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Media News

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Development Strategy

Self-Sustainable Media

The term **self-sustainable media** has become as fashionable as it is democratic. To put it simply, it means media that are able to support themselves, which besides stimulating financial injections and credits should no longer need donations. A newspaper sold at the kiosk, whose circulation is able to cover the costs of production and whose number of unsold copies is not alarming. A radio or TV station, which knows well, its target group, constantly researches the market and which advertisers are interested in. A news agency that sells instead of giving its services away for free. And so on. Principle after principle, of which most does not have practical value in our environment.

Still, most foreign donors who have invested millions of dollars in the plural and democratic development of local media are waving these criteria around as if they were a stabilizer that will save the still anarchic media situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The reality, however, is different: the media market is small and divided along ethnic and political lines, the press distribution network is unprofessional, and the system of radio links is disrupted. Few media carry out public opinion surveys. Local advertisers are economically weak, while large state enterprises prefer so-called politically appropriate media. The economic power of the population is low. Media managers in principle are not interested in learning how to manage business and money. The state does not know what to do even with media that are formally its own, let alone define a strategy of support for the recovery of this economic branch. Most people, unfortunately also most journalists, think that press, radio and television are solely a political and patriotic mission of society.

It appears that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian media development support strategy, established by the international community, has come into clash with the real state of affairs. After investing large amounts of money first in the survival of more or less free media (during the war), and then supporting media pluralism (whose consequence is a boom of RTV stations), considerably more selective donor support has now been announced and only for those who have become respectable, with large readerships and audiences, and – **self-sustainable**. However, few conditions have been fulfilled for the creation of a media market and entering it.

It would be no big misfortune if those who are without quality and influence were to disappear, but the game would be expensive if media whose journalism and quality of production have starting coming closer to European standards were to disappear with them as well. The international community has already invested considerable material resources in some of them.

A serious and analytical view of the issue of real self-sustainability of media would be worthwhile.
(Z. Udovicic)

**Blitz Monitoring /
Electronic Media Analysis**

BiH Presidency Session: More Than Protocol, With Full Right...

This time we decided to carry out blitz monitoring/analysis of the main electronic media in Bosnia-Herzegovina – of their primetime news programs of July 29 of this year. The following media were monitored: Srpski Radio, Radio BiH, TV BiH, Srpska Radio -Televizija and TV INFO/OBN.

Srpski Radio on the above-mentioned evening (edited by Radmila Grubisa) featured the following newscast:

- Dodik and Koschnik in Bijeljina;
- BiH Presidency session;
- Wolfgang Petritsch new High Representative to BiH;
- Serbs continue to move out of Kosmet;
- Ocalan sentenced to death by hanging;
- Weather forecast.

However, in the more extensive presentation of news and events, the newscast was not strictly followed. Priority was given to Prime Minister Dodik's and Hans Koschnik's visit to Bijeljina on the occasion of the handing over of 36 newly-constructed apartments, and after that to an event that was not announced in the newscast – a meeting between the two ministers of industry and energy in the governments of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Djuradj Banjac and Mirsad Salkic), held



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in Banja Luka in a very constructive atmosphere, which was shown through the report itself.

The Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina session was in third place of the hierarchy of news and events, although Radan Skipina's report was relatively extensive.

In the subsequent presentation of news and events on Serb Radio's Evening News at 1900 hrs, the order they were presented in the newscast was adhered to.

“Event Number Two...”

Radio BiH evening news (edited by Velid Dzindo) featured the following newscast:

- BiH Presidency holds session;
- Wolfgang Petritsch new High Representative to BiH;
- Council of Europe parliamentary delegation visits Sarajevo;
- Decision reached to hold the Balkan Stability Pact summit in Sarajevo;
- New International Monetary Fund assistance to BiH;
- Ocalan sentenced to death;
- Protests in Cacak;
- KLA turns over weapons;
- Complete success of Bihac Summer, and
- Weather Forecast.

