid today.

Albania's trade labour unions, among them the Confederation of Trade Unions of Albania (KSSH), the Union of Independent Trade Labour Unions of Albania (BSPSH) or the Independent Union of Trade Labour Unions (UPS), have to deal with many problems, for example decreasing numbers of affiliates, lack of money and the problem of political differences between the trade labour unions. Especially the UPS gives cause to many arguments among the umbrella organisations as it is considered the extended arm of the Albanian government by other trade unions. The UPS split from the BSPSH after the armed protests against the government of President Berisha in 1996. From that time on, the country suffered a lot from the lack of large-scale enterprises and the increasing number of the unemployed.

How to Capture the Media's Attention

Nowadays, Albanian trade unions consider it a need to work in close contact with the media. Some of them even have established their own newspapers, like the KSSH-owned weekly newspaper “Pasqyra”. Generally the trade unions have an independent communications department in order to keep in close contact with the media, and provide them with important issues. According to Nikollaj, the “media is mainly attracted by political issues, and propagandistic news. A special interest is shown when strikes and protests are organised.”

The media's attention is however, also captured by professional methods such as press conferences, press releases, informing the press periodically, participation in live-TV programmes, presenting the union's analyses in the written press etc. Ultimately, Nikollaj considers the work with the Albanian media a “fruitful issue, when it is properly used.”

Nevertheless, there are also some major problems concerning the Albanian media, as it is “often politically biased, not professional enough and serving to different political clans in the Government or other economical clans unfairly favoring interest groups which have political or economical influence.” Furthermore, Nikollaj states that the media has often attacked trade unions, only because they serve different political or economical clans that are in opposition with trade unions.

Hungarian Trade Unions – A Highly Diversified Structure

Recently Hungary has experienced a lively debate on trade labour union matters. The debate concentrates on whether the highly diversified structure of trade labour unions is profitable for the comparably small country or not. Hungary’s representation of employees is built around six highly influential confederations, among them the Autonomous Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), the Democratic League of Independent Trade Unions (LIGA) or the National Federation of Workers Councils (MOSZ) which represents mainly Christian values – an exception in the country dominated by socialist trade unions. The confederations comprise of several hundred umbrella organisations and even more independent single trade labour unions.

Farmers Marching for Frontpages

The main media work is done by the big confederations, which try to cooperate mainly with the national news wire MTI. “Basically,” Akos Heiszler, Head of Communication of LIGA, states “if you can get coverage with your press releases in MTI, your work is mostly done.”

Media communications has become pretty professional in Hungary nowadays. Press conferences are mostly avoided, as they “become less and less interesting to the media” and the work of the communications departments predominantly focuses on creating media-events, for example professionally prepared demonstrations. “You can, obviously, win front pages if you march with farmers through Budapest while you have nothing to say. And you can get zero coverage with your well-defined economic suggestions on the so-called “minimal wage” which affects a million people.” It seems like getting the media’s attention in Hungary depends not so much on the topic but rather on the way the trade unions are presenting it.

A similar point of view expresses Nandor Kovacs, Press

Officer for MOSZ: “The media prefer presenting scandalous issues or issues related to scandals, so our real activ-

“Basically, media is our main weapon!”

Akos Heiszler, Head of Communication of LIGA

ities in order to promote the interest of employees are often difficult to put through. The media and its leaders are not really sensitive to employees’ problems.”

Generally, the trade unions consider the Hungarian media pretty independent, professional and critical towards all sources of information. There are, however, concerns about their preferation for scandalous issues and the lack of sensitivity for the worker’s problems. Furthermore, Kovacs puts forward, that “our trade union representing Christian values is not always welcome and sometimes is kind of a black sheep in the media dominated by the socialists and the liberals.”

In addition to that, the trade unions face corruption and editors influenced by political parties. “We have information on journalists bribed by fellow trade unions, also journalists bribed by big employers. The whole of the Hungarian media would not report independently on several big companies as they depend on their advertisement revenues. Of course, you cannot prove these on court, but ask anyone in the PR or media business and they will have the same answers,” says Heiszler from the LIGA.

Striking Questions for the Future

By and large media plays an important role for the work of the trade unions throughout Europe. However, the trade

“You can, obviously, win front pages if you march with farmers through Budapest while you have nothing to say”

Akos Heiszler, Head of Communication of LIGA

unions are acknowledging that publicity cannot solve all their problems. Nevertheless, the media is regarded as a major weapon in the struggle for employees’ rights, even though there are also major concerns about the media’s independence and the degree of their professionalism.

