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Media News

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Media Scandals

A Quasi Protectorate

Media scandals are rocking Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Case number one. The Mostar-based EROTEL refuses to sign a frequency license for its work allocated by the Independent Media Commission. EROTEL's explanation: as its present number of frequencies was cut, this "largest Croat station in Bosnia-Herzegovina" may have to close down. The station also refers to certain promises received during talks. IMC, on the other hand, says that the excess frequencies now used by EROTEL actually belong to the federal television. And it is surprised that the station does not want to take what is given to it.

Case number two. The Republika Srpska Government dismissed the RTV RS General Director, Andjelko Kozomara. The Office of the High Representative reacted with a statement saying the dismissal was illegal because under interim arrangements on the management of this organization (agreed upon by the OHR and RS Government), dismissals can only be carried out by the radio-television's managing board. The Government, on the other hand, is surprised that it cannot dismiss someone who is managing a body which is in "state interest" and which acts in violation of its policies.

Both cases are an illustration of the chaotic situation in media legislation and a tacit war waged by "local factors" who want to maintain status quo and the international community which is getting lost in a forest of pragmatic moves. Due to a lack of even minimal willingness on the part of the authorities in the two entities to define a legal framework for the work and development of media in a new and contemporary way, the international community has resorted to imposing its decisions and various "interim arrangements" which are supposed to pave the way for permanent solutions. International representatives have tried to soften the confusing

consequences of this practice with the Dayton principle that “decisions made by the High Representative of the international community are above any local law.” Still, life has shown that parallelism between local and international competencies and the confusion concerning “sovereignty,” and often also the insufficient coordination among international factors, can sometimes multiply problems.

The Kozomara scandal, which has caused quite a lot of uneasiness at this station, and even a program paralysis, would not have been caused if the Government had proposed and the National Assembly passed on time new laws on media that had been requested (almost forgetting about deadlines) by the Office of the High Representative. There would certainly have been less misunderstanding between EROTEL and IMC if months had not been wasted in negotiations, wrangling and showering the public with sometimes contradictory information from international circles on whether Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina will have their own television and if so, what it will be like.

The time of waiting for the transfer of competencies to local authorities should be shortened or the international community should stop this farce of a quasi protectorate and introduce a true protectorate.

(Z. U.)

Monitoring

Relying on Their Own Articles

Media Plan Institute monitored daily newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina on October 18-24 in order to determine the sources of information in the local press using the quantitative method. The monitoring did not include special supplements in newspapers, such as supplements on cars, TV program, etc.

In the monitored period, by the number of different articles, *Oslobodjenje* is in the lead with 775 articles, followed by *Dnevni avaz* with 693, *Glas srpski* with 680, and *Vecernje novine* with 612. *Dnevne nezavisne novine* published the smallest number of articles – 459.

In all the daily newspapers their own sources, that is articles and reports written by their own journalists, dominated. This was most pronounced in *Vecernje novine*, which had as much as 55.07 percent of its own articles. It is followed by *Glas srpski* with 53.68 percent. In this group of papers in which their own articles make up more than one half of the content is also *Oslobodjenje*. *Dnevni avaz* also has a high percentage of 46.32 percent, while the *Dnevne nezavisne novine* has the least number of its own articles, making up about one third of all the published articles, or more precisely 34.20 percent.

News agencies as sources of information are in second place in all the papers. In *Glas srpski* they take up 32 percent of the content, in *Oslobodjenje* 30 percent, in *Vecernje novine* 27 percent, in *Dnevni*



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avaz 16 percent, and in *Dnevne nezavisne novine* 13 percent.

Oslobodjenje generally uses the official agency in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, BH PRESS, with 171 news items published in the monitored period. It is followed by REUTERS with 40 items, and then SENSE (information service from EU countries) with 15, and ONASA, an independent agency based in Sarajevo, with only eight news items (although ONASA was formed by *Oslobodjenje*). The paper published two items of the BETA agency from Belgrade, and one of the Muslim News Agency MINA. BH PRESS is also in the lead in *Vecernje novine* with 130 items. In second place, with 10 items each, are SENSE and STINA. It is interesting that this newspaper is the only one that, quite often, used the STINA agency, an independent Croatian agency from Split, which also covers well the area of western Herzegovina. Third place is shared by ONASA and REUTERS with nine each. *Dnevni avaz* used BH PRESS 73 times and REUTERS 27 times.

