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Media News

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Pressure on Journalists

Why Are Journalists Silent?

Three journalists in Zenica were threatened that they must not publish an article, which, according to their editorial assessment, deserved the attention of the public. When they did publish it in the end, pressure on these journalists started. The person in charge of this hunt was the head of the Zenica municipality, a city whose authorities euphorically protested some time ago against negative assessments about them made by some international community institutions for human rights violations.

From a formal point of view, Zenica may be included among the few urban centers in Bosnia-Herzegovina where something like this has happened. This conclusion can be reached on the basis of a recent statement by the Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (concerning Alija Izetbegovic's public reaction to criticism coming from journalists) that the "Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina over the past several years has not received a single complaint from its members and news organizations asking for protection because their right to work was violated."

The real situation, however, is completely different. Requests such as this one – that something must be published or cannot be published – have often been made to municipal local newspapers and RTV stations. They have been made by local officials, political party leaders in power, some members of media councils, and not so infrequently by people from the political and economic underground. Journalist circles know of numerous such cases, but journalists working for media which are not being watched by international community institutions are afraid to make them public. Silence about this practice is also a consequence

of the adopted viewpoint that requests through irregular channels made to editors of local media established by municipal authorities are legitimate and legal because, as the head of the municipality of Zenica has said, “we appointed you to that position.”

Vulgarization and abuse of media founder rights is more than evident. Freedom of authors and editors based on professional journalistic criteria is a universal category irrespective of who is the founder of the media organization. That is why it is not possible to assess real progress in building free journalism in Bosnia only by reading the main daily newspapers, well-known magazines or watching large RTV network programming. (Z. U.)

The Case of Zenica Journalists

Journalists Medina Delibasic, editor of TV Zenica, Spahija Kozlic, editor of Radio Zenica, and Salvedin Avdic, head of the *Vecernje novine* bureau, sent a letter on May 19 to the Appeals Department of the Independent Media Commission (IMC) in which they listed a number of examples of press freedom abuses, threats and blackmail by the head of the Zenica municipality, Ferid Alic. Two days after the letter, a meeting was organized in Zenica between seven journalists (in addition to the three above mentioned persons, the Zenica correspondents for TV BiH and *Oslobodjenje* also attended) and IMC representative James Ferguson, in which many accusations were put forward against municipality head Alic and other examples from this region. The Office of the High Representatives was requested to urgently provide conditions for free work of journalists.

Pressure on media in Zenica has not happened only in this latest case. In the immediate post-war period, requests by local authorities towards journalists were considered some sort of local patriotic duty. However, with the strengthening of institutions dealing with protection of human rights and media freedoms, and after national fervor diminished to a certain degree, the first “shy” conflicts between journalists and authorities appeared. Municipality head Ferid Alic, who came into power in September 1997, began to threaten journalists more and more openly, even in front of witnesses. His first meeting with Zenica journalists after coming to power was interesting. He told journalists that their reporting should be subordinated to city interests and that he expected a lot of affirmative articles from them. From RTV Zenica, which is a public media organization, he expected to fulfil his every request. He threatened even earlier that he would bring up the issue of editorial responsibility through the program council.

Example One

When veterans’ organizations staged a protest rally in Zenica, the head of the municipality conveyed an order through his secretary to editors to turn off their microphones and not to broadcast the requests, which, in



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his opinion, were unrealistic. The editors did not do as asked, but there was no reaction from the municipal authorities.

Example Two

In mid-April this year RTV Zenica got a letter through its connections sent by the OHR to the municipality head in which the Office expressed its dissatisfaction and threatened with international sanctions against the municipality because requests by citizens of Zenica who wanted to return to their pre-war apartments, which they left during the war, were being massively turned down. The station tried to get confirmation from the municipality head that the document was real and to hear his opinion. The municipality head refused that and asked them to reveal the source of their information. The journalists refused, and Alic threatened that he would bring up the issue of their responsibility at the managing board and program council.

Example Three

Radio and TV Zenica received on May 15 an open letter from the Club of the Patriotic League of Zenica sent to Messrs. Westendorp and Izetbegovic. In the letter the organization requested that five of the leading officials in the municipality and canton, among them municipality head Alic, answer for absence of their political will and arbitrary behaviour, and material abuse of power. The letter was broadcast in full. The following day the municipality head summoned RTV Zenica director Remzija Hukeljic. In the meeting Alic asked the director to replace the editors or, as he said, he would do it.

