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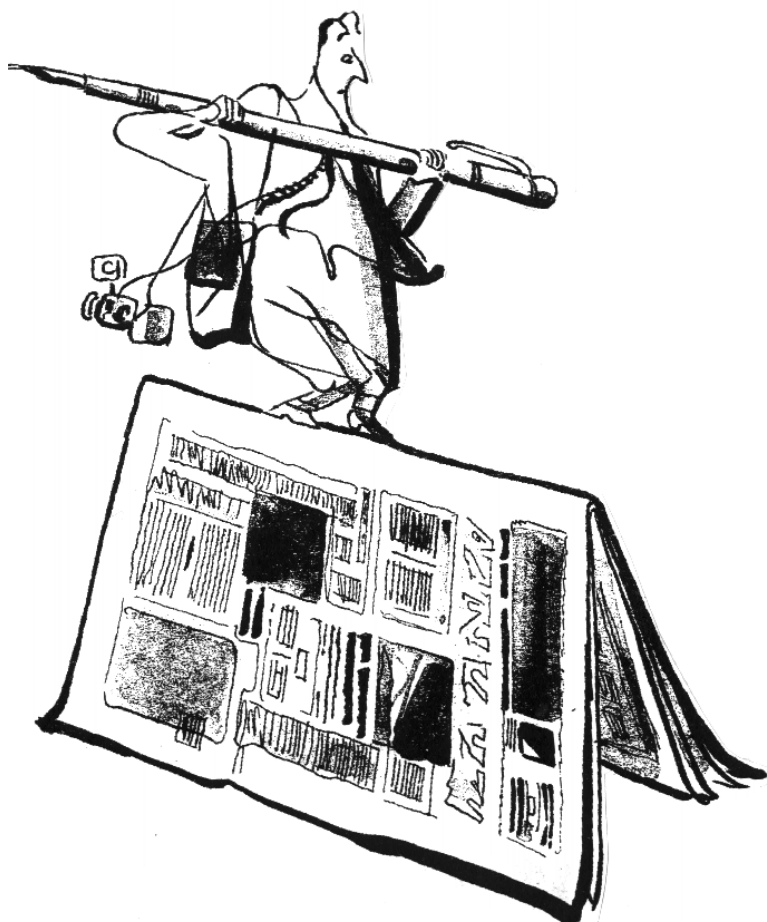
# Media News

Prepared by the  
SAFAX News Agency Sarajevo  
<http://www.mp-institu.com/>

• Journalism and Democracy • Media in Transition

No 47/48, Vol. I Sarajevo,

December 13, 1999



Božo Stefanović,  
1999

## The First Step to Own Production or A New Political Dispute

High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina Wolfgang Petritsch by special decision named 21 members of the Governing Council of RTV Federation BiH for a four-year term. The reason for the decision is that the Federal Parliament, due to political disagreement, failed to appoint seven members of the Governing Council as required by the Law on RTV FBiH by October 8. The High Representative was required to name the remaining 14 members.

According to Petritsch's decision, Tadej Labernik, international supervisor for the Public Broadcasting Service of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is obliged to ensure that international principles of public broadcasting are respected in editing of news radio-television program. All people named to the Governing Council are at the same time representatives of the Federation cantons. They are Azrija Piralic (Una-Sana Canton), Miro Sirovina (Posavina Canton), Fatmir Alispahic (Tuzla Canton), Zlata Pojskic, Nedžad Fejzić and Dubravko Lovrenovic (Zenica-Doboj Canton), Slavko Klisura (Bosansko Podrinje Canton), Mustafa Hubjar and Branka Praljak (Central Bosnia Canton), Božo Misura, Faruk Cupina, Jago Musa, Mirjana Teftedarevic (Herzegovina-Neretva Canton), Slavo Kukic (Western Herzegovina Canton), Kemal Hrustanovic, Dunja Blazevic, Zlatko Dizdarevic, Boris Tihi, Enes Durakovic, Marko Orsoljic, Josip Trboglav (Sarajevo Canton).

The vast majority of the named candidates are close to the political alternative or opposition in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although decisions by the High Representative are binding, Federal Prime Minister Edhem Bicakčić expressed objection to the appointment of the Governing Council members, while the ruling Croat party HDZ assessed the appointment as a "step back in creating the federal television."

Under a law passed July 30 by Petritsch's predecessor Carlos Westendorp, the Council is tasked, among other things, with defining program policy, ensuring national program structure of employees, choosing the president... By January 1, 2000 the federal television is supposed to carry out the transfer and re-distribution of former RTVBiH property.

Right now a program is occasionally broadcast on the frequency of the present RTV BiH's "second channel," which is marked federal TV, but it is only an experimental program featuring



**Media News-** all the media news of BiH collected in one place.

Issued every second Monday in English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian. Texts by local author are published in whatever variant is appropriate to the author.

Published by **Media Plan - Safax**

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sports content. Its own production is not planned for the time being, but it is expected that now that the Governing Council has been formed, guidelines will be formulated for creating a program schedule and transforming the present news offices. It is envisioned that federal television will broadcast on two channels – one predominantly in the Bosnian language and the other predominantly in the Croatian language. The channels are not supposed to be nationally exclusive and they are to use the same technical infrastructure, as well as a considerable part of journalist resources, in particular the correspondents. In view that the present number of Croats employed at RTVBiH is modest, massive employment of Croat journalists is expected. The ruling Croat policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina has earlier expressed a desire to have the present news staff of Erotel constitute the core of the federal TV, and is therefore opposed to the abolishment of Erotel before federal RTV starts functioning. However, it is hard to believe that this Governing Council will allow it because some of its members have earlier criticized Erotel and its journalists for pronounced national engagement. (R. U.)