Radio BiH did not strictly follow the newscast either. The editor and moderator first presented general information on the holding of the Stability Pact summit and decision by heads of states and governments of the European Union in Rio de Janeiro to name Wolfgang Petritsch new High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina. More information was then given on the former Austrian ambassador to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and then the editor and moderator literally uttered: “Event number two was a BiH Presidency session...” His announcement was followed by a report (by Jasenko Krehic) which was two minutes and 20 seconds long. Emphasis on the length is not accidental. Namely, in the next bloc the station featured a report by Dzevad Kucukalic on a visit by a Council of Europe parliamentary delegation to Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was more extensive and longer (more than three minutes), consisting of statements by the main actors and other relevant details.

News on new financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund to Bosnia-Herzegovina was given a significant place both in the hierarchy and the editor and moderator's intonation.

Archive Footage Dominant

OBN/TV INFO (editor and moderator Mujo Delibegovic) had the following newscast:

- New High Representative named;
- BiH Presidency session,
- Brcko supervisor Robert Farrand bans privatization in Brcko;
- Death sentence for Ocalan.

In a wider presentation of the newscast, the editor and moderator announced that the heads of states and governments of the European Union at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro appointed Wolfgang Petritsch new High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and German Minister Bodo Hombach coordinator for the Balkan Stability Pact. When presenting Petritsch, it was said that he had “least chances” (without giving the source of this assessment) compared to Elisabeth Rehn, Martti Ahtisaari or Christian Schwarz-Schilling.

Before a thorough item on the BiH Presidency session, a message of congratulations from Chairman Jelavic to Petritsch was read.

The dominant point of the BiH Presidency session was Bosnia-Herzegovina’s suit against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from ’93, which was clear in TV INFO’s report this evening.

Items on a visit by the European Council’s parliamentary delegation to Sarajevo and Farrand’s decision to ban all activity related to privatization in the Brcko area under his supervision were extensive.

TV BiH (editors Aida Salcinovic and Adisa Ruzdic-Hodzic, as the moderator) had the following newscast:

- BiH Presidency session;
- Ocalan sentenced to death by hanging;
- KLA complies with weapon surrender deadline;

In the report on the BiH Presidency session, which had Bosnia-Herzegovina’s suit against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from ’93 on the agenda, it was emphasized that the suit itself is not disputable, but its amendment that came after the Dayton Peace Agreement.

On TVBiH as well, news from the newscast was not featured in the same order.

SRT’s newscast (edited by Drasko Ignjatic and Predrag Laketa) focused on the following events:

- Dodik in Bijeljina;
- BiH Presidency session;
- Ocalan sentenced to death;
- Patriarch Pavle in Prizren;
- Unrest in Kosmet;
- Northern Ireland peace negotiations interrupted, and
- Weather forecast.

However, in wider presentation, the event of the day for SRT was the death sentence pronounced for Kurdish leader Ocalan, with a thorough item by Gordana Sarovic. Really, in the hierarchy of news, Ocalan’s death sentence was top news for international news agencies and TV networks that day, which the news programs moderator pointed out.

This was followed by a correct and extensive report from Sarajevo (by Dejana Glusac) on the BiH Presidency session.

A report from Bijeljina was also extensive, where Prime Minister Dodik handed over keys to 36 refugee families. The report said that the same number of housing units will be emptied out for Bosniak families.

It is noticeable that all three TV stations excessively used archive footage, especially in the case of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, showing the same pictures over and over. However, this could be the subject of another research.

Reporting does not (always) adhere to the newscast...

Of the five monitored electronic media, Radio BiH and TVBiH put the BiH Presidency session in first place in the newscast. Serb Radio, SRT and TV INFO put it in second place. For Serb radio, both in the newscast and in the wider presentation, Dodik's visit to Bijeljina was the event/news of the day. For TV INFO the appointment of Petritsch was the event of the day.

As we have already said, it is noticeable that stations do not strictly follow the newscast, which deviates to a certain degree from the widespread and recognizable practice of RTV journalism in the world.

In view of the topical and extremely sensitive issue of Bosnia-Herzegovina's suit against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was given central place at the BiH Presidency session of June 29 of this year, this event received appropriate treatment and correct media coverage. Both journalists and editors with full right saw this event as a little more than just protocol. (Monitoring Center – Media Plan Institute; D. B.)