Maybe future measures of trade labour unions, e.g. general strikes like the one in Albania in 1999 will go hand in hand with an even closer cooperation between the unions and the media. Only in this close relationship lies a chance for independent and effectively working trade unions. ■

Precariousness

Journalists' Working Conditions in Slovenia and Croatia

In Croatia and its neighbouring country, Slovenia, working conditions of journalists are still very precarious: low salaries, irregular working hours and the absence of working contracts are only a few examples which characterise the work of local journalists there.

By Martina Filipovic and Susanne Schoppelt

The unions in both countries, Croatia and Slovenia, have many common interests and goals. To strengthen the rights of journalists is one of their main tasks, even more so since another characteristic there is a notable increase in the hiring of freelancers. The work of the journalists' associations includes a whole spectrum of issues which seems never-ending.

The Trade Union of Croatian Journalists (Sindikatski Savez Hrvatske - SNH) was founded in 1990 to protect the basic working, social and professional rights of journalists. The main reason for its founding was that non-governmental organisations, including the Croatian Journalists' Association (Hrvatsko Novinarsko Drustvo - HND) have no right to sign collective agreements or call employees to come out on strike according to Croatian Law. HND primarily deals with professional issues, media law and similar. Since 1992 HND and SNH have also been members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

There are several differences between trade unions and associations. Trade unions are interest groups of employees and workers, in this case journalists. The right to organise trade unions is a basic human right, enshrined in the United Nations Human Rights Declarations. The right of collective negotiation and organisation of trade unions is also granted by the International Labour Organisation. The conventions of this organisation have been signed by most countries in the world, who are thus obliged to follow the appointments of these conventions, regardless of their national laws. Associations are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with members of a certain profession and they do not have such statutory power like trade unions. So, in every country there are thousands of NGOs and similar organisations but they do not have the right to sign collective agreements.

The traditional configuration of a journalists' organisation in South East European countries are associations. In 1910, when HND was founded, it had a social and a trade-union-like role which disappeared during the socialist system because at that time the law prescribed only some basic and low labour rights, whereas all other rights could only be achieved by signing collective agreements between a trade union and an employer's association.

But without trade unions there are no collective agreements and without collective agreements there are no secure rights concerning working conditions, vacation, working hours and so on.

Today, about 70% of Croatian journalists are members of SNH - out of the total of 4,000 journalists in Croatia, 2,800 are SNH members.

SNH organises journalists from the whole media sector, including freelance journalists. Their common interests are better working conditions, appropriate salaries and the strengthening of professional rights. SNH has signed collective agreements in eight big media houses in Croatia. In 2003 SNH started to discuss the proposal for collective agreements for journalists and other media employees in Croatia with the employers' associations. Thus, it wants to protect the rights of freelancers and employees in small local media, who often work without any rights or do not get paid regularly either.

SNH also signed a collective agreement with the daily newspaper Jutarnji list, which is 50% owned by the German media company Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ). This was a milestone for Croatia and the first time that such an agreement has been signed in this transition country.

"There can be no freedom of the media if journalists have to work under poor conditions, corruption or fear," is



SNH's motto. Recently many international media corporations have expanded their assets in South East European countries. According to SNH they work under contradictory standards: In their own countries they respect the labour law, but in the region they neglect the common working standards of Western Europe. "This is another reason why it is so important that journalists from these countries work together," says Marinka Boljkovac-Borkovic from SNH.

She adds that employers unfortunately tend to engage freelancers rather than permanent employees and when offering contracts, they prefer temporary ones.

SNH also engages many lawyers to defend its members in conflicts with their employers.

Supervision of Media Companies

In 2001 SNH called governmental inspectors to inspect all media houses in Croatia. The results were shattering: Nearly 50% of journalists and other media employees had illegal contracts or no contracts at all. SNH has been insisting on legal working contracts for journalists and still regularly calls inspectors to the media houses.

Today the situation is better than it was in 2001 but most of the journalists still do not get paid enough or on a regular basis.

Since Croatia wants to follow the example of western democracies, where journalists' associations cover professional as well as labour rights, the members of both organisations want to unite SNH and HND into one single trade-union-like organisation which would work more effectively in protecting journalists' working and professional rights.

In the case of Slovenia, the main current activities of the Sindikat Novinarjev Slovenije (Trade Union of Slovene Journalists - SNS) are negotiations on the revision of the national collective agreement for professional journalists and public employees, as well as analyses, training programmes for journalists and their representatives. SNS's main focus is put on freelance journalists. The union is currently resolving legislative dilemmas on whether it is possible or not to collectively negotiate the rights of freelancers who are often registered or considered by tax authorities, etc. as "independent entrepreneurs".

Iztok Jurancic, SNS President, implies that the situation of freelance journalists in Slovenia has been characterised as "extremely worrying" by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ). In its report from October 2003 on freelance journalists in the European media industry, EFJ noted that the share of freelancers in total employment is

increasing up to four times faster than self-employment and employment in journalism. That has brought relevant changes in the organisation of press work. All these changes have an impact on the contents of the employment agreements, trade union representation and collective agreement bargaining.