## D a i l y N e w s p a p e r M o n i t o r i n g

### Ten Percent of Economic Issues

Media Plan Institute Sarajevo in the period of November 13 to November 30, 1999<sup>1</sup> monitored six daily newspapers<sup>2</sup> published in Bosnia-Herzegovina to find out how much local dailies report on economic issues. Monitoring did not encompass sports pages and advertisements, nor sports and TV supplements. In order to get reliable data, the number of articles on economic issues was compared to the total number of articles published in the monitored period, which led to some very interesting conclusions.

Of the total 9,555 published articles in all the monitored papers in this period, only 956 referred to the economy, which is 9.6 percent of the total number of published articles. By the number of articles published on economic issues, *Vecernje novine* is in the lead by dedicating 161 out of a total of 1,254 articles to the economy. This is 12.8 percent of the total number of articles published in this paper. *Vecernje novine* is followed by *Glas srpski*, in which out of 1,312 articles, 150, or 11.4 percent, were dedicated to the economy, and then comes *Oslobodjenje*, which out of 1,906 articles dedicated 216 to the economy. This figure is 11.3 percent of the total number of articles published in this paper. *Slobodna BiH* published 204 articles on economic issues (out of 2,160 articles in total), or 9.4 percent of all articles, *Dnevni avaz* 167 articles (2,279 total) or 7.3 percent, and *Nezavisne novine* had the smallest number of articles on the economy – 58 (out of a total of 1,044 articles), or 5.6 percent.

What is the territory that the published articles are related to? Monitoring showed that daily newspapers generally reported on economic issues in that part of the country in which they are published. In dailies in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 425 articles, or 56.8 percent, were related to economic issues from this part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, followed by the world with 164 or 21.9 percent of articles. That the Federation is not a single territory in the sense of information is visible from the results obtained through a deeper quantitative analysis.

As we may have predicted, newspapers from a certain area are dominated by articles from that area. For example, *Oslobodjenje* published 134 articles related to the so-called Bosniak part of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and only seven related to the Croat part of the Federation. There were only four articles about the Republika Srpska in this paper. *Dnevni avaz* featured 122 articles dealing with the Bosniak part of the Federation, and five and one related to

<sup>1</sup> Papers from the Republika Srpska were analyzed in the period of November 13 to 28, while papers from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina from November 15 to 30, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> *Glas srpski* (Banja Luka), *Dnevni avaz* (Sarajevo), *Nezavisne novine* (Banja Luka), *Oslobodjenje* (Sarajevo), *Slobodna BiH* (Split/Mostar) and *Vecernje novine* (Sarajevo).

the Croat part of the Federation and the Republika Srpska respectively. It is followed by *Vecernje novine* with 86 (territories with Bosniak majority), one (territories with Croat majority) and eight (Republika Srpska), and then comes *Slobodna BiH* with 16 (territories with Bosniak majority), 54 (territories with Croat majority) and three (Republika Srpska).

Dailies in the Republika Srpska published 68.8 percent of items from that entity, 6.3 percent from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and only a little less from the world – 5.8 percent.

## **Few Articles on Bosnia-Herzegovina**

There were few articles on economic trends in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole. The largest number was published by *Nezavisne novine* (10), followed by *Vecernje novine* (five), while there were none in *Slobodna BiH* in this period. The latter newspaper, however, featured most articles from the world, as many as 118. Such a large figure is a result of the fact that articles on the Republic of Croatia were treated in this monitoring as “From the World.” On the other hand, the smallest number of articles on world economic issues – only two – were published by *Nezavisne novine*.

By the genre of articles, news dominates (this includes reports as well). In this period daily newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina published 760 news items, which is 79.5 percent of the total number of economic articles, most of which were featured in *Oslobodjenje* (172 or 79.6 percent). It was noticeable that there were few commentaries in the newspapers in this period – a total of 32. *Slobodna BiH* published the largest number of them – 10, while *Nezavisne novine* did not feature any.

## **Forgotten Interviews**

Still, economy is least present in interviews. Most interviews published in this monitored period were not related to the economy, and even when economy was mentioned it was closely related to some other segment of the interview. For example, on November 19 *Nezavisne novine* carried a SRNA interview with RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik, but the journalist (unsigned) did not ask the prime minister anything related to the economy. *Dnevni avaz* on November 20 in the supplement “Fokus” featured an interview with the president of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bozidar Matic. In the article titled “Corruption is an economic, not a political problem,” almost one third of the interview was related to the economy, and in one part Matic, speaking about Bosnia-Herzegovina’s biggest exporter, says: “If it had been a shareholding company before the war, ‘Energoinvest’ would certainly have satisfied its shareholders. For ‘Energoinvest’ generated profit every year, which ranged even up to five percent of sales.” This fact is very significant for economic journalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina, because a director reluctantly speaks about profit made.

## **Authors’ Articles Dominate**

Through monitoring we concluded that all newspapers rely on articles written by their own journalists, who wrote 663 articles or 69.4 percent of articles in this period, while articles by foreign agencies are least present – only 31 (3.2 percent). Although the number of authors’ articles is high, journalists who specialize in economic issues are rare. In *Vecernje novine* there are two journalists who permanently write about the economy, the same as in *Oslobodjenje*, while there is one such journalist in *Dnevni avaz*. In the articles they write it is noticeable that they are well acquainted with what they are writing about. In that sense, Ibrahim Polimac wrote a characteristic article in *Oslobodjenje* on November 28 “In the Spotlight” under the headline “Poverty Index,” in which the author skillfully operates with economic categories in an article intended for the general public. He, among other things, says the following: “Economists claim that the so-called index of unpleasantness gives a reliable picture of good or poor economic circumstances and their impact on members of society and overall development. This index is

obtained by adding the unemployment rate to the inflation rate which for the Federation is around 40 percent. At that level they also call it the poverty index.”