The Office of the High Representative addressed a serious warning to the Zenica authorities concerning this pressure on journalists. Alic is expected to stop all activities that threaten the free work of media. We have found out from sources at the OHR that municipality head Ferid Alic, if he persists in his request for the dismissal of the editors, may end up being replaced him. In view of the recent replacement of even the president of one of the two Bosnian-Herzegovinian entities, such a radical measure would not be surprising.

RTV Zenica editors maintain that it is most important for the international community to continue urging media to be politically independent and objective. They specifically reproach the international community for investing a lot of resources in less commercial media, which have almost no influence in local communities, while stronger, public systems, even if they are not nationally fervent, have so far been left to themselves. (S. K. – R. U.)

M e d i a S e l f - R e g u l a t i o n

Disagreement on the Press Council

A traditional one-day meeting of local journalists organized by the OSCE, was this time co-organized (on May 28, Holiday Inn Hotel in Sarajevo) by the Independent Media Commission (IMC) because the theme was a – journalist code.

After almost one-year announcement, preparation, extensive discussion, development of several versions, at the end of last month six journalist associations finally adopted a Press Code.

Everyone agreed during this meeting, or seminar, that it was a huge step forward, regardless of the fact that the Code is far from being perfect and as such is open to modifications and supplements, that is to say, to improvement.

Initial discussion shed more light on the most disputed part of the document – the absence of an article or paragraph regulating the institute of a Press Council, which had been built into the previous versions of the text. It turned out, actually, that it was almost an imposed compromise to leave out the Press Council. Namely, the Press Council as, conditionally saying, an executive corrective, was seen by representatives of some journalist associations as some kind of a central body with doubtful powers, and anything that suggests something central, in at least two-thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is unacceptable.

In their explications used as the basis of discussion, journalists were addressed by Branko Peric, president of the Association of Independent Journalists of the Republika Srpska, Borka Rudic, secretary general of the Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Nada Puvacic, member of the Managing Board of the Association of Journalists of the Republika Srpska. Before them a concise genesis of the appearance of the Code was presented by Edis Mesihovic, president of the Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Senad Kamenica, member of the Presidency of the Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Zdravko Nikic, representative of the Association of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to B. Perić, a Press Council is needed at this moment, particularly because we have an inefficient judiciary. B. Rudic advocated for two things on behalf of the Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina: a single Council for the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also a single Media Council, not just a Press Council. Nada Puvacic considered it essential how the Council would function in practice, but at the same time was against a single Council, as she said, for practical reasons, in view of the fact that legislation in the country is not unified, and the preamble says that, in addition to the Code, “laws and other acts make up the framework for the work of print media in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

Branislav Bozic, president of the Association of Journalists of the Republika Srpska, was resolute in the discussion that what we have adopted is not a press code, but a media code, because associations have their own journalist codes.

The discussions showed an obvious lack of understanding of the nature and essence of the Press Council, not only on the part of younger colleagues who brought up the issue of protection of journalists, in particular protection from the authorities and political structures, but also on the part of older, more experienced colleagues, even a president of a journalist association, who asked a similar question.

A specific question was addressed to Robert Gillette – how to behave until the Press Council is established, to which he replied that it was not the responsibility of the IMC but of the OSCE, by which he revealed the OSCE’s somewhat expanded mandate in the field of media, because so far this organization has been responsible for media only in the context of elections.

The organizers invited guests from Great Britain and Estonia who talked about experiences from their countries concerning the work of press councils and similar bodies.

In conclusion, there is visible disagreement on the Press Council and, hypothetically speaking, if such a body is established for the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina, there will remain a serious and open question about the way in which it will operate, because representatives of the Association of Croat Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular insisted on having a mechanism of consensus in decision-making, which would prevent possible out-voting, while journalist associations from the Bosniak-majority parts of the Federation insisted on absolute majority as a formula against possible blockades of the Press Council’s work. (D. B.)

Focusing on Events in the Region

Media News decided to monitor the Sarajevo TV station Studio 99 because of the fact that it is a broadcast media organization that has had a pronouncedly engaged political approach since the beginning of the war in Bosnia, which profiles independent journalism, but also positions diametrically opposed to incumbent state and Sarajevo authorities. Also, the international community has invested in this station from the end of 1994 till the end of 1997 huge financial and technical resources, which kept this media organization under the "magnifying glass" both of donors from the world and the local public. The subject of monitoring was the broadcast "Oko 22" in which the station's journalists and editor-in-chief have put most work and resources.