The media sector as a whole and the standard ways to manage a media company, and along with it the quality and independence of the media, have influence on journalistic work. As elsewhere, journalists' working conditions are becoming even more precarious, as a matter of fact also the type of employment has an impact on the work. The available statistics reveal that some large national publishers have not been employing journalists or have been very restrictive in that regard. They barely fill the vacancies due to retirements and fluctuation, while there has been a notable increase in hiring freelancers. That brings about significant "savings" in the cost of labour for the publishers, and significantly poorer contract security for journalists, lower levels of social security, no access to a number of rights that go alongside regular employment. Many freelancers perform the same duties of a regular employment under much less favourable terms. When analysing the market of private television and radio publishers, SNS found out that many work without one single employee.

In about half of all the above mentioned publishers, only persons working at managerial positions, i.e. the management, are employed. SNS came to the conclusion that many smaller publishers produce media content solely by hiring freelancers.

In the past years, SNS also registered more cases of a low political culture of communication with journalists than before. The demand for the union's legal assistance has become more frequent and more complex.

"There is an evident increase of cases of sanctioning journalists for expressing their views and opinions," says Iztok Jurancic.

The highest number of such occurrences has been noted within Delo, the largest publisher of print media in Slovenia. According to trade unions the publisher started utilising labour-law institutes or the institutes of the criminal code against journalists who have come into a conflict with the new editorial and/or managerial policy of the publisher. These matters cannot be solved sporadically. Jurancic points out, "that it all depends on the will of the managerial and political structures of the media companies – and there has not been much of that." EFJ, IFJ and other organisations, have called on freelancers to have a visible

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COUNTRY FOCUS MOLDOVA

The Fake Bombs of Chisinau

17 years after the end of the cold war, Moldova's democratic transition is gradually phased out. President Voronin's Communist Party has been accused of trying to silence critical views against the regime by faking bomb threats.
by Julian Paschinger and Lisa Hastert

Moldovan people were worried about their radio reception on the afternoon of 15 December 2006. The listeners of Antena C, a municipal radio station of Moldova, suddenly just received a scratchy noise. The signal was interrupted during a critical live radio debate about

Due to a very fragmented political culture, no Moldovan political force has ever managed to install a coherent media policy yet

the government's plan to privatise Antena C and the television station Euro TV, and to replace its management with men loyal to the authorities. Days passed by until an official explanation blamed a technical problem on the radio relay. Antena C's journalists protested immediately. In a statement they clarified: "The authorities themselves were the technical problem."

Antena C is one of the few radio stations that are not afraid to criticise the authorities. The station has undertaken an important strategic assessment of the government before the local elections which will take place in May 2007. Since the parliamentary elections held in 2001, which were certified by international observers as free and fair, the leader of the Party of Communists Vladimir Voronin has ruled Moldova with an absolute majority. The post-Soviet Republic of about 4 million people bordering Ukraine and

Romania is the poorest country in Europe in spite of 17 years of democratic reform.

Due to a very fragmented political culture, no Moldovan political force has ever managed to install a coherent media policy yet. The Communist government brought stability and economic growth to a country disillusioned with chaotic liberal economic reforms. Moreover Voronin recognised the pro-European supra-regional political climate just in time. He turned to aiming at an affiliation with the EU, instead of hunting for Russia's favour. The Communists' popularity level remained almost stable in spite of misgivings within the media. Most media had to broadcast the populist slogans ensuring them enough votes, particularly among the poor, whom they constantly promised betterment. In 2004 about 40% of the population still lived below the absolute poverty line. In the same year a survey showed that 43% of Moldovans were still employed within the agriculture.

A large rural electorate increases the significance of nationwide broadcasters. Antena C is one of the few media outlets reaching even Moldova's agricultural heartland. Concluding the obvious journalistic importance of the station, it has been a frustrating and sad moment for the democratic movement of Moldova as Antena C's signal extinguished. „It is striking that such a serious technical problem appeared at the precise moment when critical views of the way the station is being privatised were on the air,“ the

Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Louis O'Neill from the U.S. State Department said. Worldwide protests by leading human rights organisations and NGOs followed the governmental steps.

What really happened there is reminiscent of the times which were assumed to be over because according to the eyewitnesses, police came to the station claiming they have received a threat that a bomb had been placed at the station's premises. They searched the building and forced journalists to leave. The doors had been sealed but "there have neither been any ambulances, bomb detection units nor any other special precautionary measures, which one might expect in the case of a bomb alarm," O'Neill said further based on the observations of an on-site Mission member.

Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General said on that occasion in a press release: „I agree with the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Louis O'Neill, that it is curious that such a technical problem arose during a debate about problems at the radio station Antena C.“ Vujovic added that he is very worried about the recent developments in the Chisinau local electronic media. „I would like everyone to remember that free and independent media are crucial to the democratic development in any country. A plurality of voices is an essential element of every society.“

Nicolae Negru, who works for the Moldovan Independent Journalism Center (IJC) in Chisinau, assumed that this was a trick – a trick that has been played before. Authorities followed the same unacceptable scheme in 2004, as journalists of Teleradio Moldova were protesting the way the then-state company was being reorganised into a national public broadcaster. They were removed from the company's main building by police units, allegedly due to a bomb threat. It later turned out it was a false alarm.

“Antena C is an important source of objective news for Moldovans, especially now as the election approaches,” says CPJ Executive Director Joel Simon. “The government's vague and shifting explanations make it hard to see this as anything but a politically motivated effort to shut down an objective news source.”

Despite its government affiliation, Antena C has been regarded as independent in its coverage. “While most stations are under government control, Antena C was covering all events in the country and was not afraid to criticise

the government or the municipality,” Valeriu Saharneau, President of the Union of Journalists in Moldova explains. “The ruling party was afraid of the station's independence and popularity.” In January, the station was sold to Dumitru Liuticov, a private person close to the government. Its management was changed and most of the former Antena C staff had to leave or change to less creative jobs within the station.

However, there had been concerns that the government could seek to close the station completely. Article 27 of the Television and Radio Code states that a station's license is automatically revoked if it does not broadcast for 45 days. On 23 January Antena C resumed broadcasting after a pause of over a month.

*“The ruling party was afraid of the station's independence and popularity”
Valeriu Saharneau*

Tiraspol Times journalist Karen Ryan is one of the many who criticises the government's actions. „Freedom of expression is under serious threat, and the Antena C radio station closure is just the latest example of a long string of events that we are seriously concerned about.” Ryan draws the comparison to the schismatic region of Transnistria: “It is surprising, but I have to say it: Today, there is actually more freedom of expression in Transnistria.

While Moldova slides backwards, the media in Transnistria is moving forward.” Due to organisations like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and different NGOs, there is still a chance to improve the media situation in Moldova in a democratic way. “We are the watchdogs,” explains Negru from the IJC. “It helps a little but not much.” In a protest note eight Moldovan non-governmental media organisations condemned “the actions aimed against mass media pluralism and diversity“, which have drawn international attention to the occurrences.

They insisted on “observation of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova including the right of the audience to be informed from different sources and the right of journalists to do their job.” When asked to comment on the fact the ruling party would be in control of Antena C, President Vladimir Voronin just replied, “What's wrong with that?”■

Transnistria:

The Media Trend Under the Sheriff's Hand

Multicultural Transnistria is dealing with a lot of difficulties, particularly with regard to the state and public media. Journalists do not have an easy life because they are under big pressure of the authorities.

by Irene Nusser, Laura Weichselbaum and Kathrin Bäjén

Transnistria is a region located in Moldova, more precisely between the Dniestr River and Ukraine. It has been fighting for independence for a long time. In 1992 more than a thousand people died in a war for Transnistria's independence. The Russian army dominated the fight and brought it to an end. Moldova, inside which Transnistria is situated, protested against the involvement of the Russian troops in the area. By contrast more than 97% of Transnistria's population reportedly voted in favour of independence and for its subsequent joining of the Russian Federation. Nowadays Transnistria sees itself as an independent country with its own banknotes, officials, president and its own public holidays. Most other countries do not acknowledge its independence. Internationally there are several names for the region, namely Transnistria, Trans-Dniestr, Transdniester, Transnistria, Transdnistria and Dniestr.

"Freedom of the press is the main problem in the Transnistrian region. The basic conditions for the development of a free and independent press are not in place and the strong pressure of the security services limits the development of pluralism of opinion further," stated Claus Neukirch, Spokesperson of the Mission to Moldova of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Nearly all newspapers and electronic media are directly or indirectly controlled by the Transnistrian authorities. Whenever any opposition arises, the government uses every possible method to discredit and silence it. The media landscape in Transnistria is pictured as very restrictive by a subsidiary organisation of the OSCE, the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM). As the media landscape is so restricted, RFOM advises independ-

ent media outlets also to stay in touch with the Transnistrian administration.

Due to the reason that it is very difficult for foreign journalists to get permission to be present at official political meetings, the media coverage could never be called impartial. "None of the Transnistrian media outlets is funded or influenced by Moldova," explained Neukirch. In 2006 a few journalists who just wanted to pass through Transnistria were not allowed to cross the border.