Media in Countries of the Region (VIII)

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 Mirce Tomovski on the media situation in Macedonia

Media Picture of Macedonia – RTV Expansion

The processes of Macedonia gaining independence and creating a plural civil society were accompanied by a media expansion. The general characteristic is democratization and commercialization of the media environment and beginning of creation of a media market. In these new conditions, media are in public and private ownership. Newly formed print media have an independent position, or actually they are as dependent as the private owner or political party that finances them wants.

According to Ministry of Information data, 310 papers were registered in the period from '91 to '97. Of that number, eight are dailies, 40 weeklies, 50 bi-weeklies and 134 monthlies. Eighty or so papers are published periodically. Of that, 22 are in Albanian, one in Vlah, two in Turkish, five in Macedonian, four in English. Influential papers are: *Nova Makedonija* (circulation about 15,000), *Vecer* (highest circulation in the country – 30,000), *Dnevnik* (20,000), *Makedonija denes*, *Utrinski vesnik*, *Fakti* (in Albanian), *Flaka e vllazerimit* in Albanian (circulation 2,800), *Birlik* in Turkish (750). Weeklies – *Puls*, *Delo*, *Fokus*, *Denes*, *Start*, *Forum* (bi-weekly), *Makedonsko sonce*. The monthly *Makedonsko vreme* is published both in Macedonian and in English. There is also the state news agency MIA.

In the field of electronic media, there has been a real explosion and a somewhat chaotic situation has arisen. In the 1991-1997 period, 210 radio and TV stations were registered. Of that number, 90 are radio stations, 29 are TV channels, and 91 are radio-television stations. According to influence, the following stand out: A1, Sitel, Telma and TV Kanal 5. The government, that is, the state, has monopoly over Macedonian Radio-Television Skopje. Its founder is the Parliament, and its program is in the official Macedonian language and in the languages of its nationalities.

Such a large number of media is without doubt a part of society's democratization, but it also has an influence on democratization of the social ambience in Macedonia. There is an

opportunity to present different views. Listeners or viewers have a chance to choose the channel through which they will consume information.

Such an abundance of media has contributed to an abundance of information. However, information and media professional standards have fallen. Pirate programs and programs, which often have very low esthetical quality, are being broadcast. The number of young journalists has increased, but they are often without experience and with insufficient professional education. There are cases of entire families, friends and acquaintances entering the profession and other persons who have never engaged in journalism.

The legislative background of this media expansion is the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, which was adopted after Macedonia gained independence in the process of dissolution of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). The Constitution guarantees freedom of persuasion, conscience, freedom of speech, public address, censorship is banned...

However, the Constitution was not accompanied by new media legislation and therefore Macedonia does not have a law on information. This, on one hand, has liberated and relaxed information (“may all flowers bloom...”), and on the other, it has created a vacuum to the detriment of the journalistic profession.

The only regulation in the field of print media is the Law on Public Information from 1974. There have been several attempts so far to pass a new law on information. There is divided opinion among the public and journalists on whether journalism is more liberal with or without laws.

The year 1997 is important for the modelling of the legal framework of the entire sphere of electronic media. That is when the Law on Public Enterprise Macedonian Radio-Television was passed. Laws on radio and television activity, telecommunications, and concessions were also passed, as well as the Law on the Radio-Diffusion Council. The Council is an independent body that represents the interests of Macedonian citizens. These regulations regulate the entire field of electronic media. During two years of the Council’s engagement and application of legal regulations, relations in the field of radio and television activity have been organized (procedure, operating licenses, concessions, frequencies). The results are visible, but pirate stations still exist!

Parallel to the development of the private sector in this field, privatization processes have been launched. This was used first of all by the news enterprise “Nova Makedonija.” For now this process is in a phase of “rest” – namely, the state, together with shares possessed by the Privatization Agency, has the largest number of shares (more than 50 percent). The director is named by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The Government also appoints the largest number of members of the shareholding bodies, the Managing Board and Supervisory Board. As far as Macedonian Radio-Television is concerned, it was legally proclaimed to be a public enterprise. Its bodies and director are appointed by the Parliament.