"Oko 22" is a one-hour magazine-type news broadcast that starts at 22.00. Since it had not always started on time due to the carelessness of the staff, people believed that its name (*oko* at the same time means "around" and "eye") was the time when the program was supposed to start. However, in this case "Oko" is a synonym for something that is focused upon, that is to say, events that have drawn public attention that day.

The program was launched in the early spring of the wartime year of 1995 (NTV 99 started operating on February 1, 1995, unlike Radio 99 which has been working since before the war). The person who created its concept is Editor-in-chief Adil Kulenovic, and it was developed by the station's news department. The program is specific in that it is broadcast at the same time on radio and television, which is not the most fortunate solution because picture supplements the word on television, so the radio listener is deprived of some of the enjoyment. It is noticeable that the station has been trying to erase these differences, and so "Oko 22" consists of many items made using the principle of news covered with picture or written text, which is a service to radio listeners but degrades television as a medium.

"Oko 22" starts with an effectively made "lead" with excerpts and pictures of the most important news of the day and a review of the program's content. This announcement always lasts for one minute and a watch is shown at the bottom of the screen, which ticks off 60 seconds backwards. From the technical point of view, this is the most representative part of the program.

In the monitored period the dominant issue was the Kosovo crisis and NATO bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Our assessment is that the program treated this issue comprehensively and objectively. Its Belgrade correspondent Rade Radovanovic strongly marked the program, informing Studio 99 listeners every evening about the situation in the Yugoslav capital. Radovanovic went on air live (on-line), which meant bigger timeliness and enabled the viewer/listener to know for sure that the description of the current situation was credible. Also, it enabled the moderator to speak to the correspondent, which contributed to the report being interesting.

Radovanovic, a long-time journalist for opposition and independent media in Belgrade, reported objectively, thoroughly, combining information about the consequences of the war in Yugoslavia with political events taking place there. He did not put any emotions into his reports, except in the program of May 23 when, while reporting on NATO strikes on the electric power system and the fact that there was no electricity in Serbia even for hospitals, he asked: "How can NATO think that civilian suffering is a war against the regime?"

In contrast to Radovanovic, his colleague from Montenegro Slobodan Rackovic, also an experienced journalist and an engaged fighter for Montenegrin independence, sometimes

called in with what could hardly be called reporting. Actually he presented political commentaries which only touched on the events taking place there. Rackovic in his reporting was pronouncedly subjective and favored the political option of President Djukanovic or Liberal leader Perovic, completely overlooking the fact that almost 50 percent of Montenegro supports the Bulatovic-Milosevic axis. For instance, on May 20 he kept using the term “Serbian army” instead of Yugoslav army, and in the remaining monitored days he generalized the views of residents of Cetinje as being the views of all of Montenegro. Some facts and a lot of rope-walking are a characteristic of these reports.

The “Oko 22” broadcasts every day included reports on NATO news briefings in Brussels. In addition to the reported part, the items contained some simultaneously interpreted excerpts of the press conference with well-selected segments, which completed the news selection in the program. During the monitored period we also heard reports by the Brussels and Washington correspondents of the SENSE news agency, and a report by the Zagreb journalist Jelena Lovric. However, it seems that these sound reports were taken from other media, although the moderators did not state the source. Erol Avdovic (former correspondent of TV BiH) reported exclusively for TV 99 from New York. On two occasions he reported about the dilemmas of the general public and the Administration in the United States concerning the validity of intervention, which is an issue that was neglected by other local media. A considerable part of the program was made up of footage of entire items taken from Deutsche Welle and a little less from CNN and Sky News. On May 22 we noticed that the station was showing footage from SRT (Republika Srpska television), and it also carried in full a short interview made by this TV station with the co-chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Svetozar Mihajlovic.

According to its concept, it is envisioned that “Oko 22” host a guest who gives additional information during the program and comments on current events. On May 29 the guest was the editor-in-chief of the Kuwaiti news agency KUNA, and on May 23 the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Edhem Bicakcic. Bicakcic’s visit stands out by the moderator’s specific questions and the Prime Minister’s specific answers concerning the recent donor’s conference. This is a good example of a well-done interview, which is not always a characteristic of this television station.