There is a widespread media landscape but nevertheless the majority of newspapers and news agencies are state-controlled or are tightly associated to the ruling authorities. Some of the 'state media' are: the newspaper Pridnestrovia, the television channel TV PMR – 1st Republican Channel and Radio Pridnestrovia. Additionally a language problem dominates the media situation in Transnistria. Romanian speaking people do not get any newspapers in their mother tongue because there are only newspapers in Russian, Moldovan and Ukrainian. Apart from the state control there is a second influential institution which is called the Sheriff Company. It does not only own a television and radio station but also has a monopoly on mobile communications, including the internet access, a chain of petrol stations, supermarkets, advertising agencies, and a football club. "It is not a huge problem that the Sheriff Company is the only provider in this region for mobile and internet, simply because there is no business competition," said Neukirch. As the matter of fact a lot of other countries also have a media monopoly. Concerning the political reporting of the company's media, it is more balanced than that of the state-controlled ones. However they also pay attention that journalists do not criticise the government. ■

Precariousness

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role in the national unions: to get the possibility to address their specific problems, to look for solutions. But they have also called on unions to take the initiative: to conduct systematic research and analyses, to identify the critical aspects of journalism, and to assure a proper basis for interventions.

A Ground-Breaking Project

Previous efforts, references and sources of SNS include the ground-breaking project Freelance Journalists. The project was conducted in 2002, in partnership with the Ljubljana-based Peace Institute and with the financial support of Matra Program of the Dutch Embassy, which supports the change of a centralised communist state towards a plural democratic state, respecting the rule of law in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). One of the main aspects of the project was research on the settling of freelancers' position in selected European countries and to be the first channel for communication of freelancers. It also offers a survey on the position of freelance journalists in Slovenia.

Iztok Jurancic is also proud to say that the SNS has been recognised as one of the most decisive, innovative and successful organisations in that respect. SNS hopes that actions, that have been taken so far, will help to increase the bargaining power of freelancers and achieve an internationally important recognition of their right to the collective agreements, and also brings important changes in this area. ■

South East Europe Media Organisation - SEEMO

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is a regional non-governmental, non-profit network of editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, news agencies and new media in South East Europe. SEEMO was founded in October 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia.

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

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

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

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Your Excellencies!

Recent SEEMO Protests and Press Releases

Protest Croatia, 2 February 2007

SEEMO is deeply concerned by the repeated burglaries at the house of Gordan Malic, a journalist at the weekly magazine *Globus*. Based on information provided to SEEMO, the first burglary took place in December 2006 and was followed by a second burglary on 31 January 2007. In 2001 and 2004, Malic received murder threats. He also received 24-hour police protection in 2001. SEEMO has strong reason to believe that these burglaries are related to the threats, which Gordan Malic received a few years ago for his investigative reporting.

We would also like to remind you that, in February 2005, SEEMO issued a protest supporting Malic. On 18 February 2005, SEEMO was informed by a group of five Croatian journalists, including Malic, that the Counter-Intelligence Agency (POA) had recently accused them of meeting with representatives of foreign secret services.

We would also like to remind you that, on numerous occasions in 2006, SEEMO has been informed about threats to other investigative journalists in Croatia. SEEMO is deeply concerned about the safety of Croatian journalists and asks Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to urgently investigate these cases, and to take all necessary steps to protect Malic's life. Finally, SEEMO would like to remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental principle of every democratic society. It is also in the interests of democratic development in Croatia that journalists are allowed to investigate stories free of any pressure.

Press Release: Press Freedom Situation in South East Europe, 6 February 2007

SEEMO is deeply concerned about the worsening situation for journalists in the South Eastern European (SEE) region. The murder of the Armenian-Turkish writer and editor, Hrant Dink in Turkey on 19 January 2007 shows once again that journalists may easily become victims in the fight for press freedom and freedom of speech. Dink worked as the columnist and editor-in chief of the *Agos* weekly newspaper. He started this paper in 1996 as a bridge for better understanding between the larger Turkish population and the Armenian-Turkish community. For his reporting, he received a six-month suspended sentence on 7 October 2005 under article 301 of the penal code for insulting Turkishness. In December 2005, a Turkish court opened a new case against Dink after he expressed comments about the court's original decision.

SEEMO hopes that, after a 17-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of killing Dink, there will be a full and transparent investigation by the Turkish authorities. SEEMO also hopes that article 301, which in its opinion is a legal absurdity, will be removed from the Turkish penal code.

The killing of Dink is a reminder that there are still a number of unsolved cases of journalists killed because of their reporting in the SEE region. There are three such cases in Serbia. SEEMO calls on the Serbian officials to investigate the murder of Slavko Curuvija, owner of the Belgrade daily *Dnevni*

Telegraf and the magazine *Evropljanin*, as well as the murder of Milan Pantic, a local reporter for the Belgrade daily *Vecernje Novosti*. Curuvija was gunned down near his home in the centre of Belgrade on 11 April 1999, while Pantic was murdered on 11 June 2001, in the central Serbian town of Jagodina. SEEMO calls on the Belgrade authorities to investigate once again the murder of the journalist Dada Vujasinovic on 8 April 1994.