In the monitored period articles written by economic experts were rare. An exception in that regard is an article published in *Oslobodjenje* on November 18 on financial architecture, written by James Wolfenson, World Bank president in Washington.

Through monitoring it was determined that 198 articles with social and political content, or 20.7 percent of articles, contained an economic note as well. *Glas srpski* excels in this approach with 43 such articles or 28.7 percent of all cases. In these articles there are very few economic issues. They are usually press releases or news agency items on meetings between politicians or plans announced by certain institutions discussed in political gatherings.

To see how much importance newspapers attach to economic issues, we will use as an illustration how such articles are announced on front pages. Out of 956 articles, 58 of them, or 6.1. percent, were announced or published on the front page. This was done most often by *Vecernje novine* (20 times), and least often by *Nezavisne novine* and *Glas srpski* (five time each).

## **Most Common – Plans and Privatization**

What topics did newspapers write about most often in the second half of November? Through monitoring it was determined that most articles were about plans (company, municipal, cantonal and entity). In 151 articles, or in 15.8 percent of cases, the topics were plans, followed by privatization of enterprises and banks in 149 articles or 15.5 percent, after which comes statistics in 96 articles or 10 percent, and employment in 65 articles or 6.7 percent. The smallest number of articles were about financial and production results (only six articles), while revival of production was the topic of 16 articles. Looking by entity, the breakdown is as follows: in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina the topics mostly written about were employment (14) and privatization (131), and in the Republika Srpska it was economic plans (36) and capital investments (12). The smallest number of articles in the Federation were about financial and production results (five) and revival of production (10), and in the Republika Srpska about new factories (one) and employment (two).

## **Rare Supplements**

There are few newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina that have permanent pages or data on the economy. An exception is *Vecernje novine* which has opened two regular items: “Business” (on one page) and “Privatization” (on almost the same amount of space). This paper in the monitored period published 39 articles in “Business” or almost one fourth of all articles on economic issues, while in “Privatization” it featured an average of two articles a day.

In the monitored period *Oslobodjenje* in its issue of November 27 published an occasional item “Austrian companies – partners of our economy.” Since this is an occasional (semi-annual) item, it was not analyzed in detail. A little more specific is the supplement “Kuna” featured weekly by *Slobodna BiH*. Although it features articles on economic issues, “Kuna” is made for the Republic of Croatia, that is to say for *Slobodna Dalmacija*, and its content refers exclusively to companies, banks, cantons and the state of Croatia. In two issues of this supplement, whose articles are encompassed by this monitoring and are viewed as world news, there was not a single article on the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina or the Republika Srpska.

Other newspapers from the Federation have weekly supplements on cars and information technologies, of which a small number of articles also deal with economic issues, such as: development of the automobile industry, generating profit in these two fields, new technologies and so on, and therefore these articles were also the subject of monitoring. However, since these supplements generally do not contain purely economic topics, they cannot – in our opinion – be treated as supplements on economic issues.

To conclude, based on what we saw we can state that daily newspapers in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not give economic issues enough coverage. Ten percent of all articles are related to economic issues and that is a low figure, in particular if we bear in mind that for Bosnia-Herzegovina this is a time of transition, and reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. When we take into account the fact that out of 956 articles dealing with economic issues, 198 or 20.7 percent of them have primarily a political dimension and economy is only marginally mentioned, the need to seriously review the structure and content of daily newspapers is a big obligation that editors are faced with.

In January of 2000 we will monitor the most influential radio and television stations on the same topic. (S. C. – Media Plan Monitoring Center)

## S o u t h e a s t E u r o p e

### Journalism in Danger

(Written for Media News by Alexander Levy, Prominent Reporters Without Frontiers Activist)

Freedom of press has not been achieved in the southeast of Europe. The main reason is the lack of democracy in countries that make up this region, characterized by war, corruption and political instability. Whereas a certain number of countries in central Europe have decisively turned to Europe, in most southeastern countries democratic transition seems longer and less certain. Wars that have torn the Yugoslav region have brought into power regimes that have little respect for freedom of press. In the states that arose from the former Yugoslavia, with the exception of Slovenia and Macedonia, European and international standards in the field of press freedom have not been adhered to. Journalists are victims of repression from the authorities or nationalist parties, the state controls public media which are used for propaganda purposes, censorship is still present, but it is more concealed and pervert than during the totalitarian period. The most obvious example of this is Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia, followed by Croatia, and to a lesser degree Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which the international community is responsible for re-establishing good functioning of media.

Out of all means for curbing free flow of information, attacks and apparent murders of journalists are the worst violations of freedom of press. Wars with random bombardment or professional snipers have been, year after year, the cause of death of numerous press representatives. In 1999 two German journalists, Gabriel Gruner and Wolker Krammer, were killed while covering the Kosovo conflict. Three Chinese journalists were killed when NATO bombed their embassy in Belgrade. In another war-torn area, the Caucuses, three journalists were killed in bombing by the Russian army.

Conflicts, but also investigation into corruption in high spheres of power and war crimes, are a danger for journalists in the Balkans. Slavko Curuvija, director of the daily *Dnevni telegraf*, was killed by two unidentified persons in front of his Belgrade apartment during NATO strikes on Yugoslavia. He knew too well the background of the Belgrade regime, and his articles accused powerful members of the SPS and JUL parties in corruption and murder scandals. Zeljko Kopanja, director of the Banja Luka daily *Nezavisne novine*, was almost killed in a car bomb assassination for investigating crimes committed by Serbs and trying to find out who in Belgrade was issuing orders for them during the war in Bosnia. The journalist lost both his legs and today moves around in a wheelchair. This assassination made representatives of the international community in Bosnia realize the power of the mafia webs and former war criminals in the country... And, even worse, the passiveness of the incumbent authorities, that is to say, their complicity in these attacks on journalists.