The weakest side of the program is so-called investigative journalism and engagement of the station’s own reporters who obviously do not possess enough professional skills. Sarajevo reporters usually spend themselves in dull coverage of news briefings or seminars held in Sarajevo. Some of them, even by their vocal capabilities, do not deserve to speak on a broadcast medium. Some excursions into something that could be called investigative journalism or deepening of an issue usually end ingloriously. For instance, on May 21 we watched an item on the rights of demobilized soldiers. The occasion was a statement by Alija Izetbegovic given to *Dnevni avaz* according to which military invalids’ allegations of low pensions were untrue. In the program Izetbegovic refuted a man who introduced himself as the president of the Congress Party (absolutely politically anonymous), although it would have been more logical if an official from a soldiers’ organization was interviewed. The item also featured statements by Zaim Backovic, cantonal minister for social labor and soldiers’ matters, but on a completely different topic, and a poll with demobilized soldiers, of whom most did not want to say anything, which raises the question of why they were polled at all. The journalist in this item has the role of an unskilful interviewer, not someone who should link the topic and explain what is going on. Also, on May 23 the program developed the theme “Role of media” in which public figures (Mustafa Cengic, Hidajet Repovac, Mirza Hajric...) spoke about the significance of the influence of media work on citizens. The journalist was completely passive and produced a collection of “pasted” statements, which were not journalistically shaped and linked.

At the end of each broadcast the program presents the following day’s daily newspaper editions. The impression is that the moderators approach this job without preparation, they

practically just want to get it over with, and it comes down to reading superscript headlines and headlines. This approach sometimes appears comical, as it is unclear from pure headlines what articles are about. For instance, simple reading of the headline “Governor accuses HDZ” does not mean anything. What governor? Why is he making the accusation?

The general impression is that the “Oko 22” program is characterized by openness to different views in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but in the entire region as well. The main idea of the program is that Bosnia-Herzegovina cannot be viewed separately from its neighbourhood. Therefore the station is investing a lot in its correspondent network and covering events in a wider context, but also using different sources of information – Western, Serbian, Bosnian, Albanian sources. By investing in its staff in Sarajevo (by educating its present staff or bringing in more professional people), “Oko 22” would become a respectable program such as OBN’s TV INFO with which it has general editorial similarities.

(Media Plan Monitoring Center – Radenko Udovicic)

Media in Other Countries (V)

Slovenia: In Market Competition

Media News is publishing a series of articles on the media situation in neighbouring countries and countries in post-communist transition. In this issue we publish an article by our associate from Ljubljana, Mr. Lenart Setinc, on the media situation in the Republic of Slovenia.

Broadcast Media Boom

The number of media quickly increased with independence, and even today they are slowly growing in number. Some media did not survive the strong competition, such as, for instance, three new daily newspapers: *Republika* (published from 1992 to 1997), *Slovenac* (published from 1991 to 1996) and *Jutarnje novine* (published from July 4 to July 30, 1998). The same thing happened in the field of magazines. It is interesting that media, which acquired a good reputation right after independence, succeeded in surviving. They have survived almost without exception and are today the media backbone of the country.

Today there are five dailies in the Republic of Slovenia (*Delo*, *Dnevnik*, *Vecer*, *Slovenske novosti*, *Ekipa*), 41 reviews and magazines dealing with general topical issues, 63 local magazines, 130 papers published by companies, associations, societies and political parties, 92 reviews (from different fields: nature, family, music, cooking, sports, car racing, health, computers, etc.), 52 periodical publications from the fields of economy, finance and companies, 48 magazines for entertainment and enigmatography, 23 magazines for children and youth, 185 professional publications and scientific magazines, 30 magazines for religion and spiritual culture. In addition to the five dailies (daily newspapers), five other magazines are published twice a week (*Finance*, *Gorenjski glas*, *Primorske novice*, *Salamanov glasnik and Sluzbeni glasnik*), 49 magazines are published weekly, and there are 40 newspapers published every 14 days. The remaining periodicals are published monthly or even further apart.

Broadcast media have really flourished. Along with public radio and television programs within RTV Slovenia, there are also 21 regional (local) non-commercial radio stations. In addition to that, there are also 40 commercial radio stations broadcasting in Slovenia, four commercial television networks (POP TV, Kanal A, Gajba, TV 3), and several dozen regional

and local television stations, of which 22 distribute their own as well as purchased programs only via cable networks.