In the Republika Srpska the situation is considerably different. *Nezavisne novine* has only news item of the BH PRESS agency, while *Glas srpski* had none. *Nezavisne novine* does not have a single news item of the ONASA agency, while *Glas srpski* has two. In *Nezavisne novine* the BETA agency was present most often with 30 news items, followed by the Republika Srpska state agency SRNA with 15 items, SENSE with eight, TANJUG from Belgrade with three, and so on. In *Glas srpski* SRNA is clearly in the lead with 123, followed by TANJUG with 51 and BETA with 38.

It is interesting that all newspapers featured a large number of unsigned articles. By the number of such articles *Dnevni avaz* is in the lead – 179 (26 percent). After it comes *Nezavisne novine* with 141 unsigned articles. However, compared to the total number of published articles, *Nezavisne novine* has an even higher percentage, as much as 31 percent. In other newspapers the percentage of such articles is more or less the same and amounts to approximately 10 percent. Most unsigned articles are about relaxing issues, such as entertainment, health tips, interesting events, and so on. Since we had noticed earlier that Bosnian-Herzegovinian newspapers simply borrow these items from foreign press, in particular Croatian, it may be said that this is some sort of plagiarism.

A conclusion, at least based on this monitoring, is that Bosnian-Herzegovinian newspapers often feature articles from other newspapers, radio or TV stations. With clearly stating the name of the source, *Nezavisne novine* did this 63 times (14 percent), *Dnevni avaz* 60 (nine percent), *Oslobodjenje* 35 (five percent), *Glas srpski* 26 (five percent) and *Vecernje novine* 31 times (three percent).

Various news statements are less often used as sources of information. An exception is *Nezavisne novine* in which statements take up 8.28 percent of space. In other papers this percentage is around three percent, while in *Glas srpski* it is only 0.74 percent.

(Media Plan Monitoring Center)

C o m m u n i c a t i o n N e t w o r k f o r S o u t h e a s t E u r o p e

The Year of Dangerous Living (Anniversary of the Serbian Law on Information)

When a car belonging to the editor-in-chief and director of the paper *Glas javnosti* and director of the printing house “Glas”, Slavoljub Kacarevic, burned down, only a few days after the assassination attempt on Banja Luka journalist Zeljko Kopanja, few people thought it was just an accident. Word spread around that “a message was sent to him.” It was difficult to believe even Kacarevic when he said it might have been only an accident, which was later confirmed by the police. For, the head of “Glas” for days before it happened had been receiving lawsuits under the draconian Serbian Law on Information – a total of 52. Twenty-six against him personally, and 26 against the firm he represents.

This law, during the past one year that it has been in effect, was applied 50 or so times. Journalist and news organizations had 24 hours to prove their innocence or they would be fined. The fine was so high that many of the punished media never got back on their feet after it. The example of *Evropljanin* and *Dnevni telegraf*, which continued to work as long as they could, is probably the most drastic. After all the fines, confiscation operations, printing newspapers in Montenegro or Bosnia-Herzegovina – during the war, from an ambush, the owner and editor-in-chief of this paper Slavko Curuvija was murdered. That is what happens to those for whom the Law on Information is not warning enough. The fire on Kacarevic's car was hence seen as only another threat.

The drastic effects of the Law on Information do not seem to be enough for some. It is not enough that the paper *Danas*, which is on the verge of survival anyway, keeps having to raise money “from friends” in order to pay fines, as its editor-in-chief Grujica Spasovic has put it. It is not enough that, in addition to Curuvija's papers, also no longer in existence are *Nasa borba* and *Demokratija*, or that every editor, even when only carrying someone else's official statement, first thinks well whether it might urge someone to sue him “under the Law.”

Filing a suit is often enough for a fine. Under the law, namely, everyone who feels insulted, who asserts a lie has been uttered against them, or who recognizes in an article some elements that are anti-state, may sue any media. The judge has to hold a trial within 24 hours of the filing of the suit, and has to pronounce the verdict within the next 24 hours. Therefore, there is no time for any serious defense or detailed argument, and the fines – for the founder and publisher – range from 400,000 to 800,000 dinars (23,500 to 47,000 German marks on the black market), and for the person responsible – from 100,000 to 400,000. If the publication within 24 hours does not prove something which is claimed in the paper, even if it is a part of a press statement issued by a political party or even the authorities (such as a case in Nis, where *Narodne novine* was fined for publishing a statement issued by the city authorities), the gravity of the fine depends only on the good will of the judge. Bearing in mind the state of independence of courts in Serbia – the fines for free media are usually the highest possible.