If the number of journalists killed varied from year to year, depending on the development of a conflict that engulfs this or that part of a country (in 1999 in conflicts in Sierra Leone, Serbia and Chechnya some 20 journalists were killed), the number of attacks has remained relatively stable. An exception this year is Yugoslavia, in which at least 80 foreign journalists were detained and interrogated, sometimes with the use of force by the police and Serbian army during NATO air strikes. Reporters Without Frontiers received many testimonies of ill-treatment, insult and violence against them (“RFY” A State of Censure, May 1999, on [www.rsf.fr](http://www.rsf.fr)). But the main victims of this physical violence are Albanian journalists in Kosovo who had to leave the country during the bombing in fear for their lives. As far as Serbian journalists are concerned, most understood Slavko Curuvija’s murder as a true warning and tuned down their comments and criticism. Some chose rather to flee Serbia and go to neighboring Montenegro, in which particularly liberal legislation on information is in effect. This tiny republic, which is an integral part of today’s Yugoslavia, thereby became a host country for numerous Serbian journalists and media who wanted to get away from the draconian Law on Information from October 1998. Attacks on freedom of the press in Montenegro were mostly committed by Yugoslav military authorities stationed in this republic, who harassed and even arrested foreign media correspondents. It was only recently that the Montenegrin authorities “came into prominence” by temporarily closing down the opposition radio Free Montenegro, which is the first more pronounced undemocratic move made by the local authorities against media.

In Croatia pressure on independent media is traditionally more undefined and less direct. In 1999 journalists discovered they were being tapped. Associates of the weekly *Nacional* had their apartments searched. In February two journalists of the daily *Jutarnji list*, Jadran Kapor and Mateo Rilovic, were seriously beaten up by unidentified persons while they were taking pictures of a construction site for a villa belonging to a close advisor to the defense minister. Two journalists of the daily *Novi list*, Robert Franck and Ronald Brmalj, were kidnapped in the Croat part of Mostar in Bosnia by unidentified persons who held against them the paper’s editorial policy, which is very critical towards Croat nationalists from Herzegovina. The two journalists were burned with cigarette butts, beaten and forcibly taken to the border.

In countries of southeast Europe that have not experienced war, such as Bulgaria, Romania and Albania, safety of journalists still has not been achieved and numerous press representatives have been beaten or attacked for writing disturbing articles about the authorities or certain strongmen. The common characteristic of these attacks is passiveness, or complicity on the part of incumbent authorities which, by not punishing those who attack journalists, offer the best encouragement for future attacks.

In Bulgaria, 1998 was characterized by an acid attack. The victim was journalist Ana Zarkova, an expert in criminal scandals in a high-circulation daily newspaper, *Trud*, whose face and shoulders were burned and who lost one eye. This year, a junior colleague of hers, Aleksei Lazarov, journalist with the weekly *Kapital*, was savagely beaten and stabbed with a knife by unidentified persons because of his articles. In Romania, three journalists were beaten while carrying out their journalistic duties in 1998, of which one was beaten by a prosecutor. Also, a colleague of theirs was thrown off a moving train after writing an article in which he revealed corruption in the Ministry of Transportation in 1999. In Albania, where disturbing violence against journalists is present (four attacked in 1998, 10 in 1997), 1999 was calm from that point of view: “only” one journalist, Vjolca Karanxa, was shot and wounded while coming out of a school where he had just made a reportage. Maybe the drama in neighboring Kosovo marked a break in fighting between supporters of Berisha and Nano, the main cause of violations of press freedom in that country?

## *Media Privatization in Macedonia*

### **State Media on the Verge of Collapse**

In less than a decade the situation in the field of media in Macedonia changed considerably. Until 1991 all print and broadcast media were state owned and under the political control of the then ruling party – Communist League. Political changes: civil society, multiparty democracy, market-driven economy, dominant private ownership, have all caused radical changes in the sphere of media. These processes brought with them also the processes of democratization and commercialization of media. A characteristic of these changes is the open process of their independence, but also distance from pressure and use for political purposes by the new parties.

In the field of media there was a true boom reflected in the appearance of new print and broadcast media. To Macedonia's population of two million, according to the Secretariat of Information of the Government of Macedonia, there are 210 registered radio and television stations. New, private media are trying to generate profit out of capital invested in newspapers, radio and TV stations. Private enterprise and private capital are following their own logic in the field of media and owners are in pursuit of commercial effects and profit. It should be said that this process at the beginning was carried out to the detriment of quality, ethics and professionalism, because new media initially employed members of family and friends, and least of all media professionals. Since this did not bring in money but only spent it, and it was also in contradiction with professional journalistic logic, there is now a real hunt for professional journalists.

In the public sector in the field of broadcast media, Macedonian Radio-Television (MRTV) and its three television and two radio channels have remained under government, or parliament, dominance. The privatization process did not take place in this, not only biggest, but also most influential medium. This is, namely, the only medium that technically covers the whole of Macedonia, and its radio has the widest range outside the country. Its three TV channels broadcast national program, as well as programs in the national languages (Albanian, Turkish, Roma, Serbian, Vlah), and its third channel is used to transmit foreign satellite program. Lately MRTV has been undertaking some moves with the aim of commercialization by renting out this channel to foreign TV stations or for re-broadcasting foreign programming on a commercial basis.

In the public media sector there are 29 local radio stations and seven local TV stations. There are municipal papers and radio stations, which is a legacy of the former system. This whole network of radio stations has remained in state, or municipal framework. At state level there is an association of local radio stations, and there is also a Radio-Diffusion Council that deals with their problems. However, these local media have had a lot of problems regarding their social, professional and economic status. Practically, they have been left on their own due to the impoverishment and serious economic crisis in state media, which is taking its toll in a staffing drain and technical lagging.

