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Dayton and the Media

The Washington Agreement (1993), which regulated the Federation BH constitution, addresses certain important questions regarding the media system. In Part III, article 1, it specifies that the Federation Government has responsibility ‘for allocation of frequencies to radio and television’; in article 2 it specifies that the Federal and Canton governments will ‘have joint responsibility for the infrastructure for communication and transport’, while article 4 says that the Cantons are responsible for ‘adopting policy in relation to safeguarding radio and television, including decisions which concern the regulation and safeguarding of their work’. The right to receive and use frequencies is distinguished from the right to found broadcasting organisations. But, the constitution is sufficiently flexible in this area also, for it leaves open the possibility that the Cantons may let their responsibility in this regard devolve to the Federation, (Amendment VII, point F). This is also covered by the draft law on public and commercial radio-television, which was prepared by the European Institute for the Media, at the request of the Office of the High Representative.

The Dayton constitution does not explicitly cover the media field. Article 3 lays down that the ‘building and functioning of joint and international communication objects and connections’ and ‘the regulation of traffic between the Entities’ falls under the authority of the BH
institutions. Meanwhile, Annex 9 article 1 concerns the founding of public corporations ‘on behalf of managing with joint public capacities’. Does this also extend to public broadcasting?

At the London Conference of December 1996, the BH government was required to adopt a new legal frame which would enable the formation of independent broadcast media throughout BH, establish a non-discriminatory procedure for frequency allocation, and enable inter-entity radio and TV networks.

In the Peace Implementation Council’s Sintra Declaration (May 1997) these obligations were reiterated, together with an additional requirement for the establishment of the Open Broadcast Network (OBN). The mandate of the High Representative was extended to enable him to close down or suspend the output of any station which was in opposition to the letter and spirit of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Bonn Conference of December 1997 confirmed the intentions of the International Community (IC) to create free and pluralist media. The government of BH must adopt and implement in full new laws on media and telecommunications, and establish, by law, a permanent public body which will impose internationally recognised standards of journalism, and distribute radio and television frequencies.

In the mean time, media will, it is stated, be placed under the regulation of the new-formed Intermediate Commission for Standards and Media Licencing (IMSLC).

What are the priorities?

1. In local and international media expert circles, definition of a universal media system for the BH Federation is perceived more and more to be necessary. The field of print media is relatively easy to regulate: in fact, in many countries, no law on the press, which are generally privately owned, exists; professional standards are defined by journalistic codes of practice. The most serious question is how to govern the field of broadcasting, in accordance with the constitution of BH, as a complex state community. It is necessary to create a new configuration of public and commercial radio-television at all levels - cantonal, entity and state - and to put them to serve the needs of national reconciliation, democracy, a free flow of information, the affirmation of national minorities. In finding a solution, the practice current to date of responding only to political, cultural or nationalist requirements, and ignoring civil and economic requirements, as well as those specific to media, can no longer be continued. Public broadcasting is a vital sector of the international functions of every country. In the programming and organisational context, it is possible to accept several models of public broadcasting. Especially interesting, in this regard, are the experiences of Germany, Switzerland, France and Belgium. The question of resolving the status of
RTV BH should be placed in this context. Theoretically speaking, several solutions are possible, and their relative values will be discussed in subsequent issues of Media News. In each, the emphasis would have to be laid on the service as ‘public’ rather than ‘state’, for the fulfillment of a range of social interests wider than those of the state alone is at issue. Such an approach will bring us nearer the vital goal: of creating the possibility for the participation of different forms of capital in BH public broadcasting.

When the system of commercial broadcasting is the topic, (the puritanically strict line between public and commercial RTV has long been blurred) an impartial approach to the usage of charge-free frequencies is needed. It should not be possible to impose limits on the ranges of coverage available via these frequencies.

Media legislation must take into account the fact the existence of an additional subsystem alongside public and commercial RTV. These are the civil-sector stations, and civil association broadcasts. The experience of certain European countries is of high interest here, for it could help define the status of a number of local TV stations in the forthcoming transition into privatisation.

2. Planning, allocating and using radio and television frequencies must be regulated by law, and the state and entity responsibilities in this regard must be clearly distinguished. Frequencies are, generally speaking, a valuable and limited natural resource, on which social changes should have no influence. Their design and allocation is implemented at international conferences on the global level, and in regional conferences for European regions.