Despite all this – free press in Serbia continues to come out and does not pay too much attention to the Law on Information, adhering only to the laws and rules of the profession and trying to survive on the market. The question is – how?

In a system such as the one in Serbia, life does not depend only on laws, but also on the balance of power. Free media have behind them their influence on the general public, interest-driven support from the opposition and strong international support. While bombs were being dropped, there could have been no international support, the opposition was quiet, so what was left for media was the small free and brave public. That is why they accepted to walk on the brink of censorship. An anecdote is remembered from that period according to which a reader from Australia wrote an e-mail message to an independent paper, saying he hopes the “whole newsroom was tied to radiators” as they were writing so cowardly. According to the reader, there could have been no other explanation of their behavior. Such misunderstanding as a rule was greater the further away the reader was.

The anniversary of the Law on Information is marked by another fact – all media that were fined are print media. Not a single radio or TV station had had to face a magistrate judge, although it is clear that their influence on the public is often bigger than that of print media. The reason does not lie in the lack of evidence (because this same law obliges RTV stations to keep audio and video recordings), nor in the “unawareness of the informers” – all serious political parties have services that record the main RTV programs. For independent electronic media, primarily members of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM), a law that is applied most often is the equally disputed Law on Radio Diffusion. Thanks to it, 10 or so of these stations have had to close down. During the war the state used its exceptional powers and banned the work or confiscated the equipment of another 10 or so. The most influential and also the forefront of ANEM, Radio B92, was occupied using an organizational putsch at the beginning of the war, but the same team of workers succeeded during the summer to go on air again, on the frequency of Radio Studio B's third channel, under the name B2-92. The most

drastic assault on free electronic media occurred in Pirot. A radio station there was closed down and its owner Nebojsa Ristic, after the radio's closure, had put a "Free Press" poster on it. That act was interpreted as "bringing into doubt decisions by the state organs in a state of war." Ristic was sentenced to a prison term of one year. He has served six and a half months of his sentence so far. He is still in prison.

In Serbia's society today, free media are the strongest, if not the only segment of a serious democratic structure. The opposition is either too weak or corrupt, independent syndicates do not exist, and non-governmental organizations are still in their infancy. The authorities are not divided into judicial, legislative and executive. They are cumulated, however not in one political party, but in one man and his closest relatives and friends. Free media are the only ones who can say this, as well as other things, openly.

If there were no free media, the Serbian public would not know, for example, that Montenegro has introduced the German mark as an equal legal tender, that the United States and the European Union have promised piles of dollars if free elections are held in Serbia, and many other important things. Regime propaganda is celebrating a victory in Kosovo, successful reconstruction, non-existing diplomatic successes, and social and economic stability. All that, in addition to everyday killings of Serbs in Kosovo, arrival of "aggressor" presidents and ministers to the province which is claimed to be part of the sovereign Yugoslavia, with two million people living below the poverty line... If independent media are the mirror of the state, the regime has tried to smear it using this law. Since it is not succeeding in that, people fear that it will try to shatter it. That is why the burning of Kacarevic's car seemed like a warning. Even if it was not that, many are convinced it was.

(Vladan Radosavljevic, Media Center Belgrade)

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(Media News features a list of fines imposed on journalists and media in Serbia following the adoption of the Law on Information in October of 1998)

FINES: ABOVE ONE MILLION MARKS

MEDIA	DATE	TOTAL FINE IN YU DINARS
1. Evropljanin	24.10.98	2,400,000
2. Dnevni telegraf	9.11.98	1,200,000
3. Politika	12.11.98	150,000
4. Glas javnosti	12.11.98	50,000
5. Glas javnosti	21.11.98	380,000
6. Politika	21.11.98	150,000
7. Monitor	22.11.98	2,800,000
8. Dnevni telegraf	9.12.98	450,000
9. Borba	13.12.98	150,000
10. Svet	5.01.99	150,000
11. Prava coveka	21.01.99	220,000
12. Pancevac	5.02.99	61,500
13. Vecernje novosti	26.02.99	260,000
14. Kosova sot	12.03.99	1,600,000
15. Glas javnosti	13.03.99	150,000
16. Blic	13.03.99	150,000
17. Danas	13.03.99	400,000
18. Gazeta sciptare	16.03.99	1,600,000
19. Kombi	21.03.99	1,600,000
20. Koha ditore	21.03.99	520,000
21. Studio B	23.03.99	150,000
22. Glas javnosti	24.03.99	10,000