In the sphere of print media the company Nova Makedonija has the strongest infrastructure. It has a dominant distribution network and printing press. This company publishes the daily paper *Nova Makedonija*, evening paper *Vecer*, weekly *Puls*, daily in Albanian *Fljaka*, in Turkish *Birlik*, satirical paper *Osten*, sports daily *Skok*, entertainment papers... The privatization process in this company started back during the former Yugoslavia in the time of reformist Prime Minister Ante Markovic, and then continued in 1997 in accordance with privatization legislation in the Republic of Macedonia. A project was made, evaluation was carried out and privatization started in cooperation with the Privatization Agency. An Assembly of Shareholders was formed and changes were made in the company's bodies. However, the process was not completed due

to subjective problems in management, but also due to economic and financial problems. The state, or better to say the government, owns the largest share of capital, or of shares – 32 percent. The company is now faced with serious financial and economic difficulties. As the state owns most of the capital, it names the largest number of members of the company's management and the general manager. (Mirce Tomovski)

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## *Research of Media in Montenegro*

### **In Montenegro 63 Percent of Journalists Have University Diplomas**

The Center for Development of Media of Montenegro (CERAM), which was formed recently on initiative by the non-governmental organizations Media Plan from Sarajevo and Alter Modus from Podgorica, has carried out its first project – a survey among journalists in Montenegrin media – with the aim of obtaining data necessary for making basic judgments about the situation in this field.

The survey encompassed 43 of the total 56 registered media, which is 75 percent. In addition to other results obtained by analyzing the survey, an indicative result concerns the qualification structure, according to which out of 197 surveyed journalists, 37 percent do not have a university degree, while only 17 percent have a degree in journalism. This survey is only an introduction to a wider project to create a media portrait of Montenegro, which CERAM plans to carry out in cooperation with Media Plan from Sarajevo.

CERAM considers this research a priority task in order to prepare and implement programs for further development and democratization of the media space in Montenegro based on having a realistic picture of the state of media.

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## *International TV Festival BAR '99*

### **Grand Prix Goes to Russia**

The fourth international television festival BAR '99 was held in Bar on November 25-28. A total of 14 countries participated with six state and 25 private television stations, and a total of 55 broadcasts were shown, which is 25 hours of programming.

TV Serbia took part in the festival for the first time, which was assessed as a pleasant surprise in view of the tense relations between the authorities in Belgrade and Podgorica.

The broadcasts were evaluated in seven categories (documentary, feature, children's, music...). The best received gold, silver and bronze olives. Bar is a city of olives, and it has an olive tree which is more than 2,000 years old, one of the oldest in the Balkans.

The Grand Prix was awarded to the documentary program "Soldiers of Love" by VIC company ORT Russia.

At the closing ceremony the Festival was assessed as successful, although it was organized in a short time period. This event has been accompanied by difficulties from the very beginning.

The first Festival was held in May of '95 during international sanctions against Yugoslavia, and then due to undefined status it changed the date when it was held every year, and one year was even skipped, which all contributed to instability of the event. A possibility to include the Bar TV festival in the calendar of European TV festivals was not taken advantage of, and also locally, it was not used to contribute more significantly to promoting program quality in Montenegrin TV stations by offering them experiences from more developed television stations.

(P. R.)

## E t h i c s   a n d   C u l t u r e   o f   C o m m u n i c a t i o n   ( 7 )

*Media News* continues to publish articles on ethics and culture of communication written by well-known authors, as well as experts who are familiar with the media situation in countries in transition and southeast Europe. In this issue we publish the second part of the article "Journalist Ethics – European Experiences" written by Dr. Miroljub Radojkovic, full professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade and member of the Media Plan Institute Council. The text was originally published in the journalist guidebook "Ethical Codes for Print and Electronic Media" (published by Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia, Belgrade, 1999).

### JOURNALIST ETHICS – EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES (2)

#### *Who Passes Codes of Journalist Ethics in Europe?*

We will present data collected in research published in 1995 at the University of Tampere. The information comes from 26 countries that are either members or observers in the Council of Europe. Hence, an integration which is wider than the EU and which encompasses also post-communist countries and some countries that appeared after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Island, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Great Britain). Twenty-eight codes of journalist ethics were reviewed, since there are two in Great Britain and Holland each.

In this sample, four kinds of subjects were noticed which adopted the mentioned documents, and there is also a fifth solution that will be mentioned.

Subjects that have agreed on self-regulation and that adopted relevant written norms to that regard:

- a) **Journalists and journalist associations** are most commonly represented in the mentioned sample of countries, in 18 cases. Therefore, journalists have done the work themselves through their professional associations.
- b) Codes were passed by **Press Councils** – which is out of the question here because such a body does not exist. Press Councils have created five codes, in Austria, Luxembourg, Turkey, Germany and in Great Britain (one of the two).
- c) Codes were passed together by **journalists, their associations and associations of press publishers (owners)**. There are practically two partners here – employers and press employees. Examples of this are: Belgium, Norway, Greece and Sweden.
- d) The rarest in the mentioned countries of Europe is the fourth case – that codes were passed together by **journalists, their associations and the state**. This has happened only in Denmark.
- e) The fifth solution was applied in Holland (one of the two codes) and in the Czech Republic. Their associations of journalists decided to take over the Code of Journalist Ethics, in the last version from 1998, from the International Federation of Journalists –

IFJ (Brussels). The text was only translated and is applied as their own code of journalist ethics in these countries.

