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Media News

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JOURNALIST ASSOCIATIONS

Different Views on Media Freedoms

The leaderships of two journalist organizations in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina have given two contradictory views on the state of media freedoms in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This reminds us of some of our neighboring states which have problems with democracy, and in which journalists (or their leaderships) have divided into those who praise the authorities and those who criticize the authorities.

The occasion for expressing such diametrically different views, which will weaken the credibility of local journalists among the local and foreign public for being able to assess independently even their own position, was given by the Bosniak member of the state Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic. He addressed a public letter to the two journalist organizations – Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as to the IMC Director General Mr. Krister Thelin – posing to them the following question: “Have I really been smothering the freedom of media?” He was writing in reaction to a statement by the editor of *Dani* magazine, Senad Pecanin, published in *Oslobodjenje* on February 16. Pecanin said Izetbegovic represents a regime “which has done everything to destroy independent media or at least to make their work difficult...”

The Union of Professional Journalists was the first to react to this accusation (“I believed to the contrary, that I have done everything to protect the freedom of media... If I have not, have enough courage to say so”). The Union’s press release was signed by the six members of its presidency: Mehmed Husic, Mirko Sagolj, Borka Rudic, Vildana Selimbegovic, Senad Kamenica and Senada Cumurovic. They wrote in reply to Izetbegovic: “The degree of freedom that has been accomplished is the credit of journalists, not politicians,

not even you personally. We maintain that freedom of media and journalists as individuals is threatened. The ruling parties and their leaderships are the most responsible for that, in accordance with their jurisdiction.” The Union in its reply did not comment on Senad Pecanin’s specific statement or on Izetbegovic’s request that it explicitly say whether he personally jeopardized or protected freedom of journalists.”

The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina issued a press release signed by its president and editor-in-chief of BH Press Edis Mesihovic. The press release says Senad Pecanin’s statement “is not necessarily a realistic interpretation of media freedoms,” and that all public statements should be backed by evidence. It also says: “Information possessed by the Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as the largest and oldest such association in our country, does not speak in favor of the thesis of media slavery and unbearable restraints. The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past several years has not received a single complaint from its members or news organizations asking for protection because their right to work was being threatened.” The Association further said that in these difficult times the usage of the words “freedom” and “pressures on media” can be very profitable and that “those voices always come from the same chorus.”

Hence, according to official journalist reactions, either journalist rights are threatened in Bosnia or honey and milk are flowing for journalists. The Union of Professional Journalists’ proposal that journalists, rather than only journalist leaderships, should discuss this issue should really be accepted. Media Plan Institute is ready to give its research and monitoring for that purpose.

In his address to President Izetbegović, Mr. Thelin stated that “the very spirited nature of this exchange between leading journalists and the Presidency is in itself a measure of the freedom of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, adding at the end that “the Independent Media Commission and other international agencies are now working with the various associations of journalists in this country to develop a system of professional self-regulation based on a press code of ethics. I believe that we are making good progress toward this goal... “

R e s e a r c h

What People Read, Watch, Listen To... (4)

Today we are completing the publishing of results of a large research conducted by the Sarajevo-based Center for Minorities and Media Plan Institute among 2,800 respondents from 22 towns in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The research focused on the views of the population on current political, social, cultural and other issues



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that significantly determine the position of the citizen in society. Two questions were related to media: which media are available to you and which two media do you like to follow the most.

The research was carried out on a so-called stratified sample, taking into account the demographic structure of the population. The sample in each town was between 100 and 200 respondents.

A number of media contacted us during the publishing of the results, saying that their information shows bigger ratings than our research results have shown. In the next issue of *Media News* we will again explain the methodology we used, whose aim was to give estimations based on the selected sample, not to list the absolute number of media users, which is done using other methods.

Zenica: TV BiH, OBN and HTV

Most polled residents appreciate *Dnevni avaz* the most, with 53.0% respondents saying it is one of their two most favorite newspapers. *Vecernje novine* with 6.0% and *Oslobodjenje* with 5.0% share second place. It is interesting that 41.0% of the respondents do not read any newspaper.

TV BiH (61.0%), OBN (53.5%) and Croatian TV (28.0%) are watched by most respondents. It is interesting that a large number of respondents said they are unable to receive local TV stations' signal and that is why they could not vote for those stations. However, among those who are able to receive local signal, Zetel (66.0%) rates the highest.

Among numerous radio stations, respondents chose the two they like the most: Radio BiH (21.0%) and local BM radio (18.5%).

Sarajevo: TV Hayat the Most Popular Local TV Station

In Sarajevo once again *Dnevni avaz* (56.5%) is in the lead among the polled residents, while *Oslobodjenje* (38.5%) is in second place. According to the views of our respondents, the paper they like to read the most from outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina is the *Zagreb Vecernji list* (2.5%).

TV BiH (64.5%) and after it OBN (38.0%) are the two TV stations that rate the highest among our respondents. The local station that most viewers like to watch is TV Hayat (28.5%). It is interesting that Serb TV and HTV have quite low ratings (1.5% and 2.6% viewers respectively said they prefer to watch their programs). However, when we compare the number of viewers who are able to receive HTV signal and the number of viewers who like to watch its program, the station's rating increases to 40.0%.

And last, the radio. Respondents listed a total of 31 stations they prefer to listen to. Half of them (50.0%) said Radio BiH is among their two most favorite stations. Radio Hayat (24.0%) is in second place. Radio M has 19.5% of the respondents listening to its program. Respondents said the signal of a large number of local stations is not available to them or they do not know where to find it on the scale. For listeners who are able to receive its signal, Radio M (70.9%) is in first place, followed by Radio Stari grad (63.2%).

How to Emerge From the Agony?

Introductory Remarks

Since this service is also read by foreigners, we will give some basic information about *Oslobodjenje* which the local general public already knows and which is partly printed in the paper's masthead.

The first issue of *Oslobodjenje* was put out on August 30, 1943 in the Semberija village of Donja Trnova near Bijeljina (today in the territory of the Republika Srpska), in then liberated territory.

Oslobodjenje was the only daily (morning) newspaper in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which until 1990 was formally and legally the organ of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Bosnia-Herzegovina (SSRNBiH), at that time the most massive political organization in the former joint country.