23. Parlament	5.07.99	65,000
24. Profil	15.08.99	150,000
25. Cacanski glas	11.09.99	350,000
26. Politika	17.09.99	70,000
27. Glas javnosti	29.09.99	200,000
28. Kikindske novine	9.10.99	200,000
29. Glas javnosti	12.10.99	270,000
30. Danas	27.10.99	280,000
31. Glas javnosti	27/28.10.99	1,650,000
32. Promene	28.10.99	320,000
Total:		18,156,500 dinars

O p i n i o n s

Public RTV Services: Far From Economic Self-Sustainability

(For Media News Written by Izudin Isovica, RTV BiH Director General Assistant)

With regards to the High Representative's decision on the establishment of public services, I first want to point out that in my many years of work I have never come across a situation in which a decision on project implementation was made first, and then work started on researching the program, technical, staffing, spatial and in particular the economic foundations. I do not accept the prevailing practice of having a decision made in the hope that it will somehow be implemented. That is how 280 media were established in Bosnia-Herzegovina, many without serious projects, without economic foundations, analysis and research. Is it any wonder then that there are less than a dozen stations that are making profit although all of them are more or less commercial. Even those that receive constant infusions from wealthy donors are experiencing serious difficulties. That is how come a number of electronic media have been born and are still working although they do not pay out salaries, do not settle their debts, they use the limited national resources – frequencies free of charge, they violate copyrights and related rights, they illegally broadcast or carry other stations' programs and, despite all that, they incur losses. All of this is in violation of the criteria that they will have to adhere to when they again apply for a permanent license with the Independent Media Commission. Media have mostly been appearing as a result of political ambitions of individuals or groups.

In such an environment, even the High Representatives, although he comes from a circle of countries in which economic logic is above all other interests, sometimes even above national (state) interests, passes decisions on the establishment of public services of the BiH Federation RTV and RTV BiH (PBS), taking into account the political interests of groups, but overlooking the real potentials and expert opinions. These decisions extravagantly and gallantly offer numerous channels at entity and state level, if possible so that everyone can watch everything, public services, frequencies for foreign countries, commercial ones for Bosnia-Herzegovina, in addition to the already existing ambitious cantonal and municipal channels. No regard is given to the frequency resources, nor to how much these "toys" will cost, who will pay for it all in this small and tragically poor media and every other market. New public media will be born, and the checks will arrive later. The first check will come with the dissolution of the present Public Enterprise Radio Television of Bosnia-Herzegovina (JP RTV BiH) and transfer of its property to new public media. Out of this property, "production-wise and technically sustainable RTV enterprises" are supposed to be created. However, what is not said is economically sustainable. What property is supposed to provide "technically sustainable RTV enterprises"? It is that property which bears the scars of war consisting of about 100 million German marks of damage and 10 or so million of pre-war foreign debt, losses from the time of war, whose technical and technological capacities were procured back in 1984, and broadcasting equipment which is more than 20 years old, etc... This property provides relative TV program coverage on the first Media News, No45, Vol I

channel and some coverage on the second channel only in one part of the BiH Federation and a mediumwave transmitter which is more than 30 years old. From the income that is now made, not even simple reproduction is provided. In addition to all that, a legally absurd situation is also present. The authorities of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina have proclaimed all property of JP RTV BiH to be their own property with the prospect of its privatization, and the High Representative is now taking over this property through his decisions and putting it in the jurisdiction of “a representative for property transfer” for the needs of the Federation RTV, PBS and public corporation for program transmission. The present JP RTV BiH is operating pursuant to the laws of the BiH Federation and cantons, while the managing function is exercised by officials appointed by the High Representative from both entities.