The planning of local level frequencies, inside national borders, is carried out internally by all countries. It is of vital significance, whether the legislation defines criteria for allocating and using the free frequencies (at the state, regional and local levels), and enables straightforward and impartial access to all potential users in accord with international standards. ‘Licencing organs must have the authority to ensure pluralism of social, ethnic and political voices, so that the media system correctly represents and expresses the diversity of the population’ (Article 19, 1994). The issue of frequency allocation depends also on the extent of the democratic character of the structure of the entire broadcasting system. Therefore, the adoption of a telecommunications law is a sine qua non for the reconstruction of the media system.

3. The ball of unresolved ownership issues in the media, especially those which were once under ‘social’ ownership, is starting to roll in the Federation, meeting dramatic reactions. The process of media privatisation in BH started at the end of 1990, but was halted by the war. The basis was a set of articles passed by the short-lived government of Ante Marković. A number of media converted into enterprises of mixed ownership, or were on the way to doing so. Some already ‘privatised’ media, under the pressure of local powers and the demands of war, were forced to abandon their status of communal, public voices, and place themselves once again under the patronage of former founders.

It is clear that the property transformation of media, at all levels, should be accorded with the general model of privatisation throughout society. However, this process should strengthen, rather than weakening, the autonomy of the media, and should end the possibility of state patronage. In this regard, it is of fundamental significance to affirm the principle according to which private ownership could become a basis for the development of public RTV services, at all levels.

1According to earlier international plans (Geneva, Stockholm), frequencies were allocated to BH for four radio and three television networks for the entire country. There is a full spectrum - of researched and unresearched frequencies - of medium and low coverage capacity, now used only at minimum capacity. Thus, the resources exist, and should be rationally planned and used.
Regulation and Deregulation

The unreconstructed media system of the Federation and BH is slowing, and even preventing, swift-moving social change and the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. Therefore it is of crucial importance to start the fundamental reconstruction of the media legislation, so as to create legal and institutional guarantees for the autonomy of the media and freedom of speech. With regard to the particular and in many ways contradictory media situation in BH, this process will require both legal regulation and deregulation. It is necessary to create, by way of regulation, a basis for establishing a coherent broadcasting system (at all levels); to institutionalise the autonomy and freedom of the media, and to harmonise local regulations with international standards. Deregulation should be understood as the act of cancelling the various media monopolies and state patronage, to increase the influence of civil and market forces.

While the Federation and BH fail to achieve legislative change, the media will remain at the mercy of those forces which affirm the status quo: and those who are verbally for ‘change’ but only in the direction of their own (party, nationalist) interests. A choice between two such evils is not much of a choice.

OHR - EBU

Disagreement - or differences of position

The organisation of the broadcasting system in BH, and the transformation of RTV BH and Srpska RTV has attracted a large amount of public attention and the attention of the factors most responsible for implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this issue of Media News we publish excerpts from the correspondence of High Representative for BH Carlos Westendorp, and the president of the European Broadcasting Union Albert Scharf, which took place on the topic of transforming RTV BH.

RTV BH was accepted in 1993 into the membership of the EBU, the largest broadcasting association in the world, as the successor of Yugoslavia RTV, which was one of the founder members of the EBU. The EBU gave great support to the work of RTV BH during the war and in the post-war period.

In publishing parts of this correspondence we hope that by giving room to all frequently expressed and different views on this question, we will contribute something to a speedy and comprehensive solution of the status of broadcasting in BH, in accordance with the Dayton Agreement. The Media Plan Institute will give its view of the issue during a panel discussion, in which representatives and experts from both entities will participate, which is to be held in Brcko on 8 June.

Letter of the President of the EBU….

I write to you in my capacity as President of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), the Geneva-based association of public service broadcasters that groups 67 active members in 49 countries, including RTV BH in Bosnia Herzegovina.

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² For this essay, the following were used: ‘Initial Basis of strategies for developing RDS in BH, 1991’, research-analysis documentation of Media Plan, 1995 - 1998, and the legal regulations for broadcasting systems of European countries.
According to information which I have received from Sarajevo, your office has proposed a memorandum of understanding on the ‘transformation’ of RTV BH, which the EBU has been attempting to help recover from the war…

As I understand it, you plan to restrict the mandate of RTV BH to the territory of the Federation alone, while establishing a new channel to cover the entire Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina. My sources suggest that this channel would be the commercial channel OBN, which has received heavy sponsorship from the West.