When the multiparty political system was introduced, the paper adopted an independent political orientation. Objectively speaking, *Oslobodjenje* had had a bad reputation for a long time for being an uninteresting party newspaper, with almost the character and content of a bulletin. However, in the late 80s the process of social liberalization did not bypass *Oslobodjenje*, which was proclaimed the newspaper of the year in the former Yugoslavia in a traditional poll conducted by *Slobodna Dalmacija* (1989). Its average circulation at that time was about 100,000 copies with a relatively small number of unsold copies.

Although the then Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina passed a Law on *Oslobodjenje*, by which the paper formally became owned by the state, the ownership transformation was actually never carried out and the state did not take care of its newspaper. To make the paradox even bigger, when journalists and other employees requested to privatize the paper, the responsible bodies put *Oslobodjenje* on a list of enterprises and organizations of special state interest. But that did little or no good to people working for the paper which found itself on the list.

When the war broke out, *Oslobodjenje* maintained its independent position and orientation and it was proclaimed newspaper of the year in the world in Great Britain in 1992. In the following years the paper received numerous other international awards and recognition. During the heaviest siege of the Bosnian capital, although it had a symbolic circulation and a new (small) format and it was printed on a decreased number of pages, the paper failed to be put out only once during the whole war.

Crisis Imposed From the Outside

The oldest Sarajevo and Bosnian-Herzegovinian newspaper *Oslobodjenje* is in a serious material and financial crisis, which is inevitably reflected on the journalistic quality of the paper. One can also extensively discuss its editorial concept. As an illustration, it is widely believed that *Oslobodjenje* is today too heavy and too serious, bringing several commentaries, columns and similar journalistic expressions almost every day, which is allegedly too much for a daily newspaper, regardless of the undisputed quality of both the articles and their authors. If critics of *Oslobodjenje's* present editorial concept are in favor of accepting the

formula of a tabloid, let us say right away – we are not in favor of such transformation. Let us give a concise explanation.

Tabloid essentially means two things:

- small format and
- concentric presentation of news and short articles, with large headlines and an abundance of photographs.

A colleague of ours from Zagreb gave a seemingly untrue journalistic indication some 20 years ago in the then *Start* magazine, which he sublimed in the famous sentence: “AS – The First YU Tabloid.” For our international colleagues and readers, AS is a Sarajevo weekly that in the mid-80s had a fantastic circulation of 360,000 copies! Well, the indication was untrue, but only concerning the paper’s format. Everything else was correct. However, the term “tabloid” experienced a certain semantic change and, which is especially indicative, it is often given pejorative meaning without any justification. It is almost a synonym for so-called yellow press, which is absolutely wrong.

The three daily newspapers in Sarajevo today – *Oslobodjenje*, *Vecernje novine* and *Dnevni avaz* – have an identical (small) format. According to graphic-technical design and layout, *Vecernje novine* is the closest to the traditional idea of a tabloid. *Dnevni avaz* is somewhere in-between. *Oslobodjenje* is a tabloid only by its format, and by its editorial concept it is closest, conditionally speaking, to the Paris *Le Monde*. News is mostly used as a basis for writing more extensive articles, using the formula – “news background” and so on. There are also commentaries, columns, research, analysis, with elements of political essay and other journalistic forms, including letters from readers (“Panel”), which are usually topical and polemical. *Oslobodjenje* traditionally cherishes political cartoons, which significantly boosts the overall favorable impression about this newspaper. The formula of media complementarity is used almost to the maximum in *Oslobodjenje*. The problems, however, are on a completely different side.

Functional Illiteracy

Due to well-known reasons the demographic and social structure of the population has changed dramatically, particularly in cities and towns. In that regard Sarajevo has fared the worst. An almost unbelievable estimation was announced recently, that almost 20 percent of Sarajevo’s present population is – illiterate! If this estimation is even remotely true, it inevitably brings terrifying socio-political and cultural implications, which are devastating for print media. One should also not underestimate so-called functional illiteracy, as a consequence of low culture and lack of education among a large part of the population. Functional illiteracy, translated conditionally, does not mean literal illiteracy, but functionally reduced literacy. To simplify this even more, it means that a considerable number of readers absorb hardly one third of all items in newspapers, which is truly disastrous. It is important to emphasize that functional illiteracy is not a privilege of this region only. It is present also in countries with hundred percent literacy, but in those countries the ratio between absorption and perception of articles in newspapers is much more favorable than in our country.

Torn Between Tradition and New Trends

Can the starting premise be – *Oslobodjenje* torn between tradition and contemporary journalistic demands, which are especially topical in print media?

Not going too deeply into the reasons for *Oslobodjenje*’s crisis (infrastructure devastated during the war, loss of staff, etc.), it is certain that the newspaper would have been faced with similar, if not the same problems, which much be viewed in a wider context.

There are several important limiting factors that are absolutely outside the influence, not only of *Oslobodjenje*, but also of other media organizations, the press in particular. Among others, they are:

- Huge disproportion between the size of the population and the number of media;
- Lack of media market as a consequence of the war-torn economy;
- The overall economic power of the country is still not close to even 40 percent of its pre-war economic capacities.
- More than 80 percent of households earn less than 600 DEM monthly;
- The state has been blocking ownership privatization, which could be the driving force for consolidating and rehabilitating this media organization;
- The total number of readers is estimated at five percent of the population;
- Such a low level is primarily caused by the low purchasing power of the population, but also by the dramatically changed structure of the population in towns and cities, which have traditionally been the largest consumers of print media (about one million people today have the status of displaced persons); the changed structure of the population indicates a considerable increase in the number of illiterate persons.

Television was the most powerful medium even before the war. Now that power, partly due to the above mentioned reasons, has been increased even more at the expense of the press.

A legal regulation framework for the functioning of media has still not been made in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The present legislative ambiance that media work in encompasses laws from three different periods: (1) from the time of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; (2) from the period of the early 90s (after the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and (3) from the period after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. A legal framework is also necessary for the privatization process in the field of media. It should, actually, be the pre-condition for a successful privatization process.

Public Opinion – What is That?

Hence, the overall environment for the operation of media is absolutely unfavorable. Many journalists maintain that the environment is actually depressing. For, in addition to all other problems, public opinion is undeveloped and there is more and more manipulation with media – from subtle or more subtle, to open pressure.