Macedonian society has a complex ethnic, religious and language structure. The Constitution guarantees the freedom of individuality of the nationalities living in Macedonia, as well as their national, religious, cultural and linguistic identity. In that sense there is a positive tradition in this field from previous society. Macedonian Radio-Television, in addition to Macedonian, also broadcasts programs in the Albanian, Turkish, Serb, Vlah and Romany languages. However, private television and radio stations also exist in the Albanian, Turkish, Serb, Romany and Vlah languages.

Within the news enterprise “Nova Makedonija,” daily newspapers are published in Albanian (*Flaka e vllazerimit*), Turkish (*Birlik*), as well as children’s magazines and periodicals related to culture and literature.

The Radio-Diffusion Council has approved concessions for 27 commercial radio companies (13 TV and 14 radio) in the languages of the nationalities and in locations where the majority of them live.

All these details show that a completely different media environment is being created. There is a real deluge of various opinions, views, criticism and comment. It is practically difficult for the state to put pressure on any media other than the ones it owns. At this moment, most censorship, control and direction is coming from political parties. That is an attack on professional journalism. “Partisan” newspapers are either controlled by the authorities or by the opposition.

(Mirco Tomovski, Media Plan Institute associate from Skopje)

Dilemmas

Are Spokespersons Journalists?

An international conference was recently organized in Ohrid by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), within the program Peace and Stability in Southeast Europe, better known as the Royaumont Process (Royaumont Process – see note at the end of this article). The topic was: **“Conflict Reporting and the Media: The Role of Journalism in the Prevention and Resolution of Conflict.”** The conference was attended by some 50 or so journalists, editors and media experts from 18 countries in the region. The conference adopted an action plan of operation for journalists and media in Southeast Europe.

However, at one moment, the otherwise lively discussion deviated from the main topic and focused on a challenging dilemma – the role of spokespersons in contact with journalists. The topping on the discussion was, according to many, the controversial role of Jamie Shea, NATO spokesman, and this military alliance’s briefings in general.

The Temptations of War Reporting

Let us recall that *Reporters Sans Frontieres* (RSF) were the first to react. They issued a statement called “War in Yugoslavia : NATO’s Media Blunders” (June 15), which among other things said that NATO was not truthful with media and it has befogged truth on several occasions, or how journalists have received with particular indignation NATO’s effort to befog the massacre it committed by bombing two lines of Albanian refugees . *Reporters* also condemned the immoderate and aggressive vocabulary used by NATO spokespersons and officials, as well as many high political figures. They backed this with a statement given by Wolfgang Benz, director of the Bonn-based the Research Centre on Anti-Semitism , who warned that comparing the Belgrade regime to the Nazi Germany and Milosevic to Hitler could lead to making the genocide against Jews relative.

Reporters concluded their strong statement with the sentence: “But it could still be hoped that a coalition of democracies, which claims to have right on its side, would behave with more integrity than the dictatorship it is fighting against.”

According to a SENSE agency report, *Reporters* also opened a debate “Media and Kosovo” in the context of temptations of war reporting.

Our key question is as follows: Are spokespersons at the same time journalists, or at least – does the job of spokesperson include elements of journalism? If they are, or if it does, then they are obliged to adhere to journalist codes.

Media Manipulators

Before more extensive elaboration of the issue, it would be useful to briefly define the role of the so-called spin-doctor, which has many common elements with a spokesperson, namely a person in charge of information and public relations. The term itself is almost impossible to translate into Bosnian, but it suggests a charlatan, manipulator, illusionist. In short – a liar!

Spin-doctor is an American invention that began to be used in the 80s of this century. The term was borrowed from sports terminology, or more precisely from the American national game – baseball. “Spin” is used for a spin ball that is supposed to fool the catcher, namely the person to which it is sent. A clear metaphor, without doubt. After starting to be used widely, the term spin-doctor had many meanings – from political and press secretary, or political advisor, through writer of political articles, press releases, etc., to spokesperson, or person in charge of information and public relations. The spin-doctor’s main task is to ensure optimum media promotion for the politician, party or institution that has hired him or her. Spin-doctors rarely agree to be called that, and they all claim that they have never lied to journalists. True, they do admit that sometimes for certain reasons they have omitted some important facts. But what is that if not manipulation.