And instead of approaching the establishment of public services on the basis of previously created projects and feasibility studies (scope of program, structure of program, technical, spatial, staffing and material foundations, zones of coverage, etc.), a decision is first made on the establishment of RTV FBiH and PBS, after which issues related to their implementation will be on the agenda. The impoverished citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina will simply not be able to carry this burden, regardless of whether it is done by paying subscription or by financing public media from the budget.

In the much more stable Slovenia there is one public service. But despite even that RTV Slovenia with a monthly TV subscription of 21 DEM and an annual income of 130 million DEM has been incurring losses for years. RTV Croatia is in big financial problems and is surviving thanks to considerable state support. Therefore it is clear that what is being established in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not economically stable and self-sustainable RTV organizations, but political abortive babies which can hardly survive, and will carry out a public function even harder. A public service, bearing in mind EBU standards, is a demanding and very costly project and cannot be compared to any other electronic medium. So, what is the problem?! The inadmissible voluntarism. Where is the solution?! In the profession. In professionals in the field of journalism, technology, law, economics... who will define the public service, the necessary preconditions for its functioning, and how to create them. Therefore, bearing in mind the directive that JP RTV BiH must be liquidated (because for some this organization is phantom and for others it is single-national Bosniak), I would like to see the agony of JP RTV BiH end as soon as possible. I am not optimistic that the process of establishing the public services will be successful, because they are not being established by professionals – representatives of the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, proceeding from the needs and desires of those peoples. That is why I consider your praiseworthy effort to hear the voice of experts, whom Bosnia does have, at the same time well intentioned but naïve. Who needs professional opinions!?

- From the Editors -

With this article we are completing the series of opinions of local RTV experts on the reconstruction of the radio-diffusion system and establishment of public radio-televisions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We invited all those who could give their own professional opinion on how to make a good, popular program, which will suit all citizens and be in the interest of all peoples, for which subscribers will want to pay subscription, and potential advertisers to advertise on. We also directly contacted seven prominent journalists, directors, legal, economic and other experts whom we know for certain were involved in discussions on the implementation of decisions on the reconstruction of state radio-television, and who are now working at RTV BiH and RTV Republika Srpska or who used to work there. Unfortunately, we got a response from only three of them (RTV BiH). Because of that our conclusion cannot be representative. Still, we can point out that all three authors whose opinions we published in this and the previous two issues, are characterized by skepticism that the project can be implemented quickly (or at all).

Perhaps our idea to turn the floor over to local experts (in contrast to local politicians and the international community who have already said what they had to say) is really “well intentioned but naïve.” Still, hoping that we are not being naïve once again, we would like to

believe that program experts and other experts from these two RTV organizations do not want to “reveal their cards” yet concerning the program with which they will surprise us when we see the first signal on federal television or Bosnian-Herzegovinian public RTV service.

Ten Steps to a Successful Web Presentation

Before starting to create a Web Site, you should always know who it is being created for because there are some places on the site which are of particular importance for certain groups of users. It is difficult to give general instructions on which parts of the content to particularly emphasize and develop and how to do it because there are different conditions for using the site and different media contents.

The general rules that define the starting basis for making any Web Site are: humans hold in themselves 10 percent of what they hear, 40 percent of what they read and 50 percent of what they see as picture. Hence, the user will remember 50 percent of what he or she sees on the computer monitor. However, that does not diminish the significance of the text and sound message which have their place and certain meaning on the site. Sound, as well as text in some situations, appears as the basic addition to the shown picture, and sound content is often the only way to present a certain content to the user. When picture is accompanied by a sound message, pictures must be short and appear before the sound message. In order to clearly present picture accompanied by sound, it is necessary to introduce short verbal expressions that do not contain entire sentences. It is desirable to reveal lead words that carry meaning, so that the textual message can be shortened as much as possible without losing clear meaning. Short, lead words help the reader focus on the main thought, the meaning of an event, situation and objects. The basic aim of successful information presentation is to use all available media in the best possible way in order to give clear and easily understood information.

When making a Web Site or parts of it, the following rules should be applied –build in as many photographs, animations and video recordings as possible, – reduce textual expressions in unit presentations, – show objects that best present the content of the idea, – describe the subject.

Most Web Sites have major flaws, in particular regarding clearness and distinctness of content, which is a result of lack of preparation for their creation.