The undefined, undeveloped and unresearched public opinion is especially worrying. Namely, developed public opinion would make political manipulation with media more difficult. It is unnecessary to stress that in societies with strongly developed public opinion, and especially with available channels for articulating public opinion, political manipulation with media is practically impossible. Unfortunately, those are values that we have yet to attain.

Oslobodjenje would have been in trouble even if its material, technical and staffing foundation and other infrastructure had not been destroyed, because the country is economically devastated and politically and territorially divided. There would have been less problems, of course, but from a hypothetical point of view, in the present political situation and overall economic environment, even with strong financial injections, radical reorganization, staffing renewal and changed editorial concept, the circulation could only be doubled at best. The present circulation is 12,000 to 15,000 copies. That would be insufficient for complete recovery and material and other consolidation.

Many will use *Dnevni avaz* as an argument, which today has an impressive circulation for local circumstances. The recently launched prize game is not a reliable barometer of the

paper's quality or its successful business policy. Latest information shows that interest in *Avaz's* game is declining and that the paper is returning to its usual circulation (30,000 – 40,000 copies), which is still excellent for print media in this country. The formulation: “newspaper close to the ruling SDA party” is, however, an euphemism. Essentially, there is a tight connection between the newspaper and the ruling Bosniak political party and its political nomenclature, which has ensured stable sources of financing for the paper using its authority and engagement. Everything done beyond that is a pure gain for the paper. The political option, therefore, is decisive, along with the remark that the people presently in power and their followers are generally the richest layer of the population, if not already new tycoons.

Daily newspapers from Sarajevo are distributed in the Bosniak-controlled part of the Federation, which is another limiting factor because it is inhabited by only 1.4 million people (according to latest estimates 1.7 million).

A regular weekly session of Krug 99 (Circle 99) recently discussed the position of print media. The session was held right after the change in *Oslobodjenje*, when Mirko Sagolj, a long-time journalist and editor in the paper, was appointed acting editor-in-chief. The new editor-in-chief's first public move was to visit Izetbegovic, which was published as a news item on the last page of the paper with an appropriate photograph, under the title “Bosnia-Herzegovina needs *Oslobodjenje*.” *Avaz* published an almost identical news item, but at the top of its second page. That editorial move was symptomatic because *Avaz* as a rule calls *Oslobodjenje* a “low-circulation daily newspaper.” This visit, however, was seen as negative among part of the public and some journalists. Senad Pecanin was the harshest critic, calling Izetbegovic's statement that he wants to help *Oslobodjenje* ridiculous: “If he had ever had that in mind, he would not have made *Avaz*...”

Media Plan's research from October 1998 on how much people read daily press in cities and larger towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina shows that *Oslobodjenje* in Sarajevo is behind *Dnevni avaz*, which according to our survey is read by 52 percent of respondents, while *Oslobodjenje* has 38.5 percent readers. *Vecernje novine* is read by 32.5 percent of people in Sarajevo.

Defending Its Heritage

When interviewed on this topic, Sagolj reminded us that after the first multiparty elections, *Oslobodjenje* was the first institution that refused to be divided along ethnic lines and proclaimed itself a non-partisan and independent paper: “We can question and examine everything, but we will never allow anyone to attack the heritage and values of the early 90s!”, the new editor said emphatically. He added that the newspaper will have less commentaries from now on and adopt a certain local aroma, but not provincial. As an illustration, a cantonal page will be introduced and other innovations are also being prepared.

Mehmed Halilovic, former editor-in-chief, first stated that his mandate expired last year, but that it was only the formal reason for his resignation (his mandate could have been extended). The direct reason is a rift between the editorial board and the management, as well as the unresolved ownership status. It is interesting that Halilovic maintains that *Oslobodjenje* would have been in a crisis, if not the same then at least similar, even if its business building had not been destroyed. It is more important that the overall political, economic, social and other ambiance has been drastically changed. Hence, what we have talked about above. Certain debts were incurred during the war and have only accumulated in the meantime. The creative journalistic part of the newspaper does not have essential logistical support. Fees to some correspondents have not been paid for two years now, not to speak about stringers. A considerable number of stringers have left the paper. There has been discussion on a, conditionally-speaking, “new *Oslobodjenje*,” which would receive financial injections in the form of international donations, but there has been no specific agreement or deal.

According to Halilovic, occasional financial injections are of no help because they can only prolong the agony, and the point is – emerging from the agony! The paper can survive only on an economic foundation. “America is behind the corner,” one would say, but as we have said above, there is still no ambiance for healthy economic competition.

We wanted also to hear the opinion of the acting general manager, Salko Hasanefendic, especially concerning the paper’s new business policy, but the old/new director fell ill in the meantime, or simply was not willing to talk about this sensitive issue. That *Oslobodjenje* is at the same time a delicate political issue was proven by the reply we got from colleagues at the specialized U.S. organization IREX, which deals specifically with print media research, who kindly refused our request to give us their view of tomorrow’s *Oslobodjenje*. “It would not be politically opportune for us to say anything about *Oslobodjenje*’s fate at this moment,” one of their associates said.

Even Hundred-Year-Olds Have Phased Out

A short statement on the fate of *Oslobodjenje* was also given by Jakob Finci, executive director of the Soros Foundation – Open Society Fund BiH.

In this prominent foundation’s Media Program, *Oslobodjenje* is at the very top of financial support beneficiaries “despite the management crisis” that has been going on for quite some time now. It is indicative that Finci speaks about the organization’s management crisis, and does not for a single moment dispute the independent position and editorial concept of the paper, whose columnists are “the paper’s biggest quality.”

Finci also speaks about the division of the market, underlining that the three daily newspapers from Sarajevo are sold in a territory only a little bigger than the Sarajevo Canton, “so it is to be expected that one of the two independent papers, *Oslobodjenje* and *Vecernje novine*, in competition with the financially and politically situated *Avaz*, will in the future either integrate, or one of them will phase out.”

It is not difficult to agree with Finci that it would be a shame to close the paper after 55 years, or if that were to happen to the somewhat younger *Vecernje novine*, “as an authentic urban daily newspaper, but that is part of market laws... “

One should recall that even hundred-year-old papers have been closed, real media legends in their countries and wider. Even those with a circulation of several hundred thousand copies.