Alexander Ivanko, UN spokesman in Bosnia-Herzegovina for many years and now media advisor at the OSCE Vienna headquarters, is decisive that a spokesperson is not a journalist and is not obliged to adhere to journalist codes.

Duncan Bullivant, spokesman for the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo for many years and now OSCE media advisor, when asked the identical question – whether spokespersons are at the same time journalists – was not explicit in his answer. He explained his experience of many years, on the basis of which he drew the conclusion that if a spokesperson is lying, he or she will force journalists to seek other sources of information.

Aidan White, IFJ secretary general, was unambiguous that a spokesperson has the primary task to tell the truth and in that sense to adhere to the ethical codes of the profession, from which one can understand that his or her job contains some elements of journalistic engagement.

Franziska Hundseder, German journalist and president of the distinguished Section *IG Medien* from Karlsruhe, supported Aidan White’s stances, and she was joined by several colleagues, among them a doyen at the Ohrid gathering – Andreas Kannaouros, president of the Union of Journalists of Cyprus (Greek part of the island).

Even a cursory research of this issue points to the conclusion that journalists essentially consider spokespersons, or spin-doctors, to be their colleagues, or maintain that their job at least contains certain components of journalistic work, which means that they are morally obliged to respect the ethical postulates of the profession. Spokespersons, on the other hand, do not feel part of the journalist profession and maintain that journalist codes do not oblige them. If that is so, it is necessary to pose with more determination the question of responsibility of politicians, as an important link in the chain of the complex communication process, who in the present social and political constellation, not only here but also wider, as participants in the communication process, remain beyond the reach of responsibility.

Finally, *Media News* invites all that are interested to present their views on this dilemma. If it is a dilemma at all?

(D. Babic)

What is the Royaumont Process?

Named after a town of the same name near Paris, where in March of 1995 27 countries adopted the Declaration on Building Dialogue and Trust in Countries of Southeast Europe. The process, sponsored by the European Union, was designed to stimulate good neighbourly relations and encourage cooperation among peoples

with different cultural traditions, and to promote cooperation in art, education, media and other areas of civil society.

The process is focused on breaking down political, social, cultural and other prejudices which have led to conflict in the region, and on affirming the spirit of tolerance, unhampered flow of ideas and peaceful coexistence of peoples and ethnic groups.

Coordination of activities within the Royaumont Process in the field of media has been entrusted upon the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

F r o m a D i s t a n c e

Many people from the world have visited Bosnia over the past years with the aim of helping the development of local media. Sometimes burdened with pragmatic political tasks and obligations, during their mandates they have often been unable to assess all the positive achievements of their activities and errors made in international engagement in the field of media.

A time distance is needed for something like that.

Kosovo, and soon perhaps Yugoslavia as well, and partly also Croatia, Macedonia and Albania, are areas in which Europe and the United States will test their doctrine of supporting media development in post-conflict environments. *Media News* will address a number of media experts and spokespersons from international organizations who have lived in Bosnia, with the question: WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED IN BOSNIA?

The first to respond to our appeal was Duncan Bullivant, former spokesman for the international community's Office of the High Representative and ex media consultant for the OSCE in Vienna.

Lessons Learned in Bosnia: To Respect the Specific Characteristics of the Country and Region (Duncan Bullivant, former OHR spokesman)

In the years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, long-term media development has come of age in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is not say that there was no engagement before that period, Soros and individual nations contributed to several projects during the war. What happened after Dayton was a realisation of the benefit of media development at the political level. Here was a way of having political impact with very little financial penalty or risk.

The failure of Dayton to deal with the media issue remains an unexplained mystery, especially when one considers the Holbrook connection to the Committee to Protect Journalists through his wife. The media omission was rectified during the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council in Sintra in June 1997. However by then the issue was more of media control rather than development, a trend that has continued to this day.

Media is of course the life blood of the modern western political scene. A triumph of presentation over content, that naturally finds itself influencing policy more and more. When

western governments pour money into media projects in troubled regions what are they trying to achieve? Stability, yes, pluralism, maybe, opposition to external pressures, certainly not. The international effort in support of media in Bosnia is run by international staff, who for very pragmatic reasons seek to recreate a little piece of home in the Balkans. This approach presents a product that looks better, feels familiar and connects with the local population, perhaps.