## **Press Councils**

This body influences journalist ethics either by passing a code, or in some countries by accepting a code that is defined by journalists, and ensuring that it is implemented in practice. Councils are non-governmental bodies and the authorities therefore are not represented in them. They serve as a mediator and coordinator among different sectors of mass media – among the different forms of press, between the press and radio, etc. – and all media together towards the public. That is why it is not necessary to include representatives of public authorities. They are usually financed from independent sources, which guarantees independence of the state. Resources are determined and paid usually by owners or journalist associations themselves. Media are obliged to respect the norms specified by the council, as well as sanctions, in accordance with the principle of voluntarism, without enforcement. All in all, the councils' number one task is to protect the public (citizens) from unethical journalism. Only after that, their goal is to enable journalists and media to protect themselves from state interference. Press councils exist in more than 50 countries in the world. In Europe only some post-communist countries do not have them. Their scope of work generally includes the press, which as explained earlier has a long tradition of private ownership, while broadcast media have for a long time been controlled by the state. In addition to the already mentioned subjects (journalists and owners), councils may also include a certain number of members who are legal experts, or public figures (who have no interests or investments in media). In this case, the “third party” is usually given the position of press council chairman. This is supposed to guarantee the impartiality of the person who holds this position. For Europe it is typical for councils to cover the whole national territory, while in the United States they can also be found at regional and local level.

## **What Do Codes of Journalist Ethics Regulate?**

We will complete this review with issues that are regulated by codes of journalist ethics in Europe. An inventory was made by systematizing their provisions on the sample of the mentioned 28 documents from the 26 Council of Europe member states.

The material may be divided into six groups of issues. Two are most important and biggest, which shows the main purpose of the codes. They are: determining media and journalist responsibility before the public (citizens), and protection of integrity of the profession from interference from outside factors.

### *I Determining Responsibility Towards the Public*

This principle is usually described in the following way: information must be true, diverse and plural, the sources verified, mistakes corrected, and Press Council decisions adhered to and published.

The second aspect is usually described with the terms: clarity and unambiguity of information, which is essentially achieved by separating fact from opinion, news from commentary.

The next aspect requires the rights of the public to be respected, which is contained in the requirement for media to be in the service of democracy, to realize the right to expression of opinion, the right to comment, to criticism (by citizens), and the right to present one's opinion.

Responsibility of journalists as creators of public opinion is treated separately, and formulations from the codes are as follows: there shall be no discrimination against different social groups based on race, sex, national background and religion.

### *II Determining Responsibility Towards Sources of Information and Providers of Information*

This principle is explained as fair collecting and publishing of information. The terms used are: fair and honest means in collecting information, respect for publishing rights and rules of quoting, respect for an embargo, the right of a source to verify and correct information before it is published (we have seen earlier that this rule was maintained in laws), and forbidden insult and defamation.

The second aspect refers to protecting the integrity of a source of information. Formulations that have been used are: respect for privacy, professional secret, particular sensitivity to reporting on crime and supporting the principle of innocence until the final verdict.

### *III Determining Responsibility Towards the State*

Codes in Europe usually refer to this principle briefly, which is in accordance with the diminishing role of the state in public communication. Two formulations have basically been spotted: obligation to follow laws, and protection of certain vital state interests as specified by the constitution.

### *IV Determining Responsibility Towards Employers*

This is “terra incognita” for our journalists, who have sailed into transition from an era of self-management in which they had been considered also the employers. However, it cannot be said that this value/norm is very elaborated in European codes. It can be found in a small number of documents, and it is defined as: ban on using one’s position of journalist to gain personal benefit, respect for agreed rules at the work place, and ban on offering one and the same product to a larger number of publishers. However, in our conditions it is precisely this principles that becomes significant. Many young journalists openly say that they want to rise to the position of program moderator or page editor in order to gain personal benefit – gifts, trips, percentage from advertisements, etc. “Wild” media privatization has resulted in the non-existence of agreed rules on the work place and relations. Unregistered employment is very developed, few journalists have a contract with their employers, and the rules of work are dictated by the owners.

### *V Protection of Professional Integrity From Outside Interference*

By occurrence and scope this is the second most commonly developed principle in European codes. It is a defensive mechanism, self-regulation through which journalists distance themselves from those who jeopardize their freedom of work.

The first aspect refers to general rules and bans: non-acceptance of bribes and other privileges, the right to free journalist expression and investigation. This also includes provisions on freedom of criticism and free access to sources of information.

The second form is protection from public authority, a traditional enemy of press freedom. The expressions used are: a journalist shall fight censorship, reject interference of the authorities in his or her work – he or she is entitled to protect his or her source of information. Journalists highly value the importance of not disclosing a source of information because it is a way to get exclusive information. However, this often clashes with the state’s right to prevent and prosecute criminal acts. Therefore, it is specified more carefully today when a journalist has the right not to disclose a source of information, and in what cases he or she must disclose it or is even obliged to report it to the police (for example, if he or she finds out that a terrorist or criminal action is being prepared).

The next aspect is protection from pressure of employers and advertisers or sponsors. Hence, European codes note that another danger for independence of the profession comes from money. This issue is regulated in the following way: a journalist shall have the right not to carry out his or her task due to objection of conscience, the right to refuse an assignment that is in violation of the code of ethics (not that the law protects him or her from an editor’s order to write a commentary against anyone), the right to refuse an assignment which is in contradiction with the editorial policy. The latter formulation is clear in the existence of a regulated press market. All journalists are in principle free to chose the medium whose publishing and editorial policy

suits them, and are free to leave if it is changed or not respected. This is in accordance with the idea of pluralism of publishing policies (information) and their competition. Of course, when the mentioned markets do not exist, or are not functioning freely, there is no possibility of choice as an ethical act. In that regard, European codes also speak of the journalist's right to honest profit and the right to participate in decision-making.

Codes in Europe specify in detail that journalists are obliged to fight against concentration (although their powers here are insignificant) and to respect strict separation of advertisements from edited content of newspapers/programs.

#### *VI Protection of Status and Unity of the Journalist Profession*

Many codes truly insist on journalist unity because it increases their negotiating and defensive powers.