Commissioner Van den Broek – with whom I discussed assistance to media in Bosnia Herzegovina last year – has stated that the EU is ‘fully committed to the necessity of preserving a dual broadcasting system’ (my italics). If I understand correctly, your proposals would seem biased towards a commercial system.

In the EBU’s opinion, democratisation in Bosnia Herzegovina would suffer severe damage if the OHR were to install a nationwide commercial network while clipping the wings of RTV BH, which has been gradually transforming itself, against enormous odds, into a genuine public service broadcaster.

The country’s citizens could also suffer as viewers, as restriction of RTV BH to responsibility for the Federation alone would compromise its eligibility for EBU membership.

Membership of the EBU is open to broadcasting services of national character and national importance, providing balanced and varied programming irrespective of the ratio of cost to audience. In some countries, one public service broadcaster is the EBU member; in other countries a number of regional services operating under a national umbrella may satisfy our membership requirements. (This is the case in Belgium, Germany and the UK for example, and it was the case with JRT in Yugoslavia; the loose network constituting OBN would not qualify.)

RTV BH has solemnly and publicly declared its commitment to peace, democracy, ethnic integration, journalistic integrity and public service. In the judgement of the EBU, the station gives daily proof of its sincere attempts to meet this commitment. We therefore understand RTV BH’s resentment at the proposed reform, including the installation of an OHR administrator.

One way forward, however, might be a truly Federal organisation, (i.e. covering the whole of the Republic), embracing the reformed SRT in Banja Luka, and a reorganised RTV BH. Such a development might improve audio-visual services to all communities throughout the country, while guaranteeing for RTV BH, SRT, and their viewers the benefits of EBU membership….

What such a structure would need more than anything would be solid financing, including a reaffirmation of the licence fee and a just fair share of foreign aid…

I trust that this letter has clarified the position of the EBU, and that our organisations can continue to cooperate in the service of media democratisation in Bosnia Herzegovina…

Albert Scharf,
President (EBU)

…The Reply of the High Representative

I would like to thank you for your letter and interest in the International Community’s efforts to help media in Bosnia Herzegovina conform to the highest democratic standards.

You will, of course, be aware of the contribution that the media in Bosnia Herzegovina made in fomenting the conditions that led to the war, stoking the fire during the conflict itself, and subsequently in holding back the speedy implementation of the Peace Process following the agreement at Dayton.
In this context, the governments sponsoring the implementation of the Dayton Agreement have called upon me as High Representative to organise and oversee the reform and restructuring of the whole media landscape in Bosnia Herzegovina. In particular, I have been asked to ensure the transformation of government controlled media into genuine public service television.

As you are also aware, this process began with the restructuring of SRT in the Republika Srpska, and an international administrator is overseeing the project. The Peace Implementation Council (PIC) at a conference in Bonn last December also called for the formation of a new regulatory commission, the Intermediate Media Standards and Licencing Commission, which will provide a legal framework for media and broadcasting in particular. The Commission, which will resemble similar regulatory bodies in Western Europe, will begin operating soon.

It is clear that the standards of public service broadcasting, that we have insisted upon for SRT should apply throughout the country. The Steering Board of the PIC is determined to see these standards applied to RTV BH to ensure protection from political interference.

This is not only essential in the context of general structural reform, but also vital for free and fair elections. The forthcoming September elections will serve as a litmus test of how the whole peace process has progressed thus far.

I have discussed the future of RTV BH at length with the Chairman of the Presidency Alija Izetbegovic, and with the Croat member of the Presidency, Kresimir Zubak. Both told me they agreed in principle with such a reorganisation.

The reform envisaged seeks to preserve RTV BH as a television service for the whole country. It has never been the intention of the Office of the High Representative or the PIC to somehow undermine public service broadcasting and promote a commercial alternative, including the Open Broadcast Network, in its place. Your reference to this notion is puzzling as this has never come up in my discussions on this issue...

As High Representative, I am committed to seeing RTV BH uphold the statehood of Bosnia Herzegovina. I am equally committed to bringing an end to partisan political control of any publicly funded media, including RTV BH. Political parties have no place interfering in the governance or management of any media paid for by taxpayers.

RTV BH must and will be subject to the same exacting standards as other public broadcast networks which are members of the EBU...