Ownership Transformation Completed

Ownership transformation in the field of media in Slovenia has been completed. Today the only significant state medium is RTV Slovenia. There are still several municipal papers in which that process has not been completed, although the law has enabled them to do it. All other significant print and broadcast media were privatized pursuant to the law on ownership transformation of companies (Official Gazette no. 55/92), whose Article 2 stipulates that the law shall be used for ownership transformation of companies and other legal entities that are involved in review, radio and television, magazine-agency and film-informative work, except for work which is determined by law to be a public service (the only such public service is RTV Slovenia).

In addition to RTV Slovenia, also exempted from privatization is the magazine *Nepujzsage* and Hungarian Radio program for the Hungarian community in the Republic of Slovenia. Therefore, the Law on Ownership Transformation has enabled all media organizations to transform their ownership although the former system considered them to be social activities of particular social interest (not economic).

Among the several possibilities that the law has given them, media employees chose almost without exception the method of ownership transformation with “internal distribution and external purchase” (all employees and former employees in companies were entitled to it). As a rule, present and former workers became majority owners with 51 to 60 percent of ownership participation. At least 40 percent of ownership participation in newly established privatized business associations was given, pursuant to the law on privatization, to managing systems that were established.

The first effect of media ownership transformation was majority management on the part of employees in media organizations, which led to bigger professionalism of most of the privatized media. Ownership privatization is by no means a static category, and already in the first few years following the completion of the ownership transformation process, considerable progress was made in the ownership structure of individual media, and ownership became concentrated in the hands of an increasingly smaller number of owners. The first media organization (*Delo*, Shareholding Company) is quite successful on the Ljubljana stock market because it is opening a new era in the media ownership structure transformation in Slovenia. It is worrisome in this regard that the prices of shares of media organizations are unrealistically high (compared to their profits). It means that it is not only economic logic that is decisive in the purchase of their shares.

Anti-Monopoly Clauses

A significant role in protecting media autonomy and professionalism was played by the law on media, passed in 1994. Its provisions protected the plurality and diversity of media, stood in the way of concentration of different types of media (for instance, daily newspapers, TV and radio) in a single company, and limited ownership by one person or legal entity to 33 percent of participation and management rights in a company which it owns. Ownership by a single owner in different media organizations has also been limited to 10 percent of each. Another significant provision says that foreign persons can have a maximum of 33 percent ownership or management rights in a media organization.

The Law on Media also stipulates that media shareholding companies must issue nominated shares (shares with the name of the shareholder) and stipulated the obligation that media must once a year publish their ownership structure in the Official Gazette in order to guarantee transparency of media ownership. In that way the law has so far prevented the appearance of large media concerns that have monopoly, and has curbed the possibility of foreign capital taking over entire media organizations or their majority parts. Foreign capital is for the time being present only in two commercial television programs (POP TV and Kanal A), which would not have been able to operate without foreign assistance, but in terms of ownership, Slovenian capital has majority ownership in both networks.

The most important laws regulating the work of media are the Law on Media (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia 18/94) and the Law on Radio Television of Slovenia (Official Gazette 18/94). The Law on Media has had considerable influence on democratization of media space in Slovenia. In addition to restricted anti-monopoly provisions, important provisions were made to regulate relations between owners, responsible editors and journalists, criteria for allocating RTV frequencies, and complete liberalization of establishing and publishing publications. The Law on RTV Slovenia regulated the only public service medium, in which certainly the biggest achievement is the RTVS management system, which prevented majority and direct managing influence of politicians on the national television station's program policy. The Law on Telecommunications regulates allocation of frequencies for radio and television. Despite the fact that there is no doubt that Slovenia has internationally appropriate media legislation, a new law on media is being prepared. According to the lawmakers, the reasons for that are the following: to ensure efficient media management supervision, to protect national identity, to harmonize the law with European legislation...

Harmonization of Slovenian and European legislation's will certainly bring changes with regard to free flow of capital and people, European quotas (for TV feature programs), terminology, equal competition conditions for all media, dual system (differentiating the public RTV service from commercial RTV), etc. Professional discussions on the new draft law on media are underway right now.

We cannot view the relationship between the state and media on a systematically formal level or on a level of informal activities and usually concealed attempts to influence editorial policy. The state has influence on the position of RTVS, the Government approves the amount of RTV viewer subscription, some programs are financed from the budget (although very modestly), the Parliament approves the appointment of the director general and names one-fourth of RTVS Council members. Political parties can formally influence RTVS only through the parliament and government and the RTVS Council, but informally it is possible to detect big pressure from some parties on certain editors and journalists, primarily at TV Slovenia. All political options are convinced that the national RTVS does not adhere to the principle of equitable access and political equidistance...