Some trends are not favorable for print media, not only in our country, but also in the world in general. Circulations are constantly falling, especially in Europe. Regardless of the technique of conveying information, certain principles of journalism remain unchanged, but information is articulated and conveyed more effectively through new media. The Internet is the hit now and it directly threatens the traditional press, because in this phase the Internet is based on text, that is to say, on letters, words, and less on picture, especially on moving, live picture. However, that may be adopted as everyday practice already tomorrow, which means that the Internet could also threaten traditional television. Still, the crisis at *Oslobodjenje* is specifically local with strong political charge. Therefore, a possible emerging from the crisis cannot be deprived of political reflections.

Despite the painted bleak picture, *Oslobodjenje*, if it wants to survive, should try the following:

- Urgent ownership transformation, including a new business strategy, which will respect the newly-created social, political and economic ambiance;

- Determining its target group so that it can define its potential readers more closely, without relying too much on old readers who are gradually disappearing as a result of biological laws;
- Oslobodjenje essentially has its own journalistic identity, which it should not deviate from, but which it should certainly build on.

(D. Babić)

What Sort of RTV Do Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina Want

Objective TV That Will Respect Specific National Traits

Television Bosnia-Herzegovina on February 23 broadcast a program called “What sort of television do Bosnian Croats want,” which consisted of views of several Croat intellectuals from different spheres of life. Opinions on the restructuring of the present TVBiH, as well as the constant problem of Croatian Television broadcasting in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, were presented by Ante Domazet, president of the RTV BiH provisional managing board; Franjo Topic, president of the Croat cultural association “Napredak”; Kresimir Zubak, president of the New Croat Initiative; Ivan Lovrenovic, writer; Senka Nozica, vice-president of the Helsinki Human Rights Committee in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Dubravko Lovrenovic, historian; Gradimir Gojer, vice-president of the Social-Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Ilija Simic, president of the Croat Peasants Party, Jadranko Prlic, minister of foreign affairs of Bosnia-Herzegovina and vice-president of the HDZ; and Petar Andjelovic, Franciscan provincial.

In view of the present political relations, the views of Jadranko Prlic as representative of the most powerful Croat party and Ante Domazet who is involved most directly in resolving these issues, carry the most weight. However, this program, as well as this transcript (which was made with some short cuts) are an interesting testimony to the views of a number of prominent Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats on burning media-political issues that are in the phase of being resolved.

Ante Domazet:

“A very big issue concerning television is the issue of how different political options see the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the future of the Federation. Our stand in the Provisional Managing Board was that it is necessary to equally respect the needs and rights of peoples, but also of citizens. That is why we proposed two complementary channels. They should be complementary in terms of program, content, language, region and topic. That is, they should reflect the richness of the diversity of life in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

From the Memorandum on Understanding signed by Messrs. Izetbegovic, Zubak and Westendorp, it is clear that the future federal television will be a new institution. It is yet to be established. It will use the present RTV BiH’s infrastructure. RTV BiH itself should start its own process of restructuring. It should become a public service serving all three constituent peoples, but also citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The federal RTV should also have a balance between two constituent peoples. The television of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina should be founded by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina by a law that should be called Law on Television of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Until RTV BiH is restructured, the present RTV will continue to work and that is one of the strategic decisions by the

Provisional Managing Board – to ensure promotion of present program and its balanced and wide regional coverage. Therefore, a step towards a television that will be the television of all peoples, not only of one, which unfortunately is the dominant feature of the present television.

I think that a minute or two on HRT's news program is not what Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina need. They need, just like other peoples and citizens, to provide and develop their own television. That is in first place the television of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and as the second step it means participation in a public service at the level of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. HRT has a good quality program and I think that its viewers come from different national structures in the country. I think it is good that we have this program, that is, the opportunity to choose that program. However, what is most important is the need to legalize it. The conclusions of the Madrid Conference clearly state the stance that HRT program broadcasting should be brought into harmony with present regulations valid in Europe. That means, before all, through business contracts that will precisely determine the obligations and rights that HRT and organizations that re-broadcast program should and must have in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In my opinion, the key issue is for the RTV of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, through active participation of all factors including those presenting the interests of the Croat people, to develop into a quality television independent of the state and parties.”

Franjo Topic:

In my opinion, experience can be used from countries such as Switzerland, Belgium, Canada... It seems it would be good to bear in mind that most Croats living presently in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not see the present television as their own. That is a diagnosis over which, it seems to me, we can agree fairly easy. I think that some people are wrong when they emphasize this as a national issue, while others see it purely through the professional aspect. I think that neither is sufficient. Something can be made in an extremely professional manner and still not be, for instance, acceptable for a Croat, Bosniak or Serb. It can also be made in the most Croat or Bosniak manner, but if it not professional, we do not have anything. Therefore, both the former and the latter should be combined.

It is necessary to attract Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats to consider this television as their own. I think that can be done through language, culture, religion... I also think that Croat areas should be covered more. By doing that, people will feel that it is their television.

It is a fact that all authorities would like to consolidate everything, including media. Of course, we should not fool ourselves because we know that it is difficult to have significant influence in this society without media. It is somewhat understandable, but it is not justifiable, that the ruling parties want to have as much influence as possible. This is also a question of their wisdom and responsibility not to make this a partisan television, but to have it represent the structure of the population and all parties and everything else.”

Kresimir Zubak:

“Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina are entitled to broadcasting TV program in one of two forms – either through a special channel, or regular programs should contain in their content programs or should broadcast programs in the Croatian language. If television in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina is regulated in such a way that it broadcasts program in the Croatian language and if it has such content that ensures the national and cultural identity of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then it is not necessary for Croats to have a separate channel. When it comes to this television, it is not stated imperatively anywhere that that must be done with this television.

It is evident that there is some improvement in the present TV BiH, but it is still far from satisfying the interests of the Croat people, the Croat man. It is still far from what would satisfy our interests. I personally think that the draft law prepared by the working group from

the Office of the High Representative is a solid foundation for complete regulation of the issue of television transformation. We are against having one channel for Bosniaks and one for Croats. We maintain that there should be two channels, one that would broadcast news, and the other that would deal with culture, sports. I think the editorial policy should be balanced in order to satisfy the interests of the two peoples.