Your suggestion of a federal organisation embracing the reformed SRT and a reorganised RTV BH sounds similar to the model I have submitted to Mr Izetbegovic and Mr Zubak. SRT could eventually form part of a countrywide service, but details of such an arrangement have yet to be worked out. The restructuring of SRT has only just begun, and it would be premature to lay down a definitive model at this stage. Nevertheless, under the BH constitution, any arrangement would have to be based on an agreement between the entities.

The best way forward may require the creation of a public broadcast corporation which would offer RTV BH a firm legal foundation for the future, and allow for such a cooperative agreement. A genuine national public service broadcaster which conforms to Western democratic standards and indeed your own criteria must represent the country’s two entities and three constituent peoples, as set out in the Dayton peace agreement ratified in Paris. I am afraid I must disagree with you when you suggest that RTV BH upholds these principles now. It patently does not, and this is also the position of the Steering Board and the European Commission. I shall be happy to provide concrete evidence of this if you so require...

Nevertheless, I would like to accept your offer of assistance in the building of a strong public broadcasting service in Bosnia Herzegovina. I would thus ask you to nominate a suitable candidate for the position International Administrator at RTV BH. The OHR will send the EBU
details of this position, and the qualifications required. You will then be able to ensure directly that your current member genuinely conforms to the standards and criteria which you demand of your other members.

Furthermore, another positive contribution would be to consider including SRT as a member of the EBU, once it is brought into conformity with EBU standards. This would certainly be an important first step in the process of creating a truly representative National Public Service TV …

I warmly welcome your intervention on behalf of RTV BH and I understand that you have a responsibility to represent the interests of your members. However, I have to take a broader view of the whole media picture in Bosnia Herzegovina. It is my task to help bring lasting peace to this country. This cannot be done without fundamental reform of the media, which, and in this I must include RTV BH, has contributed significantly to the problems of ethnic division which the country must overcome…

Carlos Westendorp
High Representative

What does the Law on Media in Canton Sarajevo contain?

Greater Responsibility for Public Words

The public discussions taking place in Sarajevo on the Draft Cantonal Law for Media are being finalised. The draft of this law was produced before it was known that the international community would require the adoption of media standards and criteria for the allocation of RTV frequencies, and fund the Commussion (IMSLC) to monitor the process. Independently of this, on the issue how to establish relations between the cantonal, federal and state legislation in this area, the Sarajevo Canton initiative is worth attention, for it is the first effort to regulate the BH media situation in accordance with modern European standards.

What are the basic specifications of the suggested laws?

Freedom of speech is guaranteed and broadly defined. However, its extent can, in certain cases, in accordance with the law, be bordered by limits or sanctions, which are in the spirit of European conventions about the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Censorship is decidedly forbidden, and the protection of privacy obligatory. Nobody has the right to abuse their position, or in any other way illegally limit the right to public expression. Nobody is allowed to use the media or any other means of information for endangering the indisputable right to personal privacy.

The founding of media is liberalised to the maximum extent. Media can be founded in all forms of ownership, registered for publishing informative activity their founders or co-founders can be actual persons or representative bodies. There are no limits to the concentration of ownership inside the different types of media (the ‘mixed’ ownership of the daily papers, radio and television), which is otherwise the practice in many European countries and the states of the USA, where such regulations have been found hard to implement.

The novelty that public media can be founded as industries of mixed ownership – meaning industries whose founders are parliament – the so called legislative, meaning representative bodies of government, in cooperation with other actual persons or legal bodies.
The record of the media in evidence is obligatory, and is carried out in the responsible cantonal ministry. For the press no special conditions are necessary, but for the founders of electronic media it is obligatory to possess licences for frequency usage. Licences are not necessary for legal bodies which want to produce radio or television programmes without intending to broadcast these themselves.

Media are allowed to accept donations, but the donors cannot influence on their editorial independence. In order to preserve genuine independence, the public must be kept informed about donations.

The Editorial teams of media have complete freedom in forming and implementing editorial policies in accord with the programming concepts of the founder or founders. In addition, the interests of the public must be represented by public media in its programming, by advisory associations, which comprise experts for journalism, culture, education and art.

Publishing announcements, corrections and responses, and disclosing sources of information, and the preservation of published texts and audio-visual records, is not regulated by the draft law in a way which differs significantly from current practice.

Media have free access, under equal conditions, to all events and information which is of public interest. State and public institutions are obliged to regulated the realisation of public work by issuing rules of procedure, or any other form of special act. The possibility is envisaged that the institutions may withhold information which is being sought, if its secrecy is supported by law of by other act, meaning that in as much as ‘its publication would influence state security or defence, or would endanger international relations, the implementation of law, public safety, personal privacy, or business secrets.