There is no systematically defined influence of the state on private media, except, of course, through the economic strategy policy. However, there have been attempts to exert political influence through participation in ownership and through informal connections. Regardless of this, we could generally say that the state and political parties for now do not have alarming influence on media democracy in Slovenia.

***Nedelski dnevnik* Has Biggest Circulation**

Among daily newspapers, *Delo* and *Slovenske novice* have biggest influence; *Delo* with 29.6 percent of readers among adults, and *Novice* with 38.5 percent. In view of the fact that these two dailies are closely connected through their capital and their editors, they jointly cover more than 60 percent of Slovenia's daily market. *Delo's* biggest shareholders before Media News, No33, Vol I

entering the stock market were its present employees (together with former employees). Of outside owners, Krekovo drustvo is strongest with more than 25 percent of shares, which means that it has a control share (with regard to status changes for which the law requires a 75 percent majority). The remaining 25 percent of ownership are held by various dispersed shareholders. For now it is impossible to claim that the new ownership structure is already influencing the politically independent and professional editorial policy. Individual editors, commentators and journalists have bigger influence on political legitimacy than owners, or shareholders.

Also very influential are the dailies *Vecer* from Maribor (23.8 percent of readers) and *Dnevnik* from Ljubljana (20 percent), which are still regionally oriented. Both dailies' editorial policies are politically independent. Internal shareholders dominate in the ownership structure of both media organizations.

The significance of *Dnevnik* is reinforced by the exceptionally influential weekly *Nedeljni dnevnik*, which has been the most popular magazine among its readers for decades (in the year 1998 it had an average of 44.4 percent of readers). Two professionally excellent weekly family reviews published by *Delo-revije* (whose capital is not linked to that of *Delo*) have almost the same number of readers. Some other significant weekly newsmagazines are *Antena* (20 percent) and *Nedelo* (19.3 percent, published by *Delo*), *Mladina* (15 percent), *7D* (12.8 percent, published by *Vecer*), and *Kmecki glas* (11.2 percent). Among influential regional magazines we should mention *Primorske novice*, published three times a week (11.1 percent).

The most significant of the above mentioned magazines have the following circulation: *Delo* – 92,000, *Slovenske novice* – 82,000, *Vecer* – 72,000, *Dnevnik* – 71,000, *Nedeljski dnevnik* – 182,000, *Lady* – 94,000, *Jana* – 76,000.

Among electronic media, RTVS programs have biggest influence. In the field of radio, First Program – Program A has the largest audience – 34.3 percent, while Second Program – Val 202 has as much as 44.1 percent. On state level RTVS's first and second radio channels are without competition. On regional level there are several influential regional stations with a maximum range of 10 percent of listeners. All more important regional and local radio stations have been privatized and are in private hands, and are wholly dependent on the market.

In the field of television, national television has quite good competition primarily in POP TV programming which is produced by the organization PRO-PLUS d.o.o. (which has majority American capital in its ownership structure), along with several regional stations associated in a network which covers approximately 70 percent of Slovenia's territory. TV Slovenia's first channel had an average of 80.2 percent of viewers in 1998, and its second channel had 59.1 percent. However, POP TV has already provided an average number of 74.9 percent of viewers. Its success is certainly partly a result of its selection of excellent series and movies and a correct, independent and professional editorial policy. It often surpasses the editorial achievements of national television which, due to competition, is indicating that it might move towards bigger independence and popularity.

High achievement is also indicated by Kanal A (58.3 percent of viewers) and the newly-established TV network Gajba (18 percent), which, like POP TV, is linked with the production company PRO-PLUS d.o.o.

In conclusion: as a reader, listener and viewer I generally do not have any reason not to trust most Slovenian media (of course, it is necessary to avoid political and propagandistic writing of some media and their journalists and editors, but they are rare and usually without significant influence). For a researcher who investigates the media situation in more detail, a worrisome fact is that the prices of shares of media organizations are unrealistically high (in comparison to their profits), which means that it is not only economic logic that is decisive in the purchase of their shares.

(Lenart Setinc)

Addresses of some of the most significant (still) independent media in Slovenia:

Delo d.d.