There exists a right for HRT to be in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, in order to broadcast HRT programming here, a special contract must be concluded between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, that is, between the two television organizations if TV BiH equipment is used for transmission. That is not disputed at all. If Croatian Television has ambition to broadcast program about Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, their status and everything else, it should abide by certain rules related to the presentation of political parties, ideas, organizations, etc. Remember when on the eve of the last elections HRT strongly supported HDZ's campaign. Under pressure from the OSCE, presentation was allowed for other political parties as well. Hence, if HRT wants to have a presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina it must ensure equitable access to all parties, not only the HDZ which now controls that television."

Ivan Lovrenovic:

"Croats really need a television of their own. A television that they would feel as their own. When I say that, I am primarily referring to the fact that Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina today are a sadly abandoned and neglected people. Neglected chiefly by those who swear to be working in their name. I am specifically referring to the HDZ, but also to a series of other declaratively national political, cultural and even spiritual institutions and organizations. In the situation that they are in today, of course, they must feel a subjectively strong syndrome of being threatened and there is no need to speak about it, as they say, objectively. It is what it is. A television which would first of all be organized by adhering to the professional standards of the trade and which would be able to respond primarily to the informational, and then also to the cultural needs of that nation, would certainly for them be a way to return to their homeland much faster and more productively than it is possible today.

Behind that euphemism, that pretty word "national channel on television," hides nothing other than a vulgar desire of the political party to rule the area it wants for itself. That area is territory, and after that the area of a certain ethnic group, and thank God, the area of media. Therefore, that channel even if we were to receive it, not only would it not be national, not only would it not respond to the needs of national identity, but it would actually be opposed to those interests. Because it would essentially cherish the group interests of a political group, and nothing else.

Croatian Television has now become a big problem. On one hand HRT is a very developed media organization with strong diverse programs on three channels and in that sense everyone would have an interest to be able to follow programming broadcast by such a television on their channel. Of course, I am excluding programs which are politically tendentious and which politically poison Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the problem with HRT has several dimensions. One of them, which international factors have particularly been warning about, is the issue of ownership, and that problem obviously surpasses Bosnia-Herzegovina's borders, and will have to be resolved together with foreign companies. In any case I know that everything that is illegal, and there are many illegal issues in the present situation of HRT's program re-broadcasting, will soon have to be reduced."

Senka Nozica:

"I maintain that media must first of all be professional. If they are professional, they can satisfy the interests of all people, and therefore also of Croats. I think there are certain problems concerning information when it comes to satisfying some specific needs, but I think

that this federal medium that would be at the level of the Federation, if it were to work in a professional manner, if journalists were really professional in carrying out their duty to inform, to educate, could satisfy Croat interests.

I like to watch as many television stations as possible in the languages we understand, including HRT. However, there is a purely economic factor here. HRT is broadcasting its program in Bosnia-Herzegovina in an illegal manner because it is using all resources that belong to the Federation and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Only after real economic relations are established, when Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state is able to collect money for their services, for their usage, only then can we speak about watching them legally in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I think that an average Bosnian viewer is seen too superficially. He has enough sense to judge what is propaganda in favor of a political option, and what is quality information.”

Dubravko Lovrenovic:

“As far as Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina are concerned, the issue of television that has been brought up lately, mostly through HDZ structures and its policy, has been turned upside-down at the very beginning, because advocacy for a so-called national program, national channel, which is the basis of the HDZ’s position, is wrong. True, it should be understood as a continuity of a policy which has been present in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the last eight and more years and which eventually leads to convincing Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina using various means that Bosnia-Herzegovina is not their homeland, that is, which leads to driving Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina into a ghetto. I think that is the basic platform which is being advocated and which, if it is realized, as far as Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina are concerned, will not end well.

When it comes to the establishment of two channels, one let us call it Bosniak and the other Croat, it lies in the hearts of everyone who have been working since the beginning on Bosnia-Herzegovina’s destruction and ethnic division. When it comes to Croats, it is part of a widely established cultural concept which is supposed to cause among Croats, and which unfortunately has succeeded in large degree, a feeling of historic amnesia. It means that Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina should at any cost lose that most minimal feeling of authentic historic presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and should in that way, actually, be turned into a pendant of that, as Tudjman defines it, all-Croat program in which the final fate of that nation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is completely uncertain.”

Ilija Simic:

“I do not think that the sole solution is a national channel. It is necessary to have quality program and quality staff. It is important to have an open, democratic medium. Whether it will be called Croat or Bosnian-Herzegovinian, that is less important. It may be important to petty politicians, who want to make a certain political impression that they have succeeded in obtaining a national channel. We actually have such television stations now, based on which those who understand what a public medium means, can assess, especially in the recent period, that television has actually contributed in a negative way to resolving the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I think that quality work must be done in the field of media and I do not think that national channels are the solution. It would give air to new quarrels, new arguments over anything. We see that from the level of municipalities to the level of the Federation and Bosnia-Herzegovina. They (probably referring to HDZ – author’s note) are in favor of dividing everything and they function exceptionally well in such a milieu. There is no way that normal life can be achieved in Bosnia-Herzegovina if we divide everything in this way.

Concerning HRT there are two problems. One problem is economic-technological, because it is about transmitters owned by Bosnian-Herzegovinian television or the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose usage does not result in economic benefit. The second problem

concerns programming. As far as I personally am concerned, we (HSS) do not grieve for such HRT programming. However, if it were a free, open program, if it were not a partisan HDZ program, we would then fight for its presence here, of course under equal economic and technological conditions. HRT is watched by all peoples in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but its ideological foundation is such that it is to the detriment of the political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

Gradimir Gojer:

“I think that such a television should be made which will satisfy not only the minimum needs of the Croat people, but the maximum needs of the Croat people. That means first of all that they live in a civilization framework, that means that they live in a framework of tolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina. When I say that, I must consequently say that the minimum – in order to achieve the maximum – is to have an opportunity to express one’s language and one’s culture. The language component is at this moment exceptionally significant and I think it should not be disputed in any case. I maintain that the Croatian language must enjoy absolutely equal treatment on television, both on federal television and probably also on the public corporation that will be established. I believe in that. Without a public corporation there will be no state of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I am very explicit in my attitude towards two channels on federal TV. Two channels yes, but not two national channels. I am strongly opposed to television program being broadcast in the Bosnian and Croatian languages on separate channels. I am in favor of having two channels, but for having both Croatian and Bosnian spoken on both channels. Therefore, that the channels differ in terms of programming, not in terms of language.