The rights and responsibilities of the editor in chief, editors and journalists are accorded usual standards of practice. Freedom to work, and journalistic responsibility would be defined by the general act of the founder, or distributor, and the principles of this act by collective contract.

It is demanded of journalists that they show professionalism in thir work and respect for the ethical codes of practice of journalism. Their responsibility for ‘the truth of information and facts in published material...and the exactitude of the transmission of information from the source’, is confirmed. A journalist has freedom in selection of fact, freedom and autonomy in choice, meaning the picturing of the information, and freedom in interpreting events. Also, the journalist is enabled to, with no kind of consequences, refuse to prepare information whose content is opposed to professional standards and journalistic ethics. Penalties are envisaged for the publishing of information whose content has been significantly change by editorial selection or by the title under the name or pseudonym of the journalist/author, without their consent.

Responsibility for material or non-material damage done to others by the publication of untrue information is confirmed. On these grounds, the right exists of settlement in court, or out of court settlement between the parties. Those responsible could include the media’s founder, the journalist or editor, depending on the source of the information which resulted in the damages.

The distribution of the press is free, and the possibility of limiting or forbidding it is envisaged only in cases and under conditions supported by law, for example, if it may endanger state security or the territorial integrity of BH; if it may inflame racial, ethnic, or religious hatred or intolerance; if it supports criminal acts and propagates or supports acts against humanity. Temporary suspension can be ordered by the relevant prosecutor, and prohibition by the relevant court for the area of distribution, and the legal force of the court order forbidding distribution of the media must be admitted by the founder or distributor. All these articles are applicable to electronic media or any other means of information.
It is especially required of electronic media, both public and commercial, that they are unbiased, and that they uphold linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity in the area covered by their broadcasts. The programmes of public electronic media ‘must be diverse and balanced, contribute to the advancing of understanding and tolerance between people and nations, affirm political pluralism, and democratic freedom, respect the thinking and convictions of others, take into account the levels of education of residents, the development of ecological awareness, the promotion of the values of culture and learning and the development of cultural – artistic creativity.’ Commercial RTV stations are enabled to perform a public function in part of their programming, according to agreements reached with state organs.

Special articles regulate the transmission of short reports on cultural, sport and other events of public interest, and the access of political parties and independent candidates to radio and television programmes in the course of the election campaign.

**No time-limits are set for publishing radio and television advertising.** Such limits are omitted from the desire that the media, bearing in mind their current economic difficulties, may have maximum benefit from marketing, and thus be come self-sustaining. However, the way of publishing advertising is regulated, on the world standard model. Public radio and TV stations, for example, are not allowed to interrupt a programme with adverts, while commercial stations can do so, if this is done in a way which does not disturb the unity and quality of the programme being transmitted. The right to interruption does not apply to the transmission of news and informative-political programmes shorter than 30 minutes, nor to the coverage of religious ceremonies.

**The transparency of financing RTV stations is obligatory.** This condition is inserted to guarantee the independence of RTV stations, in the light of their great influence in forming public opinion.

**Supervision of the legality of media activity, should be carried out by the cantonal ministry responsible for information.** The ministry responsible for traffic and communications should oversee the technical standards and quality of the broadcasts and equipment of RTV stations – in as much as the Law on Telecommunications, still awaited at the federal and state levels, does not specify otherwise.

Respect for generally accepted professional standards of journalism would be monitored by editorial teams and media founders, who would undertake of initiate appropriate measures, and the possibility is envisaged of forming a special body which would address these questions. But, above all, it is essential that professional associations, and not state organs, should be responsible in this area.

**Penalties are in accord with the cantonal Law on Violations, and range, depending on the type of violation involved,** and whether a registered body or private associations or individuals are concerned, from 50 to 10 000 KM. In addition, an action which is the subject of criminal law (abusive language, insults..)are not penalised by the proposed draft law: these are not the subject of media legislation in any country of the world. (Azem Ohranovic)

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**Report on the Sarajevo Daily Press**

**Clinton’s Messages**

The letter sent by the president of the US, Bill Clinton, to Alija Izetbegovic and Kresimir Zubak was generally interpreted by the public as a continuation of the dialogue that started in
December of last year in Sarajevo. During this visit Clinton, the guest of honour, clearly specified tasks key for the implementation of the Dayton agreement.