The first aspect is protection of the status of journalists. Provisions that specify this are the following: it is one's duty to defend the honor of the profession (this is related to everyone individually), it is one's duty to respect the journalist code of ethics, and it is irreconcilable to be involved in journalism while having another profession. The latter formulation is not to be found in our codes, and perhaps it is unacceptable in conditions of pure survival. It may be discussed – whether it is good or not – but it is to be found in European experience.

The second form is protection of solidarity within the profession. It is formulated through avoiding plagiarism, respecting authors' rights of all journalists, agreeing only to fair competition (for us new and unknown) and respect for the professional organization one belongs to.

### **Sanctions for Disrespect of the Code of Ethics**

Press Councils, ombudsmen and program managers are the main bodies responsible for ensuring that the principles of journalist ethics are respected in practice.

Press Councils work on the basis of two kinds of documents. In a smaller number of cases their duty is to compare the conduct of journalists in practice to the code of ethics that journalist associations have passed. In this case the Council has the role of a permanent quasi-court body. In most cases in Europe, however, Councils work on the basis of codes that are passed under their auspices, with the agreement of the other involved parties (journalist associations and associations of media owners), which thereby automatically recognize the jurisdiction of the Council in imposing sanctions.

In a number of cases, their jurisdiction encompasses only the press, which has traditionally been and still is in private hands. The contemporary trend, however, is to expand the jurisdiction of these bodies also to radio and television.

The institute of ombudsmen is applied most of all in Scandinavia. That is usually an individual supported by a professional service to whom all private and legal persons can complain about unfair media reporting. That person may also launch an initiative on their own if they deem it necessary. In Germany there are ombudsmen – professional persons – in most media. They review the work of their organizations and offer advisory services before controversial material is published. They also receive all remarks and complaints from readers, listeners or viewers.

Program managers and directors ensure that internal regulations on work and reporting are adhered to in large private RTV networks in the United States. All networks have internal guidebooks on the conduct of journalists and other staff (sometimes they are over 60 pages long). All employees when they start work are given a copy of the guidebook, which they certify by a signed statement. Their duty is to read it and, in case they do not understand something, to consult with the responsible program director. A signed statement is considered a document on acceptance of rules. In addition, all employees sign a personal statement that neither they, nor

members of their immediate family, will receive any gift (gifts) worth more than \$50 a year, except for business lunches. Representatives of those industries which may be interested in establishing special relations with a journalist or a privileged position are clearly specified. In case the rules are breached, sanctions are pronounced by the program manager in consultation with the legal department.

\* \* \* \* \*

All Press Councils in Europe complain about the poor and insufficient obligation of the sanctions at their disposal. Since this is a matter of self-regulation, the stipulated punishment is mild and of course cannot refer to those media and journalists who did not participate through relevant institutions in the creation of Councils or codes of journalist ethics. These bodies have no jurisdiction over them.

By reviewing European examples, an **inventory of sanctions** includes the following:

**Voluntary publishing of the code violation** to be done by the medium that has committed the violation. What is insisted on here is visible publishing and speed (if possible in the next issue-edition). This kind of public reprimand is intensified if the Council demands that other media publish it as well or if it publishes it itself in its own publication. The German Press Council gives three different kinds of public punishment: advisory note, note on a publishing ban, and public reprimand.

Harsher sanctions that Press Council may pronounce are **paying financial penalties**. The meaning of a fine is more to make the violation visible than to damage the medium financially. Also, fines may be paid by individual journalists.

The harshest sanction, in extreme cases, is **expelling a journalist from his or her professional organization** (such as in Slovenia).

In essence, the mentioned sanctions for violating the code of ethics are complied with. The most common sanction is a publicly published reprimand. This means that Councils in their work (the same as media) mostly rely on giving negative publicity. However, if violators refuse to accept the pronounced sanction, the Councils do not have at their disposal any mechanism to make it compulsory or to enforce its application. This is the shortcoming that they mostly complain about. In countries that have media ombudsmen, such a person may negotiate a deal between violators of someone's rights and the damaged party.

## First World Conference on the Internet and New Services

### Full Freedom of the Internet as a Medium

The First Conference on the Internet and New Services was held November 30 and December 1 at the UNESCO seat in Paris. The conference brought together renowned scientists dealing with this field and representatives of all world organizations for protection of media freedom. Media Plan Institute, thanks to assistance from the Government of France, was represented by M.S. Marija Putica, lecturer at the Internet Department of the Media Plan School of Journalism. Participants in the summit advocated for liberalization and popularization of new media, primarily the Internet, and full freedom of flow of information on the Internet.

Particular attention was given to requests from certain governments and institutions for control of the Internet. It was underlined that people do not have to accept everything that is offered on the Internet, but that censorship is undesirable because such practice would become a limiting factor in promoting also progressive ideas. New media must be a new area of freedom, participants said, and pointed out that people who want to control the Internet are those same

people who control traditional media. It was particularly warned that individuals will advocate censorship justifying it with combating violence, racial hatred, etc. However, it was said, this is “a sword of Damocles”, a justification that totalitarian regimes will use to suffocate freedom of media. It was concluded that freedom of the Internet is a real threat to authoritarian rulers from Singapore to Serbia, who want to control everything. Most speakers insisted that in true European democracies there is rage against regulating the Internet, whereas it is precisely totalitarian regimes that are in favor of regulation. However, there were a number of speakers who claimed that puritan demands to ban pornography and other indecencies on the Internet, which mostly come from the West, are precisely demands for censorship and regulation.

In the end, the general conclusion was that the Internet does not need special legislation, but it was underlined that the following should be sanctioned: crime, conspiracy, fraudulent advertisements, copyright violations, instigation of violence, pimp pornography, and other unacceptable content on the Internet, which all countries prosecute anyway. It is therefore necessary to pass special laws against only such activities on the Internet and harmonize them in all countries.