Therefore the main rule when creating a Web Site is to build in an inter-active control system, create the possibility of free access to any one part without disturbing the clarity of the information message. A dot search mechanism must be built in because the process of using the information content must not be limited to only one way which is defined in advance. Moving from place to place is defined by the hypermedia mechanism, which provides full unification of content in a logical and systematic way. In that way a Web document stops being only a set of contents in different media.

When making a Web Site which includes interactive usage of content where the user himself or herself decides on the routes and interactive dots in the document, it is necessary to create a diagram of content activities. It is very common in practice for all content units to be instantaneously available or to be available from one source. Most better quality program tools for creating multimedia documents have built-in structures for planning and designing the document structure, and they also include the creation of diagrams of the organizational structure of documents.

Bearing in mind all the above theories on the rules of Web information presentation, in creating it the following rules should be applied:

- clearly know what you want to do, define the goals and structure of documents;
- define your own style, recognizable and different from others;

- define your audience and create your vocabulary and information presentation to suit them;
- page graphic design must be very simple, using pictures such as anchors for hyper-textual links. Enrich the pages with icons, symbols and other elements that will make them more cheerful;
- use different styles for text format. Create tables, lists, patterns and other attractive elements;
- each document must have a name, it will be in the bookmark list of all your users and help them use it again;
- there is no limit to the number of pages that can be created. Organize a logical document hierarchy, making each one short and simple;
- each individual page must have a hyper-textual link to the starting page to enable the reader to easily access different information. Also create links to the previous and next page in a logical page sequence structured before creating them;
- in addition to originality, maintain a uniform graphic design of all pages. Creating elements that are present on all pages which are original and interesting helps. Think of something new that cannot be found on other pages. It might be the way of moving from page to page or a picture pattern;
- ask your readers to respond to your pages. Create a form in which users can give their opinion about your presentation. Regularly update pages, do not forget that a page which is not updated for seven days is considered dead.

(M.S. Marija Putica, University of Mostar Journalism Studies)

EROTEL Case

EROTEL Refuses Temporary Working License

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) reviewed EROTEL's application for a broadcasting license and decided to give this RTV station a limited, temporary license for 180 days. EROTEL strongly reacted to the IMC decision calling it a "sad and irresponsible provocation."

A special provision in the temporary license which bothered the station's management most of all is that EROTEL must give up all transmitters that it is currently managing except for 11, for whose use it is authorized, in order to enable the functioning of federal television. When federal TV starts operating, this station will stop using the frequencies that are not given to it by this decision. Namely, EROTEL, a TV station based in Mostar (in the western part of town), covers with its own program and Zagreb-based Croatian RTV program all parts of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina with Croat majority population. The station is accused of unlawful use of some frequencies, including a part of the Radio-Television BiH transmitter network, which it took control of during the Bosniak-Croat conflict.

In its decision IMC also warned EROTEL that when carrying any HRT broadcasts in its program, it must bear in mind HRT's repeated violations of the IMC Broadcast Code of Practice. If such violations continue to take place, EROTEL should be ready to accept specific editorial conditions prescribed by the Commission. IMC pointed out that EROTEL is registered as a local organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina and meets other conditions for being issued a license. However, the scope in which the Croatian Government continues to control the financing of this TV station, according to the decision, remains an open question.

EROTEL reacted to this statement by categorically refusing the decision because limited coverage means an end to "this biggest Croat TV station in Bosnia-Herzegovina." It further stated that the OHR ordered the Independent Media Commission to issue a license to EROTEL

for only one strong transmitter, which the Commission had done. This, according to the station, is proof that the OHR had one-sidedly annulled all political agreements on this TV station in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

“EROTEL rejects this sad and irresponsible provocation in fear that the cancellation of the agreement will have negative consequences on the Croat people in Bosnia-Herzegovina, that is to say, on viewer interest,” EROTEL’s management in Mostar announced.

After these statements made by EROTEL’s management, a number of articles appeared in the press reporting a rift between the HDZ leadership and EROTEL concerning the station’s future. A senior HDZ official in Bosnia-Herzegovina who spoke on the condition of anonymity told *Dnevni avaz*: “The political leadership of the HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina, even President Jelavic personally, suggested to EROTEL to accept the IMC offer. However, the management refused to do so,” said the anonymous source, adding that the party’s political leadership will take action that will result in personnel and organizational changes at this TV station. IMC expressed surprise by EROTEL’s decision, pointing out that not a single media organization has so far refused what the allocated license had offered it.