Bosnia – a Living Laboratory

As in many areas, Bosnia has provided the international community with a valuable living laboratory. The rapid development of the civil administration of Kosovo has been, in part, due to the experience gained post Dayton. The considerable international effort to change the media landscape within Bosnia has thrown up some experience as well. A complete list of lessons learned would fill a book, however in the regional context, considering Kosovo, several areas for consideration do come to light.

If one were to drive from Zagreb to Skopje many things would stand out. Firstly the staggering level of destruction caused by the conflicts of the past 8 years. However amongst the damaged buildings one would also notice a large number of satellite dishes, providing access to news and programming from beyond the local terrestrial service. Arriving in Sarajevo, one might meet with a resident of the Dobrinja area, shattered by war but now recovering. In conversation, that person might tell you with pride that when his house and all the others in the area were built they were all wired for cable/satellite TV. Long before half the roads in London were being dug up to install it.

Before setting off on one's journey again, you might choose a newspaper to take with you. Turning down the opportunity to pick up a copy of *Slobodna Dalmacija* you opt for a copy of *Dnevni avaz*. Continuing on the journey, a border guard in Republika Srpska notices the paper and asks if he can read it, keen for news from a city he has not seen for some time. So the journey continues, until reaching Skopje, when on the radio one hears the latest Serbian language broadcast from Radio Free Europe booming out from Prague. The lead item is dealing with the plight of Serbs living in Eastern Slavonia, and is avidly listened to by Serbs in Macedonia.

Despite the nationalist policies of the vast majority of the region's political leadership, there is a thirst for information that crosses over the nationality issue and regional borders. There is a danger, especially after the depravity of the violence in Kosovo that international agencies take as a norm what it finds on the day that it starts to develop a local strategy for media. Right now the thought of strong media links between Pristina and Belgrade is unimaginable to the vast majority, as well as politically undesirable to those who pursue the goal of independence. However, not long from now that relationship will return, as geographic and market forces come to the fore. Maintaining a regional perspective with development projects is essential and all too often overlooked.

Developing a strong fourth estate in the South East European region is not just a money making operation for international media experts with nothing better to do. The whole effort is part of the establishment of root and branch democracy in a region that has known little of it during its turbulent history. Alongside the reform of political structures and the judiciary the media has a vital role to play.

However, despite this, there should be no direct political emphasis placed on media development as this is in effect interference rather than development, and can have a negative impact. At every stage of project development it is important to keep a clear vision of what is trying to be achieved overall. This may mean the reform of media that has a less than perfect background, as well as starting projects from new.

With the odd exception every country in the world has a slightly different approach to the media. Formats for television programmes, newspaper distribution systems, the list goes on and on. What suits an audience in Los Angeles may not suit an audience in Banja Luka. BBC training is amongst the best in the world, however putting together a network or programme in a cash short environment is vastly different from the cash rich environment of London.

Investment in Second Rate Media Outlets

Many of the styles and news formats in the region date back to the socialist era, but that does not mean they are bad. People get used to a method of delivery, remember it is the message that is the priority not just the production standards. In the UK moving the timing of ITN's evening news from 2200 to 2300 has destroyed their ratings. The genuine wishes and desires of the viewing public were not taken fully into account, despite the quality of the movies that were put on instead of the news. Those involved in helping to develop new projects, or help existing ones, must whenever possible try to read themselves into the culture of the target public they are trying to reach.

Over the past few years the International Community has poured money into projects that have supported second rate newspapers, corrupt TV stations and unlistened to radio stations. There have been successes as well, but in almost all cases this has involved the support of a commercially viable project.

Media training is a valuable source of support for emerging media sources. However, most of that training is geared up to technical training of journalists, camera men, sound recordists etc. How often do newspapers or TV stations get serious financial training. Standards of advertising and public relations in the South East region are not high, yet standards of art work and graphic design are. Lost revenue from poor financial planning, corruption and plain incompetence plague many media houses. Do not forget the need for this kind of training and advice, in the long term it will increase the impact of international funding.