I personally am not against HRT broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, we must make an effort to create first of all a serious and strong federal television, which will satisfy the needs of citizens living in Bosnia-Herzegovina – Bosniaks and Croats and Serbs. We need to concentrate on creating a strong federal television and a public corporation, and those two television stations should then compete with HRT. They should make programming that should be relevant in comparison to HRT and all other television stations broadcasting in the territory of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I must also remark that there is a real witch-hunt here against HRT, but no one is saying anything about “Srna” and RTV Belgrade broadcasting in this territory. Transmitters should absolutely be restored to the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, this is not only a matter of transmitters. Serbia and Yugoslavia are constantly exerting media influence here. I think there should be an equal attitude towards HRT programming and SRT and Yugoslavia programming.

Jadranko Prlic:

“Does anyone believe this television is the solution? It represents only one side. Well, no one is speaking about that aspect. It is really not a division if there are two channels in two languages. There are two peoples who are constituent in the Federation. You must enable people to follow program in the country they inhabit in their own language. That is a basic right, that is an axiom about which there is no discussion. It does not mean that a correspondent who reports on an event will make two reports, one in one language and the other in the other. Of course there will be exceptions in all that. As a rule there should be one channel in the Croatian language, and one in the Bosniak language. That is the reality that exists in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Federal television should be a television station that will produce program, and a corporation at state level should have the function of maintaining Bosnia-Herzegovina’s membership in international organizations that gather television stations from the member states.

When it comes to the broadcasting or re-broadcasting of Croatian Television, it is necessary to regulate the position of those Croat stations and those systems that re-broadcast its program. Therefore, it is necessary to bring them into harmony with the regulations that exist in Bosnia-Herzegovina today. That is the real way to regulate that issue. This issue is not completely unregulated. If something is not regulated, it does not mean it is illegal. It is necessary to completely regulate Erotel which re-broadcasts those channels so that it can have three frequencies, or more or less, and only then, in the second phase to resolve the issue of programming that Erotel or some other station are broadcasting.”

Fra Petar Andjelovic:

“Television cannot be television of one party, one group of people, and it cannot even put itself 100 percent in the service of one nation. If it were like that, we would not need questions of one channel, two, or more channels. If all channels serve to spread truth about all three peoples in Bosnia-Herzegovina, then these questions need not be raised. Both you from media and we from religion should force our politicians to finally make a society of law. By doing so, hundreds of questions that now torment us will be resolved.” (the end)

M o n i t o r i n g

OBN Television’s “TV INFO”

Media Plan’s Monitoring Center has made a short analysis of seven-day monitoring of the primetime news program “TV INFO” at 8 p.m. (February 22 – February 28). Monitoring focused on territorial coverage of Bosnia-Herzegovina with the station’s own staffing potentials, as well as the general professional impression acquired from watching this program.

Coverage

In the seven monitored days, the program featured 53 items from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and 22 from the Republika Srpska. Statistically speaking, approximately one third of its content refers to the Republika Srpska, which in the sense of coverage is relatively satisfactory in view of the fact that the main office and studio are based in Sarajevo. The Croat-majority part of the Federation is poorly covered. Of the 53 mentioned items from the Federation, only five were from those areas.

Most items were from Sarajevo, as many as 31, followed by Banja Luka (16), while Tuzla is in third place with only five items. All other towns from which reports were sent were represented by three or less items. OBN, as most other media, has decided for extensive coverage of the two capitals, which are essentially the most interesting for media. OBN also suffers from insufficiently balanced coverage of the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina, but less than other media.

Not a single item from the eastern part of the Republika Srpska was featured in this monitored period. It is difficult to assess based on seven-day monitoring whether OBN has difficulties in finding correspondents in that part of the country, or even problems preventing it from sending its own correspondent from Sarajevo. It is interesting that on February 22 an item was presented on SFOR’s reinforced presence in Foca (Srbinje). However, the item was made in Sarajevo (SFOR and IPTF representatives were interviewed), while archive footage of Foca was shown in the background during the whole item.

Professional Impression

“TV INFO” is “free” from press releases, open letters and other non-journalistic expressions that are widely present in similar programs on other TV stations that can be followed in Sarajevo. That is why “TV INFO” is really fit for television much more than its competitors, who often use telops or for long periods only show announcers reading various statements. In this sense we want to single out an example of how a report on a press briefing, which is usually a boring form of TV journalism, can be made interesting. We are referring to an item (February 24) on a news briefing by the Independent Media Commission (IMC). The report was “covered,” in addition to footage shot at the briefing, also by numerous other details that garnish the picture of media issues – newspapers, video recorders, IMC registers with media monitoring and license applications, and footage shot immediately before and after the news briefing. This report, using footage and pictures, made the event interesting for the common viewer.

A positive trend in OBN’s items is supplementing reports with additional statements given by participants in an event. For instance, in the February 24 program, a report on a session of the Federation Parliament included an exclusive statement by Federation President Ivo Andric Luzanski, who maintained that it is not necessary for the Parliament of Bosnia-Herzegovina to approve “special relations” with Croatia, which Bosniak deputies were insisting on. The Republika Srpska Assembly went into session the same day, and a report on the session included a statement by a Serb People’s Union representative who elaborated the Law on State Security, which was on the agenda. Or, for instance, the program of February 25, after a statement by Carlos Westendorp who condemned an attack on an SDA deputy in the Republika Srpska Assembly, featured a statement by RS Information Minister Rajko Vasic who gave his opinion on the attack.

OBN anchors and reporters usually present information without additional comments or suggestions. However, in this period there was some deviation from this practice. For instance, on February 25 the program editor commented on Alija Izetbegovic’s letter to journalists asking them whether he is smothering freedom of the press. The editor said: “It is not usual for a president to write letters, nor is it usual to seek protection from the press.” Or, on February 23, a reporter, following a statement by Alija Izetbegovic’s advisor Mirza Hajric that the Presidency maintains that the issue of supreme commander is the responsibility of the Defense Council, wonders: “What will Carlos Westendorp say to this?” He was alluding to the fact that the High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina stated that the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina is the supreme commander of the armies in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In the February 22 program we noted a very disputable item from the professional side. A Banja Luka correspondent filed an interview with Republika Srpska Information Minister Rajko Vasic in which Vasic commented on the views of and moves made by RS President Nikola Poplasen. The journalist explained Poplasen’s views to the audience and then gave Vasic a chance to refute and criticize them, by which the RS president was put in an unequal position.