“Before the license allocation moratorium announced by the High Representative had gone into effect, EROTEL possessed this same number of transmitters for which we had now offered the license. In the meantime, they had expanded and applied to be allowed to re-broadcast all three HRT channels via 148 transmitters in 50 locations across the Federation. We maintained that it was too much compared to other organizations,” said Zinaida Babovic, IMC spokesperson. She said that if EROTEL were to be allowed to continue using its present capacities, it would directly block the development of other TV stations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

NEWS

Assistance to RS Journalists in Need

Due to an increase in the jeopardizing of the right to freedom of speech and opinion, the Helsinki Human Rights Watch in the Republika Srpska decided to offer assistance to all journalists in need. Assistance consists of giving legal advice and free representation in court cases.

Most suits have been filed against the Bijeljina-based “*Ekstra magazin*”, whose editor-in-chief Jovica Petkovic and five journalists have been summoned to court. The plaintiffs are requesting financial compensation of more than 200,000 DEM for alleged insults. The court in Prnjavor fined journalist Dragan Colic, while the Zvornik Basic Court pronounced a prison term of six months for journalist Mirjana Micic following a suit by the former police chief of this town. The director of the “Boksit” company from Milici, Rajko Dukic, sued two journalists from this paper, Aleksandar Knezevic and Milos Savic.

The RTV RS director general, Andjelko Kozomara fired three editors from the Banja Luka studio and two journalists from the studio in Bijeljina, Petar Lukic and Jovan Cvetkovic.

SOS Telephone for Journalists

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina introduced a telephone line for the protection of journalist rights.

“We have opened this telephone line in order to establish direct contact with journalists who have received threats or have been subject to attack,” said Regan McCarthy, Senior Advisor and Director of the OSCE Media Department. The OSCE Mission called on all journalists who received threats, who were harassed or intimidated, or whose rights have been denied, to call the mission on +387 71 292 228 or write to freemedia@oscebih.org. Since the OSCE Mission is

familiar with the difficult situation that journalists may be in, when journalists want their cases to remain confidential, their wish will be respected.

For more information call OSCE spokesperson Tanya Domi on 071/292 222 or 090/144 311.

Belgrade's "Vecernjak" Soon in Sarajevo?

The news publishing house "Novosti" from Belgrade informed journalists in Sarajevo that they will again start distributing their editions in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by New Year's at the latest. Representatives of this house also offered assistance to local publishers to go on the markets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. "Novosti" Director Pero Simic announced the company's intention to start a Latin edition of "Vecernje novosti" for markets in Bosnia-Herzegovina that would be printed in Sarajevo.

"The main subject of our talks was to try to find out a possibility for an exchange and circulation of the press. Their wish is to open a bureau here and to try to find a printing company to print their editions. We gave them some addresses where they can discuss this and they will assess what kind and how much cooperation they are interested in," the prime minister of the Sarajevo Canton, Beriz Belkic, said.

"We have come to Sarajevo with the best intention to contribute to prevailing the evil that we have lived through. Opening a perspective, opening any look into the future, must start in Bosnia. Bosnia is a compromise of peoples in the Balkans and if it does not function, then the entire Balkans does not function," Pero Simic said during the visit to Sarajevo. ("Oslobodjenje", Nov. 5, 1999, "Dnevni avaz", Nov. 6, 1999).

Adriatic Journalist Gatherings Soon

The Split news agency STINA, Media Development Center from Podgorica and Media Plan/SAFAX from Sarajevo launched an initiative to organize journalist Adriatic Gatherings. The project, developed by Media Plan Sarajevo, specifying that gatherings of journalists from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia will be held next year in Neum, Kotor and Makarska to discuss neighborly cooperation, ecological protection of the Adriatic Sea, and position of minorities in majority communities. As of 2001 these gatherings should be held once a year, alternating between these three towns. 7

**If somebody interfere with your professional, journalistic work call
SOS – open line for journalists - 078 213 442 Media Plan Banja Luka**

**On the Threshold of a New
Century**



Listen with your ears!



Look with your eyes!



Think with your head!

△

Council of Media Plan Institute: Prof. Dr. Muhamed Nuhic, Hamza Baksic (Sarajevo); Perica Vucinic (Banja Luka); M.S. Lenart Setinc (Ljubljana); Prof. Dr. Mario Plenkovic

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