Dunajska 5, 1509 Ljubljana
Tel: (386 61) 131 82 55;
Fax (386 61) 133 40 32
Internet: <http://www.delo.si>
Director: Tit Dobersek
Editor-in-Chief: Mitja Mersol

POP TV: Produkcija PRO PLUS, MMTV, TELE 59, TV Robin

Kranjceva 26, 1000 Ljubljana
Tel: (386 61) 189 32 00;
Fax (386 61) 189 32 04
Director: Marjan Jurenc
Program Editor: Branko Cakarmis

Dnevnik, casopisna druzba, d.d.

Kopitjareva 2-4, 1510 Ljubljana
Tel: (386 61) 132 52 62;
Fax: (386 61) 132 1020
Internet: <http://www.dnevnik.si>
Director: Branko Bergant
Editor-in-Chief: Zlatko Setinc

JANA, Delo-revije d.d.

Dunajska 5, 1509 Ljubljana
Tel: (386 61) 319 260;
Fax: (386 61) 133 43 20
Director: Andrej Lesjak
Editor-in-Chief: Bernarda Jeklin

CZP Vecer d.d.

Svetozarevska 14, 2504 Maribor
Tel: (386 61) 62 224 221;
Fax: (386 61) 226 338
Internet: <http://www.aaa.czp-vecer.si>
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Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF): From the 1999 Report

Media Freedoms: Poorest Situation in Yugoslavia

The annual report on the state of media freedoms in the world published by this prominent non-governmental organization is not at all encouraging, although it is stated at the very beginning of the Report that the number of journalists killed in the line of duty considerably decreased in comparison to previous years. *Reporters* registered only 19 journalists killed in 1998, in comparison to 26 in '97, 51 in '95, or 103 in '94, of whom 48 in Rwanda and 18 in Algiers. It is interesting that *Reporters* emphasize that their figures are considerably lower than figures of other related organizations and agencies because their list includes only those journalists who were killed in the line of duty, or the reason for their murder is exclusively the fact that they are journalists.

Still, even these lower figures of killed journalists hide a worrisome trend. The 19 mentioned journalists were not killed in the line of duty as war reporters, which had been characteristic for the previous years. Almost all were killed in retaliation, or with the aim of silencing them after they discovered cases of corrupt politicians or dishonest connections between governments and organized crime. Such murders took place in Columbia, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines and Thailand.

Among governments that are keeping journalists in prisons are Turkey, Syria, Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, China, Ethiopia, etc.

Repressive and totalitarian regimes fear television most of all, as the most powerful medium. Approximately 75 world countries have imposed full control of TV stations or networks. They have recently starting fearing the Internet as well, so already 45 countries have been trying to prevent citizens from accessing the Internet. China is the most zealous in that field, followed by Vietnam, Burma and Malaysia.

Of the former Yugoslav states, Yugoslavia fared the worst, presented as “Serbia – Montenegro.” Croatia was given a little less space than Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it was portrayed in a worse light than Bosnia-Herzegovina. The report in the part about the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina does not differ considerably from the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) report, except for the fact that Macedonia was also included in only three paragraphs, with two cases of preventing three Bulgarian journalists from entering the country. Slovenia, understandably, is not in the report: which is praiseworthy for it!

The report also registered two positive examples: Hong Kong and Indonesia. In the case of the former British colony, there had been unfounded fear that the new authorities would repress freedom of the press, and in Indonesia, the resignation of President Suharto revived the media environment. As of January 1 this year, there was not a single journalist in Indonesian prisons, while 100 publications appeared on the market. In addition, the government firmly pledged to soon pass new media legislation to guarantee freedom of the press.

At the end the report provides extensive lists of names of killed, imprisoned and missing journalists, not only for last year, but for the last 25 years. A shadow which is cast on the credibility of the presented data, at least in this part of the report, is the name of Nijaz Abadzic, prominent journalist of TV BiH (TV Sarajevo), who allegedly disappeared on May 16, 1992. However, his disappearance was solved long ago and, thank God, he is alive and well. We have warned RSF officials about this detail several times.

(D. B.)

C o r r e s p o n d e n c e

OHR – Erotel

A representative of Erotel Television – Mostar, Jozo Curic, sent a letter to the High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina on May 8 in which he expressed the opinion of his media organization’s officials about the position of Croats in Bosnian-Herzegovinian media, reconstruction of the present RTV BiH, and the attitude of the OHR towards Erotel.

