

## SEEMO Mission to Croatia Reports in media

<http://www.predsjednik.hr> – official webpage of the President of Croatia



**27 01 2011**

Predsjednik Josipović primio izaslanstvo SEEMO-a (South East Europe Media Organisation)

Predsjednik Republike Hrvatske Ivo Josipović primio je izaslanstvo SEEMO-a (South East Europe Media Organisation), podružnice International Press Instituta, nevladine i neprofitne mreže urednika, medijskih izdavača i vodećih novinara jugoistočne Europe.

Članovi izaslanstva upoznali su predsjednika Josipovića sa svojim aktivnostima u zaštiti slobode tiska i pomoći novinarima i medijskim kućama u jugoistočnoj Europi. Razgovaralo se, također, o stanju novinarskih sloboda, političkoj i ekonomskoj situaciji koja utječe na rad i opstanak javnih medija, integritet novinara, pad profesionalnih standarda i komercijalizaciji medijskih sadržaja. Članovi SEEMO-a su 2009. godine započeli sa svojim posjetima najvišim predstavnicima vlasti s kojima razgovaraju o temama vezanim uz slobodu medija.

## BalkanInsight

26 JAN 2011 / 10:34

### SEEMO Press Freedom Mission Heads to Croatia

A delegation of the South and East Europe Media Organisation, SEEMO, including representatives from the International Press Institute, began a four-day Press Freedom Mission to Croatia on Tuesday.

#### SEEMO

During their visit, the Press Freedom Mission will meet with Croatian President Ivo Josipovic, as well as a broad array of representatives of media professionals.

Self-censorship, pressure by advertisers and political groups, threats against journalists, especially investigative reporters, the situation of the public broadcaster, and other problems media professionals face in their daily work are the topics high on the agenda.

SEEMO Secretary General Oliver Vujovic, who will lead the Press Freedom Mission, said: "The main aim is to obtain clear feedback about the media situation and media developments in Croatia."

Vujovic added: "Croatia, which is on its way towards the EU, must provide a positive example with regard to media developments and journalist professionalism, and this is the message we want to set during our visit".

International Press Institute Acting Director Alison Bethel McKenzie said: "As Croatia prepares for EU

accession, the International Press Institute is hopeful that this mission is the beginning of a strong relationship with the media and government stakeholders in the country."



## **SEEMO/IPI Press Freedom Mission to Croatia from 25-28 January 2011**

Vienna, 25 January 2011 - A delegation of the South and East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), including representatives from the International Press Institute (IPI), will begin a four-day Press Freedom Mission to Croatia on 25 January 2011. During their visit, the Press Freedom Mission will meet with Croatian President Ivo Josipovic, as well as a broad array of representatives of media professionals.



A delegation of the South and East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), including representatives from the International Press Institute (IPI), has begun a four-day Press Freedom Mission to Croatia.



## **Press freedom on downward slope**

*Croatian Times*

The International Press Institute (IPI) has raised concerns that press freedom in Croatia is declining amid an increase in self-censorship, harsher libel laws and attacks against journalists.

IPI's Steven M. Ellis told Croatian Times that while the country has seen some advances over the past several years, recent months show a downward trend.

"Reports of attacks and threats against journalists, as well as increased self-censorship and the introduction of a draft law calling for jail time and fines for libel, have raised concerns that the country is declining in the area of press freedom," Ellis said.

A delegation from the South and East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), including representatives from the International Press Institute (IPI) finished a four day Press Freedom Mission to Croatia last Friday. The Mission met with various representatives of the Croatian media as well as the country's President, Ivo Josipovic.

Zdenko Duka from the Croatian Society of Journalists (HND) who met with the Mission's representatives, said that HND is particularly concerned about the state of the national broadcaster, Croatian Radio Television (HRT). According to Duka, the new law governing HRT would give politicians greater leverage in making appointments for the station's leading positions, more than they had in the past.

Ellis pointed out the problems that exist in the "systemic culture of political influence" that is prevalent in Croatia and reflected in HRT's operation and its appointment of senior management, as well as in the lack of transparency in media ownership.

He also warned about the new draft law that proposes reintroducing prison sentences as punishment for libel, something the HND President views as very problematic. Croatian authorities have said, however, that most European states prescribe similar measures.

"One wrong does not make a right," says Ellis who adds that IPI, SEEMO and many other press freedom organizations are fighting to remove defamation from EU states' criminal laws.

"We would hope that those countries being considered for accession to the EU would begin their journey by removing from law, or by rejecting any suggestion to add to law, criminal defamation or libel."

The organization warns about the number of high-profile attacks and threats against journalists, who do not feel free enough to adequately cover pressing issues such as corruption.

"While police authorities sometimes apprehend the actual attackers of journalists, they are not aggressively pursuing those who order the attacks," Ellis says.

Those few that do write about corruption have problems accessing documents that should be made public anyway, he adds.