The monitor analysed the treatment and editorial presentation of Clinton’s latest letter in the Sarajevo papers Oslobodjenje, Vecernje novine, and Dnevni avaz (9/5/98). Out of all the Sarajevo daily press, viewed as a whole, Oslobodjenje gave the greatest significance to the US president’s letter. This was the only paper to give this important address front page placement as top-ranking news. With the headline ‘The Obstruction Must Stop’, beside photos of Clinton, Izetbegovic and Zubak, excerpts of the first and second letters were carried. Inside, (on page 5) more of the text of the letters was carried. Dnevni avaz and Vecernje novine, whose first pages always offer a kind of exhibition of the most appealing news items of the day, had not realised the letter from the Washington bag was something that they should draw to their readers’ attention to specially. However, they did carry both letters on their second pages.

Clinton’s letter to Izetbegovic was made available to all three dailies by way of an ‘announcement from the Presidency cabinet’, passed on by BH PRESS – only Oslobodjenje failed to mention the sources. We also noted that in Oslobodjenje the final sentence the Clinton’s letter to Izetbegovic was missing: ‘It is now necessary to use the vision and decisiveness which you displayed during the war to build a lasting peace.’ This sentence actually appeared in the Dnevni avaz headline: ‘Use vision from the war to build lasting peace’; and it figured, albeit in a reduced version, in Vecernje novine’s – ‘build a lasting peace’.

Dnevni avaz carried photos of the recipients of each letter by the letters themselves, and so that Clinton was placed next to Izetbegovic. It is notable that Vecernje novine did not bother with photo illustrations, and the headlines had little to do with the actual significance of the letters.

Whether because of the length of the letters, or for some other reason, Clinton’s letter to Zubak took up more space in the Sarajevo dailies and its contents were reported direct, unlike those of Izetbegovic’s letter. The longest version was again that of Oslobodjenje, (also given front page placement), which obviously used a different source (unspecified), from those of the other two papers. This was clear from the language of the letter, which was a Croatian language translation containing parts missing from the other other two dailies. (These parts related to the problems of refugee return to Drvar and Stolac, and expressing satisfaction with the Croat action of handing over ten persons accused of war crimes to the Hague Tribunal.)

Dnevne avaz carried the letter to Zubak (probably as taken from BH PRESS), under the title ‘Give up Separatism’, with photos of the correspondents. The opening summary expressed Clinton’s concern over the situation in Mostar. Vecernje novine carried only the first part of the letter (from the same source), and automatically dropped the rest. In this abridged text, which had the not totally appropriate title of ‘Concern Because of Police’, several important points made by Clinton were omitted. (These concerned the return of refugees, the demand that Bosnian leaders start to rule Bosnia effectively themselves, without constant recourse to international intervention, and so on.)

The next day, Dnevni avaz (page six) under its permanent section ‘Personality of the Day’ and accompanied by the name and picture of the US president, featured an article ‘America Won’t Give Up Bosnia’. This repeated particular statements expressed in the letters, and stressed that ‘the American President is a sincere friend of Bosnia’. Vecernje novine (in its Monday issue: the Saturday edition also covers Sunday) did not have comments of its own to make on the topic. Oslobodjenje, however, in its subsequent issue, had two commentaries, on the first page (the ‘In Focus’ section) and the second page: ‘Why Is Clinton Issuing Warnings Again?’ Analyzing the context and essence of Clinton’s messages to the top leaders of the Bosniaks and Croats, the commentator noted the lack of a third letter, to Momcilo Krajsnik, ‘who is obviously considered a hopeless case by Washington…’ (The Media Plan Monitoring Center)
One More Oslobodjenje In the RS

Loudspeaker for the SDS

The political wrangling and division in the Republika Srpska is perfectly reflected in the media scene in this entity. At the beginning of May two newspapers with the same name were issued: Srpsko Oslobodjenje - but of very different political orientation. The older ‘Srpsko Oslobodjenje’ started issuing at the beginning of the war in Belgrade, and subsequently in Pale, speeding up from a weekly to a daily. After a short interruption in production, the paper recommenced issuing in Banja Luka, as a weekly. The government of Milorad Dodik recently nominated Mladen Kanlic as the editor in chief.