The importance of international policy was also stressed, which enables a promotional approach to new media by promoting cooperation. It was concluded that a free flow of ideas and technologies will bridge the gap between the North and South and enable free development of all societies.

With regard to new services, satisfaction was expressed with this summit because it was held at the time of a UNESCO initiative for global development of the information science. All industrialized countries have understood the importance of information paths and multimedia for national and international development. For, the Internet was defined as a universal monitor, a prototype of technology that reflects all forms of human life, and offers huge new potentials for education, intellectual cooperation, democratization and cultural change. Due to this, the unequal world approach to the Internet was characterized as an impediment to democracy and development. While industrialized countries have a successful national information backbone, numerous other countries suffer from misinformation and ignorance. In those countries politics was characterized as being responsible for the poor development of new media because universal access and use of the Internet is restricted. (M. P.)

## **N e w s**

### **SOROS Continues to Support the BBC School**

The Soros Foundation will continue to support the project of the BBC school for training journalists from Bosnia-Herzegovina. The school has been working since 1996 and has already educated ten generations of young journalists who received its diplomas.

“Soros and his foundation will remain in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the resources allocated so far for the BBC school project will be decreased. The school will operate along the same principles as it has been doing so far for at least three more years, after which we hope to be able to survive on our own,” Media Center Editor-in-Chief Boro Kontic told us, adding that rumors that financing of the school will stop altogether were not true, and that Soros was very proud of the BBC school project which represents fundamental help to media in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

According to Kontic, the organization’s ambition is to be transformed over the next three years into a training center that would be incorporated in Bosnia-Herzegovina’s media and education system, helping both news organizations and the university. At the beginning of the year 2000 six eminent Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalists will go to London for training so that

the school would have its own, local trainers. Until then, two journalists from London will continue to work at the school as lecturers.

“Our plans are to turn also to neighboring regions, and the school is already attended by several students from Montenegro and Serbia. There are numerous initiatives from the region for cooperation with the BBC school, and we are particularly interested in new private schools being opened there,” said Kotic, adding that the school, starting with the next generation which commences on January 24, will be more open to journalists from the region who will be able to apply for one of the 20 student seats that the school has.

### **Five Years of the Association of Veteran Journalists of B&H**

The Association of Veteran Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina on December 3 hosted a ceremony marking the fifth anniversary of the its founding. An exhibition of works of veteran journalists made in the 1994-1999 period for the first time gathered in one place works created during the war and a short post-war period. Books, literature, works of art and magazines were part of the exhibition which was open for only one day.

A book was promoted on this occasion, “With Pen Against Evil” with selected contributions of the organization’s member journalists published and broadcast in periodical publications, daily newspapers and RTV programs. The book was published on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the journalist association in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### **A Protest Against Dismissal of Radio Fern Journalists**

The Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina sent a protest to the Governing Board of Radio FERN and IMC director against the firing of Savo Trifunovic, Dzevdet Tuzlic and Emina Topic without, as they say, any explanation.

The Association of Journalists demanded a re-examination of Radio FERN’s legal status, legal employment of workers, syndicate protection and smothering of professional and human rights and freedoms. The Association of Journalists maintains that these achievements are not on an enviable level at Radio FERN.

Radio FERN’s management considers that the accusations are unfounded and that the workers were dismissed because they did not fulfill their duties or there was no longer a need for workers of their profile.

The dismissed workers claim they did not have signed contracts to regulate their rights and obligations in this media organization.

FERN is a radio network, founded and financed by the international community, whose signal covers both Bosnian-Herzegovinian entities via a number of transmitters.

### **A Call For Solidarity**

The Forum of Citizens of Tuzla organized on December 4 a recognized seminar for journalists on media and freedom of speech. After the seminar they issued a joint press release:

*“Journalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina are dissatisfied with the state of media freedom and determined to oppose it. Holders of public positions are demanded, in accordance with democratic standards, to provide access to relevant information for media and the public. We advocate that incumbent structures of authority do not exert influence on media, but, in accordance with their constitutional and legal powers, to help media exercise their function as one of the most important levers in the democratization process. We are opposed to national divisions of the media space and the favoring of certain media, both with regard to access to information, as well as in financial regard, because dominant influence on media is achieved in that way. We call on journalist associations in Bosnia-Herzegovina to show a higher level of professional solidarity, in particular in the field of protection of safety and journalist freedom,*

*and in view of the adopted Code to speed up work on forming a council of honor. We call on the legislative authorities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as representatives of the international community, to urgently pass a law on media, which would contain standards and principles appropriate for developed democracies.”*

### **Media Plan School – A Competition in February**

The Managing Board of Media Plan decided that the Media Plan School of Journalist will have a regional character in the year 2000. This means that interested candidates from the whole region of southeast Europe will be able to enroll in the third generation in October of next year.

This time the competition for the third generation of students will open already in February of 2000 to give enough time to students and the School to provide scholarships for staying in Sarajevo.

The school lasts for 10 months, and every generation consists of 22 students. Classes are held by local teachers and professors from the High School of Journalism in Lille, France.

### **Next Year – An Internet Magazine on Media**

*Media News* is marking its second year of publishing. With this double issue, we have published a total of 48 editions, which our readers have received via electronic mail or in hard copy, a summary of which they could read on our Internet site. We would like to thank Open Society Fund Bosnia-Herzegovina and Westminster Foundation London who helped local media receive this service free of charge.

SAFAX and Media Plan Institute are intensively preparing to start a new edition next year, a Media Journal, which will deal with the media situation in countries of southeast Europe and in the context of wider European and world experiences and trends. This service will use all the advantages of the Internet as a new medium. Until then, we will continue to put out *Media News* using the present concept, but it will be distributed solely via electronic mail. The price of subscription for foreign users in English and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian remains the same, while local media will receive a proposal of cooperation for publishing and using this service. The next issue of *Media News* will come out on January 10, 2000.

**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!

△

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