The number of individuals who have suitable experience to follow through projects in the field is limited. Often in the past the quality of the international staff involved supervising projects has been questionable. This leads to misunderstandings, confusion and inefficiency as well as a failure to make the most of the projects concerned.

Of course, there will never be one single source of funding for media projects. Outside the EU, US and Soros triumvirate there will always be bi-lateral approaches being made. On more than one occasion in Bosnia double funding was encountered. That is to say the same project being funded twice, ideal for the shady businessman on the receiving end of the money, but not good for the overall effort.

Such problems can be overcome by regular co-ordination between the founders and project co-ordinators. In an ideal situation the agency responsible for the overall political development of the region in question should draw up lists of preferred projects for funders to view, as well as list of projects already being funded .

There can never be a perfect design for media development, because ultimately the demands of the local population will shape its commercial development. However, by building on experience and listening to the demands of the target population, international support for media development can have long term positive impact. (Duncan Bullivant)



OBN More and More Convincing

Open Broadcast Network, better known among the general public by its English acronym – OBN, is becoming a media outlet that people trust more and more every day. As an illustration, in one day only, actually in a couple of evening hours (Wednesday, July 7), the station broadcast two attractive and professionally made items which we believe held the viewers glued to their seats, or to something else, depending on where they were when they watched the program.

The primetime news program TV INFO was followed by a special item – an interview with George Robertson, Great Britain's defense secretary. This exceptionally interesting interview was conducted by Duska Jurisic, without headphones, namely without an interpreter. The translation was subsequently synchronized but it was done in a skilful way because at the same time, although understandably at lower volume, the authentic voices of both the minister and the journalist could be heard. The interview was made in the salon of the British ambassador's residence. Smartly dressed, looking good and with a piercing look, Jurisic asked very unconventional questions, even unpleasant to the English ear. It is important that the choice of the person interviewed was very gratifying, as he was extremely well informed about the local situation.

This was followed by the third "Tourist Postcards," whose author and host is Mladen Vujic. This time he visited two lakes – Modrac and Balkana. As a rule, tourist topics are politically neutral, but Vujic skilfully included a component about tourism as a destroyer of barriers. He mentioned, namely, an interesting detail about guests from the other entity, from Ozren and Podozren (Serb) villages, who partied with their Bosniak hosts in a catering establishment on Lake Modrac until early morning. Nothing propagandistic, but discreet affirmation of the spirit of tolerance.

N E W S

Amendments Essentially Change the Law on Federation RTV

The House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, despite Croat deputies' opposition, on July 1 adopted the Law on BiH Federation RTV. However, the law will go into effect only when it is approved by the House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament as well, in which decisions are reached by consensus, which means that Croats can prevent the law from being passed.

The Croats' opposition is based on the fact that the House of Representatives voted for the law on the federal TV with the addition of two amendments, which essentially modify it in comparison to the version agreed upon by the Federation Government which Croat deputies had also accepted.

The first amendment stipulates that the future federal TV shall broadcast on one channel only, which shall respect all the specific characteristics of the Federation, instead of on two channels in the Bosnian and Croatian languages, which had seemed to be without dispute for months. The second amendment envisions the strengthening of RTVBiH over the future BiH Federation RTV, which Croat deputies are opposed to because they maintain that RTV BiH's continued existence would enable Bosniak domination in the field of information.

As it is clear that the law will not get a green light in the House of Peoples, it is expected that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) will make the final decision. The Office, which mediated the passing of the version of the law agreed upon by the FBiH Government and the Federation Forum, presently opines that the passed amendments are counter-productive.

Three Years of the BBC School of Journalism

The BBC school for electronic media journalists marked three years of work in Sarajevo. At the same time, at a ceremony in the school premises, the ninth generation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalists was promoted. A total of 153 young journalists attended the school so far, and some of them are now the moving force behind numerous electronic media in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Deputy High Representative Jacques Klein addressed those present at the celebration. He partly blamed warmongering journalists for the war in the region and told students to contribute to prosperity in their country by reporting accurately and timely.

On the Threshold of a New Century

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