SEEMO is also alarmed about the December 2006 criminal defamation charges laid against Dogan Harman and the daily newspaper *Kibrisli*, where he is the publisher and editor-in-chief. Dogan and *Kibrisli* are charged with allegedly insulting officials in the Turkish controlled area of Cyprus, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. SEEMO believes that criminal defamation and insult laws are an anachronism that should be removed from every legal system. Moreover, public officials need to be afforded less, not more, protection from defamation than ordinary citizens. The world's leading courts, including the European Court of Human Rights, and leading inter-government organisations, support the decriminalisation of defamation.

With the above in mind, SEEMO is concerned by the decision of the Romanian Constitutional Court to annul a parliamentary decision removing defamation from the Romanian Criminal Code. SEEMO asks Romanian officials to stop jailing journalists and to end the criminalisation of insult and libel in Romania. In addition, in her December 2006 decision, the Romanian Minister of Justice, Monica Macovei, attacked freedom of the media in her country. The Emergency Ordinance 131/2006 was adopted regarding free access to the personal information of the staff belonging to the Department for the Investigation of Offences, Organized Crime and Terrorism (DIICOT). The Emergency Ordinance represents a new threat to privacy and to freedom of the press. In 2006, SEEMO protested the decision of DIICOT investigators to remove information saved on computers belonging to several Romanian journalists. The removal of information was made without any foundation in law.

Regarding press freedom developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, SEEMO notes that on 12 January 2007 the Vice Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Ante Kasipovic, announced a boycott of the Bosnian-Herzegovian state-wide public broadcaster and its TV channel BHT 1. According to SEEMO, this is a clear attempt to apply political pressure on the editorial independence of a public broadcaster.

Commenting on these press freedom violations in the SEE region, SEEMO Secretary General, Oliver Vujovic, said, "SEEMO strongly condemns these threats and attacks, as well as any government or state action that restricts the work and movement of journalists. I am very concerned about the worsening working conditions for journalists in the SEE region at the beginning of this year; particularly as many of the cases show that pressure was exerted by politicians or their representatives."

Protest Croatia, 22 February 2007

SEEMO is deeply concerned at several anonymous death

threats made to Robert Valdec, the anchor and journalist of the investigative television programme, "Istraga," shown on Nova TV in Croatia.

Based on information provided to SEEMO, Valdec received several threats during 2006, but they became more serious in December 2006 when he received numerous death threats by telephone and email.

The television show "Istraga", which has been broadcast since September 2005, is a weekly criminal investigation programme. The programme shows a compilation of dozens of crime stories involving organized crime, violence against children or women, drug dealers, war crimes, and corruption, among others.

SEEMO supports the HND (Croatian Journalists' Association), which has asked Croatian officials to fully investigate the death threats made to Valdec. SEEMO also supports HND's assertion that those with legitimate complaints against the media have a range of different mechanisms to pursue these complaints. Death threats represent a serious attempt to pressure the media and they should be condemned whenever and wherever they occur.

SEEMO has also been informed that the police have started an investigation. With this in mind, we call on Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to protect Valdec's life and those of his family members, and to take all necessary steps against the person or persons responsible for these threats.

We would also like to remind you that, on numerous occasions in 2006, SEEMO has been informed of threats made to other investigative journalists in Croatia. SEEMO is deeply concerned about the safety of Croatian journalists and asks Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to urgently investigate these cases.

SEEMO views all of these threats as a serious violation of press freedom and the rights of journalists and would also point out that, around the world, the issue of a death threat is often the precursor to murder. Therefore, the authorities must take them seriously.

Protest Bulgaria, 27 February

SEEMO is alarmed at the pressure applied on the media by the supporters and members of the Bulgarian ATAKA party, including its leader Volen Siderov, on the editorial offices of the Bulgarian daily 24 hours and weekly 168 hours.

Based on information provided to SEEMO, on 23 February at about 1.40 pm Siderov, his deputy Pavel Shopov, and Dimitar Stojanov, ATAKA Member of the Bulgarian Parliament and Member of the European Parliament, together with a group of party supporters, went to the editorial office of two newspapers. In addition, another organised group of some 100 supporters was waiting nearby. When at the editorial office of the print media, the group requested from the journalists a document to justify an article published on the previous day about some financial transactions.

During the visit journalists and editors from both newspapers were threatened, humiliated and verbally abused. During the invasion of the newspapers' editorial office one ATAKA politician allegedly threatened Nikolai Penchev, editor-in-chief of 168 hours. The politician apparently said to Penchev that he would "rip out" his liver and that he knows where Penchev lives.