OBN’s anchors and editors are of different nationality. By identifying them by their names, in these monitored seven days, there was one Croat woman, one Serb woman, one Bosniak woman and one Slovenian man living in Sarajevo who appeared as editors-anchors in the central studio. Reporters are also mixed, but from the Republika Srpska they are Serbs, from the Croat part of the Federation they are Croats, while from the Bosniak part of the Federation they are of different nationalities.

The conclusion is that TV OBN (at least judging by TV INFO) comes the closest to the ideal of a Bosnian-Herzegovinian television station. In addition to relatively good staffing coverage of the country, most content of its programs is made in such a way that it does not provoke additional tension among the three national groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Items showing cooperation between peoples and entities are being emphasized. For instance, a

Federation Economy Fair in Banja Luka was top news in programs on February 24 and 25. There are also everyday items about efforts to reconstruct the country and projects invested into by the international community in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

OBN does not avoid items dealing with so-called sensitive issues. On February 25 an item was featured on a Serb returnee to Zenica who has been unable to gain possession of his private apartment for two years. The item reveals the inefficiency and political partiality of court bodies. A local judge claimed he was swamped with applications for restoration of private property and therefore could not respond to those cases. However, the journalist presented information received from court statistics showing that it was not true. Also, an eye-catching item was made on the celebration of Bosnia-Herzegovina's Independence Day, which showed, through polls in Banja Luka and Kiseljak, that most Serbs and Croats deny the holiday. (Media Plan Monitoring Center).

I n d e p e n d e n t M e d i a C o m m i s s i o n (I M C)

First Official Licenses

The Independent Media Commission on February 26 completed the process of issuing broadcasting licenses to six radio stations in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Licenses were given to: Independent Radio Feral Kalesija, Bosnian-Moslem Radio Hayat from Sarajevo, Croat Radio Bobovac from Vares, Radio Good Vibrations from Mostar, Radio Majevisa Lopare and Radio Pan Bijeljina.

After that date until this bulletin was completed (March 5, 1999), no other station received a license. As IMC Deputy Spokesperson Zinaida Babovic told us, the licensing process is complex, and therefore slow. Each license application is individually reviewed by an engineering, a legal and a monitoring section. Then these groups of experts give their opinions on technical, legal and purely professional issues after which, if the situation is clear, a license is issued. Issuing of licenses to RTV stations, according to Babovic, will be successive and the names of the next group of stations will soon be announced. IMC does not expect in the following period any negative answers to registration of stations which have filled out applications correctly and accurately.

Licenses for the work of electronic media will be of temporary character, they will last for six months and will be free of charge. During that time the Commission, in cooperation with media, will resolve certain problems related to frequency ranges and possible decrease of power of certain stations' transmitters, and only then will start issuing real, permanent licenses, which will have to be paid for. "Thirty percent of stations in Bosnia-Herzegovina claim they have disturbances because frequency ranges overlap due to the unregulated situation in this field. IMC is responsible for regulating this situation," Babovic said.

IMC has extended the deadline for radio and TV organizations to submit licensing applications. The earlier deadline which expired on February 28 was extended for a month, until March 31, 1999. IMC has established a direct "help-line" telephone number – 071 65 74 80 where stations can receive information from this field.

IMC's chief spokesman Dieter Loraine at his last press conference addressed the issue of, as he called it, Croatian Television's illegal broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, emphasizing that the international community will prevent that. According to him, there are three reasons to stop HRT broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The first is political, because efforts are being made to create a federal television, and HRT is using as many as three frequencies which federal television is supposed to use. The second reason is purely legal. Croatian Television has no right to broadcast legally purchased foreign programs outside of

Croatia, including Bosnia-Herzegovina. And as third, Loraine gave economic reasons. “HRT is disloyally taking away advertisements from local media because advertisers rather go to Croatian Television, which is more powerful, than to local media, which have the right to make income from advertising at least in their own country,” the IMC spokesman said.

Loraine also stressed that the positions of Television Serbia and Croatian Television in Bosnia-Herzegovina must not be put on an equal level. “TV Serbia is carried, only partially, on one of the two Republika Srpska channels, whereas HTV is taking a whole frequency range,” Dieter Loraine said. When journalists asked if that means that TV Serbia is broadcasting in Bosnia legally, he did not give a specific answer, but only said “a television that has a valid contract with the local authorities is legally present.”

The Independent Media Commission was founded by the Office of the High Representative in August of last year with the aim of bringing order into the media chaos in Bosnia-Herzegovina caused by the war. It is responsible for allocating frequencies and licenses for the work of electronic media.

According to the Commission’s data, there are 70 TV stations and 212 radio stations broadcasting in Bosnia-Herzegovina’s two entities.

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Criticises the Independent Media Commission (IMC)

Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) recently in a little bit bizarre and controversial way criticised the draft press code proposed by the Independent Media Commission (IMC). Its press release was titled : “ **IFJ Warns Press Code for Bosnia Could Limit Press Freedom** “ (underlined by editors).

The IFJ claimed that proposed draft press code was too proscriptive and failed to provide journalists with an adequate basis for resolving ethical problems.

“The draft code is full of ambiguous and vague provisions, which could easily be used to restrict free journalism”, said Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary.

According to IFJ officials, the point is why the international community wants to keep Bosnian journalists from doing the same, ie., introducing press codes which do not exist in their countries ?

The most controversial part of the IFJ’s statement was declaring untrue that the IFJ was consulted over the proposed text (!?) :

“In its current form this is not a press code we can be associated with”, said Aidan White.

In the end, IFJ reminds that the IFJ and its four journalists’ organizations in B&H had adopted their own charter of principles for the conduct of journalism last October, which is a good basis for establishing self-regulation in Bosnian media, and they hope that the IMC and the Council of Europe will recognize that professional codes work best if they are elaborated by the media professionals themselves.