The second, just-emerged Srpsko Oslobodjenje ‘the daily paper of the Serb nation’ (as it states on the impress) started issuing as a daily at the beginning of May. Its founder is the Novi Sad industry ‘Penal’. The paper is printed in Belgrade, and the editorial team is located there. The editor in chief is Jovanka Jovic (probably a pseudonym). On the board are leading members of the SDS, and some members of the RS Senate (a Pan – Serb Advisory Board). The briefest of glances at the first issue of this daily shows that this new ‘Srpsko Oslobodjenje’ will be a voice for the nationalist hardliners of the SDS. Its appearance coincided with the start of the RS election campaign. In the first issue both of the first two pages were entirely covered by an interview with Momcilo Krajsnik, Serb member of the BH Presidency, who turned up the media barrage aimed at Dodik’s government, calling it a ‘regional government of incompetent and incapable ministers’. In two texts the target of attack was RS president Biljana Plavsic: ‘Devaluation of the state which others made is not only unwise, but deeply immoral’ concluded Dr. Savo Grujic. The title alone of the second piece, ‘Biljana Srpsku deljase’ (the linguistic catch/game with the title of a famous folk song shifted in ‘Biljana ruins Srpska’) speaks with sufficient clarity of the drive to compromise the current RS president. In its attitude to the Donor’s Conference (7 and 8 May)the paper demonstrated through cartoons in which President Plavsic appeared to be trapped in an abyss trying to grab the carrot which Uncle Sam was holding out on the end of a stick. She was followed by Premier Dodik, with the new flag of BH....’

The Banja Luka Oslobodjenje reveals its editorial orientation in the characteristic headline ‘We are not them’, on the topic of its undesirable namesake. In its conclusion, the commentary says, ‘therefore, presentation in our name, or on our bank account (and other supporting services) is something we cannot and will not accept. Nor will we, for we are not – them’ (SP - BU)

News in Brief

OSCE is Financing Radio FERN

Swiss Ambassador to BH, Wilhelm Schmidt and the director of the OSCE Media Development Office (MBO), Linwood Tod, signed a new memorandum on the financing of Radio FERN, in Sarajevo.

In signing this MoU, the Swiss Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DEZA), and OSCE, agreed that for this year OSCE will undertake the greater share of financing the station. DEZA will continue to fund the expenses for the Swiss management of Radio FERN, and OSCE will undertake all other expenses of running the station, retrospectively, as of 2 January 1998.
Radio FERN (Free Inter – Ethnic Radio Network) was founded by the Government of Switzerland and the OSCE in 1996. The project came under the Swiss programme of reconstruction which included support to independent media. Therefore, FERN has chiefly been financed by Switzerland, until now.

Apart from the new form of funding, new developments are envisaged in the conceptual and programming area. Thus Radio FERN will cooperate more in the future with other radio stations on the eve of the forthcoming September elections. Two dozen of the most influential radio stations in BH will broadcast on their own frequencies neutral material taken from Radio FERN, for the elections. With foreign music, locally made music will also be broadcast.

A second studio of this radio will be opening in Banja Luka. Preparations are currently under way.

**Sejad Luckin - Journalist of the Year**

In the Association of BH Journalists, an expert group comprising top public and cultural professionals nominated the best journalists, broadcast and print media, and examples of broadcast and written work, for 1997. According to the decision of this group, the journalist of the year was Sejad Luckin of Oslobodjenje; the best paper was Dnevni avaz, the best radio station was Radio Stari Grad. Sarajevo; and Sarajevo’s TV Hayat bore away the prize for the best TV station.

The prize for the best piece of written journalism went to Jasmin Durakovic for his article: ‘The Lexicon of the Bosnian Spirit’ (100+1)’. The best radio programme was declared to be ‘The Alphabet of Democracy’ (Radio M), author Mirsada Ibrica and a group of co-authors; and the best TV programme was Senad Hadzifejzovic’s ‘Face to Face’ (TV BH). Fehim Demir’s ‘This is Sarajevo’ series was voted to be the best photographic serial.

Media Plan and the team of SAFAX congratulate all prize-winning authors and media.

**Campaign Without TV Adverts**

In the course of the upcoming election campaign, the paid transmission of political advertising material will be prohibited. This announcement was given by Ambassador Robert Barry, head of the OSCE BH mission, at a press conference.