We would like to remind Your Excellencies, that those with legitimate complaints against the media have a range of different mechanisms to pursue these complaints. These violent

threats represent a serious attempt to pressure the media and they should be condemned whenever and wherever they occur. SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental element of every democratic society. Bulgaria in now a member of the European Union (EU) and these violent actions against journalists by the members and supporters of a political party in an EU country are unacceptable.

Your Excellencies, we ask you to fully investigate this case, including the verbal threats made against the journalists. We call on Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to protect the lives of all journalists, and to take all necessary steps against the persons responsible for this unwarranted invasion of a newspaper.

Answer from H.E. Rumen Yordanov Petkov, Minister of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria (sent by e-mail), 27 February

In reply to the letter sent on behalf of the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), signed by you, I can assure you I totally share the opinion that "a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental element of every democratic society".

The reaction of the Ministry of Interior officials to the referred incident in the editorial offices of the Bulgarian newspapers 24 Hours and 168 Hours unambiguously confirms that we are able to ensure and protect the freedom of speech and journalists' security.

I hope that a review of the facts' chronology from Friday afternoon will convince you in that. I was informed immediately about the incident by the First Regional Police Department within the Sofia Metropolitan Police Directorate, which is responsible for the territory where the editorial offices are situated. On 23rd of February at about 2.47 p.m. operators on the hotline 166 received a phone call from Mr. Radomir Cholakov, chief juriconsult of the 168 Hours newspaper. He informed them that Volen Siderov, leader of the parliamentary represented party Ataka and 30 – 40 supporters of the party had come into the newspaper's editorial office at the Printing House. They had rushed into the editor-in-chief's office and had started abusing and threatening. The cause for that had been a publication in the newspaper's latest issue. Immediately after receiving the signal, auto patrols, police investigators and operative workers of the First Regional Police Department, as well as forces of the Specialised Unit for Protection of the Sofia Metropolitan Police Directorate were sent to the incident's venue. They ascertained the following: at approximately 1.30 p.m. the deputy editor-in-chief of 168 Hours received a call by the security guard of the building, asking him whether he expected citizens' visit to the editorial office. While discussing the appointments with the editor-in-chief, a large group of people crowded in front of the 168 Hours editorial office and rushed into the 24 Hours corridor, and afterwards headed to the weekly newspaper's editorial office. The group was lead by Mr. Volen Siderov and other Ataka MPs – Pavel Shopov, Dimitar Stoyanov and Georgi Dimitrov. They headed towards Mr. Penchev's office where some of the supporters, by using provocative shouts, threatened the editor-in-chief with taking the law in their own hands. After that they went into random editorial rooms, looking for the publication's author. Mr. Siderov was asked several times to leave the editorial office but he refused. The MPs and the citizens that accompanied him continued to threaten the journalists after which they left the building.

The head of the Sofia Regional Prosecutor's Office, Mr.

Nalbantov, was informed immediately about the incident. By his order, a prosecutor was sent to the venue to supervise the situation and to execute the procedural and investigative activities. A pre-trial case against an unknown perpetrator was instituted under Art.212, Para 2 of the Penal Procedure Code. The criminal procedure is for committing indecent activities, grossly violating the public order and expressing obvious disrespect to society – a crime under Art.325, Para 1 of the Penal Code. By an order of the prosecutor M. Beshkov, dated February 26th, interrogations of the personnel of both editorial offices, who had witnessed the incident, were requested. The order also stated “all the MPs and supporters of the parliamentary represented party Ataka, present at the 24 Hours and 168 Hours newspapers’ editorial offices, have to be interrogated, in their capacity of witnesses, about the circumstances that have to be proven”. The order gives directions for executing technical expertise reports on the collected evidence on the case. I’m deliberately giving you the facts about the case in detail, because I am convinced in the public significance of the act of violation against the freedom of speech, as well as in the fact

that the law enforcement officials have reacted to the signal from the editorial office in due course. Even more concerning is the fact that the MPs which have been asked to give explanations on the case have not so far gone to the police for interrogation – this is extremely alarming because the persons concerned represent the people and are vested with power.

As Minister of Interior I cannot accept a behaviour that hinders the work of the law enforcement and the judicial authorities, since all of us request and expect fast investigation and guaranteeing of citizens’ security and safety. I’m aware that the police are defending peoples’ rights and freedoms. I have informed the Prime Minister about MPs not showing in the police.

Acquainting you with the facts for the time being, I would like to assure you once more that the Bulgarian police have undertaken duly and professionally all the necessary activities to examine the case and to protect journalists’ security. As a confirmation to my words, I hope that you’ll accept the invitation to discuss the case with you personally or with other representatives of SEEMO.