* * *

Reply of the IMC Director General Mr. Krister Thelin

“The IMC is eager to cooperate with the IFJ and other press-freedom organizations in helping the journalism profession in Bosnia and Herzegovina build a system of ethical self-

regulation”, the IMC Director General Mr. Krster Thelin said in his response to the letter and press release of the IFJ General Secretary Mr. Aidan White.

“In doing so however, the IMC would prefer a different approach of communication than through a letter, coupled with a simultaneous press release, like that recently published by IFJ”, Mr. Thelin emphasized. Furthermore in his response to the IFJ he touched upon several points which appeared in the IFJ press release from 25 February.

First of all he reiterated that IMC did not “launch” a press code at the Neum conference in November last year. “The fact is that the draft Code is based explicitly on the model provided by the IFJ and adapted to the specific circumstances of B&H. The text had appropriately led to lively and constructive debate at Neum. The IFJ was invited to attend the conference but declined”.

“Subsequently, more meetings have taken place involving all six journalist organizations, of which three are full members and one an affiliate member of the IFJ, together with representatives from OSCE, OHR, Council of Europe and IrexProMedia. In these meetings extensive discussions took place to improve the body of the text of the draft code. At no time has the IMC imposed its will on any part of the code, in fact it’s the complete opposite, the IMC has solicited comments from each organizations and acted upon those comments to improve the code. Many of these comments are now incorporated in a further draft version of the press code, which is to be considered and debated at the next meeting in Banjaluka on March 17. The role of the IMC and Council of Europe in mediating the development of a press code is supported and appreciated by all six B&H journalist organizations”.

In finishing, Mr. Thelin underlined the IMC principle from the beginning was to allow media professionals in B&H to establish for themselves a framework for professional standards based on the commitment to self-regulation, because nothing else would work. He expressed his hope that the IFJ will see fit to resume the spirit of professional cooperation with the IMC which commenced back in October last year.

T h e M o n i t o r ’ s E y e

(Non)Culture of Communication

It has become usual for editors of radio stations not to adhere to publicly announced program schedules. One thing is written in the program and another is broadcast, and program hosts often loose sight of the time. Producers of video and audio recorders on which you can program the time of recording have nothing to look for in our market. No one even dares to program their recorder to start recording at a certain time before leaving home, because who knows what they will find on their tape when they return. The only exception are large electronic networks, but even their publicly announced programs sometimes do not contain basic information about a program, except for its official name.

Still, people in charge of everyday broadcasting of French International Radio (RFI) on Independent Radio Studio 99 Sarajevo went beyond all limits in belittling their listeners. For who knows which reason, this radio station carries only half of RFI’s program and then cuts it off and plays music. On Tuesday, February 23 the duty technician at 4:40 p.m. interrupted the journalist who was reading an item on the abuse of cultural monuments in Kosovo in mid-sentence and continued the program with his music.

Ample and Diverse Saturday News Program on TV BiH

Saturday's news program *Dnevnik* on TVBiH (February 26), whose editor and anchor was Senad Hadzifejzovic, was extremely ample and diverse. Although it lasted for 45 minutes, to careful listeners it seemed like 10 to 15 minutes. A particular quality is that the items were topical and timely and territorially encompassed all of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The reporters went as far away as Germany to inform listeners about the essence of a story of Bosnian-Herzegovinian passport abuses.

As cream on the cake, there was a number of short but effective stories featured at the very end of the program – from Banja Luka about Dusan Sestic, the man who composed the new Bosnian-Herzegovinian anthem, and a warm story from Western Herzegovina about a music school in the village of Kocerin (incorrectly qualified as “Cerin”), founded by a local returnee.

Prejudicing an Unfortunate Event

In its latest issue (no. 320 of March 1-8), the weekly magazine *Ljiljan* made a scandalous and highly unprofessional move. The text of an article, and especially its title given by the editors: “Police in West Mostar stab girl 30 times,” inadmissibly prejudiced an unfortunate event which was still being investigated. The event itself was tragic enough so there was no reason to add blood to it for purely political reasons. If there was a state of law here, police in West Mostar could sue the paper and ask for millions in compensation.

(Media Plan Monitoring Center)

N e w s

2.6 million KM for Sarajevo Cantonal TV

A sum of 2.6 million KM from the budget of the Sarajevo Canton for this year is envisioned for the needs of Cantonal Television Sarajevo, the Sarajevo daily *Vecernje novine* wrote. Of that amount, 1.2 million KM will be set aside for employees' salaries and their expenses, while material and services will cost 1.4 million KM.

The strongest opposition party SDP has opposed this relatively high amount maintaining that it will make Television Sarajevo dependent on cantonal authorities, which will then have no interest in entering a market competition. On the other hand, deputies from the ruling Coalition for a Single and Democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina supported the budget. Right after the budget was adopted, Coalition representative Ismet Hadzic threatened the cantonal television station for not covering the entire session of the cantonal parliament. “After the budget was adopted, they packed up and left the room. I think that's not in their interest,” Hadzic said.

Television Sarajevo started broadcasting in mid-last year on a pre-war TVBiH frequency. Due to better conditions and bigger salaries, many employees from local TV stations began working for it, especially from Independent TV Studio 99. Some media analysts in Sarajevo maintain that the incumbent cantonal authorities want to reinforce this television station at any price so that after TV BiH's transformation it can become the main pillar of informing viewers in a way that suits the cantonal authorities.

Fines and Warnings to Media

The IMC Reinforcement Panel on February 26 decided that three broadcasters have to pay fines, while four others were warned for violating the Code of Editing RTV Program passed by IMC.

Croatian Radio Station Mostar was fined with 600 KM for unprofessional and tendentious reporting contributing to tension between Bosniaks and Croats in Mostar. Channel S from Pale must pay 1,500 KM for not obeying an IMC order to deliver recorded program. IMC said in a press release that this is the second time this station violated the Code. For the same violation IMC warned Radio Vlasenica, Radio Serb Sarajevo and TV BN from Banja Luka.

TV St. George was fined with 1,000 KM for violating several articles of the IMC Code, while TV 99 from Sarajevo was warned for incorrect presentation of facts concerning the creation of curricula for the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina.

On the Threshold of a New Century



Listen with your ears!



Look with your eyes!



Think with your head!

Council:Media Plan Institute

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