‘We want to ensure that the media offer equal and fair access to all political parties, to safeguard the voters’ right to information, and to ensure equal treatment and coverage of events concerning all political parties. One of the new regulations is the prohibition of paid advertising broadcasts, on radio or television. The aim is to provide fair treatment for all political parties. This is a significant change from the last elections, and passed by universal decision of all members of the PEC (Provisional Election Commission)’, said Ambassador Barry.

The press is also obliged to carry correct coverage of the activities of all political parties, and to provide equal room for advertisement. This means that there must be equal opportunity for publishing political adverts, which should be priced at minimum commercial rates, or lower.

‘Media and journalists will not be involved in distorting or concealing facts, falsification, misrepresentation, or censorship, including regular omission of information,’’ said Barry.

The Media Experts Commission (MEC) and its subcommissions, which are distributed throughout BH, and employ numerous media observers, will carefully monitor the implementation of the regulations. In accordance with the types of violation committed, this commission will pass various penal measures against those responsible for violation of the rules and regulations.
‘Stall’ Takes Away Work

As the Banja Luka Daily Independent News (Dnevne neyavisne novine) wrote, the workers of Srpska Radio Television (SRT) will be prohibited from ‘honorary’ work in other media, unless they receive a letter of consent from the general director of this house by 4 May. This regulation obliges all workers to inform the general director by letter, by 30 April at the latest, for whom, and to what extent, they have been performing ‘honorary’ tasks.

‘If the worker continues this type of work without written permission, measures will be taken to end their working relationship with this house’, states the order, which was issued by the international administrator for SRT, Dragan Gasic. The order states that it was passed ‘in order to prevent disloyal competition and to protect the interests of SRT’.

In Pale, it is being supposed that this order was given in order to enable SRT and the International Community to solve the problem of those workers in SRT’s Pale studio who are ‘honorary’ employed by the station close to the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) leadership: Channel S.

Ekavica Is Not Forbidden

‘The information that, as administrator for SRT, I have forbidden the use of ekavica (a Serbian language dialect variant) is pure stupidity. Watch the TV programme, and you will see that both ekavica and ijekavica are used.

However, a certain number of journalists and editors, responsible for the previous system of media manipulation, have been left unable to display themselves in front of a microphone for benefit of the cameras of SRT,’ SRT administrator Dragan Gasic told Dnevni Avaz.

Spektar Issued

The Sarajevo media scene is richer by one more paper. The first edition of the new serial paper Spektar, issued by the International Centre for Peace, Citizens Forum, Sarajevo, has appeared. The director of the paper is Ibrahim Spahic, and the editor in chief is the young Sarajevo journalist Ivica Pjanic.

Podrinje Deprived of SRT

The watchers and audiences of central Podrinja have recently found themselves no longer able to receive the programmes of SRT, due to power failures among the local transmitters. As Tanjug reports, the failures have been growing more and more frequent, and repairs have been awaited for several weeks. SRT’s responsible technical service explains that the problem is due to a lack of spare parts, owing to the lack of material supplies to the transmitter maintenance services of this station.

HRT Back In Zenica

As Dnevni avaz reports, the first channel of Croatia Television (HRT) is again visible in the area of Zenica. The channel broadcasts from a TV repeater in the village of Kopilo (near Klopacke Stijene, near the city), use of which was prohibited to HRT by the relevant cantonal ministry. It will be remembered that HRT started broadcasting in this region for the first time in September last year, but three months later the Zenica-Doboj cantonal ministry for traffic and communications stopped transmission. This was accomplished by preventing supply of
electricity to the private house in the village of Kopilo from which the signal was being broadcast.

The first channel of HRT is now transmitting again, by way of a power aggregate. The cantonal government has yet to react.

Sarajevo School of Journalism

In Paris, in the Lys gallery, on 30 April, a promotion was held for the School of journalism in Sarajevo. This, in cooperation with the High Journalism School in Lille, France (Ecole Superieure du Journalisme de Lille) and with the support of the European Commission and the French Government, is being opened by the Media Plan Institute. The host was the Paris-based Sarajevo Association; among those present, who included a large number of French journalists and cultural and public professionals, were professors of the new school: Zlatko Dizdarevic; Duska Jurisic, Enes Musabasic, and Edis Mesihovic, widely experienced local journalists.

The international director of the school, Marc Capelle from the Lille-based High Journalisme School, announced that French journalists will hold two teaching courses in the Sarajevo school, in autumn and spring.

The Media Plan Institute has announced a competition for the enrollment of the first generation of potential graduates of the school.