Review

Recent Book Releases

Television across Europe: Regulation, Policy and Independence. Monitoring Reports 2005, Volume 1.

In view of steady changes in media sectors, especially in the sector of television broadcasting, democratic organisations have taken the step of a costly experiment of monitoring analyses. Therefore, they take us into the world of broadcasting affairs and lead us to some selected countries with different political and economical background but with the same sort of experience sharing: All of them have recently been monitored by the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme of the Open Society Institute (EUMAP), in cooperation with the OSI’s Network Media Program (NMP).

The book represents a comprehensive report providing insightful overviews of troubling developments in public service and commercial broadcasting. Based on the results of monitoring examinations of television service in the selected OSCE countries, the report also provides recommendations on how to follow more democratic lines, if necessary. Therefore, attention is especially directed towards essential democratic factors such as the objective news coverage, diverse and qualitative contents, and the coverage of issues, including minority issues.

Structured in two differing parts, the report’s first and main part concentrates on a general overview of broadcasting regulations all over Europe, focusing on economic and political questions. The second part puts its focus on some participating countries of the OSCE: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic and Estonia.

At this point, the book provides highly detailed information. The comparison of the broadcasting system of western models and eastern patterns illustrates a picture of a “democratic divide” and proposes suggestions on how to come closer to the ideal model of western democracy. In the face of their very different historical and political contexts, any judgement would almost seem presumptuous and eurocentric. Despite this difficult situation, the authors of the report managed to compare the systems in a pretty objective, but also intensively demanding way. Considering the fact of providing very detailed information, especially about the country focus (including lots of tables, abbreviations and statistics), the report may be used most appropriately as a sort of “up-to-date encyclopaedia”.

by Johanna Strahlhofer

Preview

Upcoming Events

SEEMO Meeting of Editors-in-Chief and Media Executives of Roma and other Minority Media Representatives in South East / Central Europe

20 - 22 April 2007, Belgrade, Serbia

IPI World Congress 2007

12 - 15 Mai 2007, Istanbul, Turkey

SEEMO Private News Agencies Workshop

31 May - 2 June 2007, Skopje

SEE Media Forum Zagreb by WAZ - KAS – SEEMO

27 - 28 June 2007, Zagreb, Croatia

SEEMO Investigative Reporting Seminar Albania

21 - 23 September 2007, Tirana, Albania

More information: www.seemo.org

Annual fellowship to focus on mobility in the Balkans

Balkan journalists are invited to apply for a seven-month fellowship to research and report on transitional and reform issues in southeast Europe and the European Union at large. Application deadline: April 27. For more information, contact fellowship@birn.eu.com or visit <http://fellowship.birn.eu.com>.

Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism

The Kurt Schork Awards in International Journalism celebrate the best freelance print journalism and honour reporters who show great courage and commitment to reporting on controversial issues.

Entries must be received by IWPR no later than 15 June 2007. For full details, visit: <http://listmgr.ifex.org/lists/lt.php?id=NUwPDwcJB1UYCw0FUkwBAQ0ADw%3D%3D>

DR. ERHARD BUSEK - SEEMO 2007 AWARD FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) is pleased to announce the Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO 2007 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe.

Sponsored by Dr. Erhard Busek, special coordinator for the Stability Pact, the 2,000 Euro award will be given to a journalist, editor, media executive or person educating journalists in South Eastern Europe, who promotes a climate of better understanding among people in the region and who works 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 its recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO 2002 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe, 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*. The 2005 Award was given to Brankica Petkovic, Head of the Center for Media Policy at the Peace Institute in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and editor-in-chief of the book versions of *Media Watch* and *Media Watch Journal*. She is also the author of a number of articles on media representations of minorities, with a special focus on the Roma minority in Slovenia. In 2006, the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) and its international jury chose the Croatian journalist, Danko Plevnik, international relations columnist for

the Croatian daily *Slobodna Dalmacija* from Split, as the recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO 2006 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe, in recognition for outstanding efforts in journalism which contributed toward better understanding in South Eastern Europe.

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 (along with a professional CV, describing why she / he should receive the award), as well as the contacts of the person (media organisation, address, phone, fax, email). In case you would like to nominate a media outlet or an organisation / institution, please always provide details of its representative, because this award can be presented only to individuals.

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 another individual or individuals, please send us their details and contact information. We would also need your own details and contact information (address, phone, fax, email, mobile phone). Please note that members of the jury cannot be nominated for the award.

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 welcomed. Unfortunately, supporting material cannot be returned, so please always send copies of the original material.

Please send your nomination and supporting documents to:

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E-mail:

The deadline for applications for the 2007 Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe is: 1 June 2007. The Award will be presented on 19 October 2007 in Vienna/Austria.