The letter states that the Office of the High Representative, using a centralist model, is forcibly trying to implement a project of closing the only available programs in the Croatian standard language in one part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in that severe way trying to isolate Croats in the media sense.

Carlos Westendorp, in his reply to the letter sent to Jozo Curic on May 24, says that his comments reveal a worrisome incorrect interpretation of the aims that the Office is trying to accomplish in the field of overall reorganization of media in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as of the way in which this relates to Croats as a constituent people in the Federation.

Curic in his letter further comments on a statement by the Deputy High Representative for Media, Simon Haselock, saying that he proclaimed a legally registered company an agent of HRT and gave comments on an application submitted to IMC although he was no boss.

In reply to that, Westendorp states that the director of HRT appointed Curic and Colak as his only and exclusive representatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina with full executive powers to act on behalf of HRT, in the presence of OHR staff. As far as the application submitted to IMC with a request to receive all four available frequencies of the state network is concerned, he pointed that the request showed either a lack of seriousness or of technical knowledge.

Erotel's letter says further on that the Deputy High Representative for Media has indicated a situation in which Croats in TV business would have less rights than they used to have in the communist Yugoslavia. The letter therefore requested that Westendorp protect Erotel as the only serious organization, which produces television program in the Croatian standard language in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

With regards to that, Carlos Westendorp replied that the OHR has never suggested that Croats should have less rights to television than they had in the former communist country, and has therefore initiated the establishment of the Independent Media Commission and tasked it with reorganizing broadcast media in Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to encourage open and democratic media.

N e w s

“Positive Media”

Deputy High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina for Media Simon Haselock in an interview with the AIM news agency listed several media organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina that can be used as positive examples. OBN and all its affiliates and NTV Banja Luka, according to Haselock, are very good media. In the Federation, TV Hayat and NTV 99 from Sarajevo stand out, although he said they are not really the best examples, and as far as print media are concerned, there is *Oslobodjenje*, *Vecernje novine* and *Dani*. In the Republika Srpska the best print media are *Nezavisne novine* and *Reporter*. Among radio stations, he singled out Radio Mir (SFOR RADIO) and Radio Zid, which have the best projects.

TV Subscription

The Constitutional Court of the Republika Srpska pronounced unconstitutional the RS Government decision according to which subscription for watching SRT programming should be paid together with the telephone bill. The proposal and initiative for assessing the constitutionality and legality of the Government decision before the Constitutional Court was made by “Boksit DD Milici” and several individuals. They pointed out that this way of collecting television subscription was illegal and unprofessional.

The RS Government stated in its response that the decision was made on the proposal of the Serb Radio Television Managing Board and the reason was the difficult material situation and destroyed radio-diffusion systems, and the poor turnout of subscribers in fulfilling their obligation.

The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska has accepted the RS Information Ministry's proposal to review the decision and find a better way of collecting TV subscription.

Bosniak Television Programming Suspended

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) on May 20 banned further broadcasting of Bosniak Television International (BRT Int.). Bosniak Television adhered to the IMC order, and now instead of regular program, its channel features a message, which says that there is no program due to the Independent Media Commission order.

IMC said in an official statement that the suspension of BRT Int. programming is temporary until the Commission reviews the issuance of a broadcasting license for this television station, which is the regular procedure used for all broadcast media in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Namely, BRT Int. appeared as a result of fusion between Bosniak Moslem Radio Hayat and TV Ljiljan, which received a frequency from the former Telecommunication Board but never started broadcasting. BRT Int. started working on that frequency, but the IMC does not recognize it.

BRT Int. maintains that the broadcasting ban is motivated by political reasons because the international community does not like that fact that there is a Bosniak television. The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina shares that opinion and has accused the IMC in a statement of having an unbalanced approach in assessing the work of media, in which media in the Bosniak-controlled part of the Federation fare the worst.

BRT Int. started broadcasting at the end of March '99. *Media News* monitored the station and concluded that this media organization supports the Bosniak national-religious concept, but does not insult the feelings of other peoples in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Scholarships for Journalists

Westminster Foundation for Democracy London has decided to give two nine-month scholarships to young journalists from the Republika Srpska for attending the School of Journalism and internship at the Media Plan Institute, Sarajevo. This is the first case of a foreign foundation giving scholarships for education and training in a Bosnian-Herzegovinian media organization.

Media Plan Institute has announced an open competition for scholarships, which is open until June 10 this year.

On the Threshold of a New Century



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