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# Media News

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## • Journalism and Democracy • Media in Transition

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## Copyright Conference in Bosnia-Herzegovina

### Authors Unprotected – Pirates Rule

The Broadcast Copyright Conference in Bosnia-Herzegovina held May 4 in Sarajevo concluded that a Copyright Law must be passed as soon as possible in order to protect intellectual property in this field. The law should use positive experiences from European Union countries. At the same time, the conference appealed on authors to organize themselves in order to protect their rights. It was also emphasized that the lack of an efficient state institution in this field is making the situation even worse. Piracy is present in all fields, from unauthorized RTV broadcasting, public performance, to production and sale of so-called false audio and video recordings, illegally produced usually in Bulgaria, but lately also in Yugoslavia, and even in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The chairman of the conference, Independent Media Commission Director Krister Thelin, underlined the importance of making a full review of the present situation regarding copyright enforcement in Bosnia-Herzegovina as soon as possible. The conference did not say whether the law should be passed at state or entity level, although most participants maintained that efficient protection can only be provided by having a single law for the whole country.

In presenting the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prof. Dr. Slavica Krneta of Sarajevo Laws School said the present Law on Copyright Enforcement, dating back from the former Yugoslavia, is essentially not bad, but must be harmonized with international trends. However, the problem is lack of instruments for its implementation. She added that Bosnia-Herzegovina in this field seriously lags behind other countries of the former Yugoslavia. In the first stage, we should review the present law, which is a condition for joining international organizations. Only in the second stage can we think about a new law, Krneta pointed out. She said it is important for Bosnia-Herzegovina to legally regulate certain aspects of intellectual property which have appeared with the development of new technologies. For example, computer programs, in her opinion, could be regarded as *written works*, and data bases as *collections*. Referring to the issue of collective copyright enforcement, Professor Krneta pointed out that Bosnia-Herzegovina does not have a single organization dealing with this issue. "As an example, I would like to point out music artists," said Krneta, adding that payment of high fines for unauthorized use of authors' works should be legally regulated.

Legislative competences of the internationally recognized Bosnian-Herzegovinian state, according to her, have been reduced to a minimum in favor of the entities, which is the main problem standing in the way of passing an appropriate law to ensure equal copyright enforcement in the whole country. "There is interest to pass this law, but we are being held back by the unyielding insistence on separate legislative competences," Krneta concluded, adding that an institution should be established to deal exclusively with copyright enforcement.

In response to her speech, Svetlana Djordjevic, lawyer from Banja Luka, said that a new law is presently being drafted in the Republika Srpska, and that insistence on a single law for the whole country should not stand in the way of passing separate laws to fill in the existing voids. "It would be good to establish good coordination between the two entities to enable us to come up with laws which are harmonized to the maximum," Djordjevic concluded.

Zoran Udovicic, Media Plan Institute president, explained why Bosnian-Herzegovinian authors still have not established any associations to protect their copyrights, without which there can be no efficient collective protection. One of the reasons, in his opinion, is the lack of an adequate market, and authors' work is therefore devalued. He said there is not a single person in professional state bodies to deal with this issue; as if everyone was waiting for the international community to solve the problem for them.

A guest from Croatia, Zoran Vujasin of the Society for Protection of Audio and Video Products, presented to the conference the experiences from his country in passing the Copyright Enforcement Law. "Until 1993, when the Copyright Law was amended, we had 100 percent piracy. Only when piracy started to be treated as a criminal act which was prosecuted ex officio, and when confiscated material started to be destroyed immediately, did we have a legal market," said Vujasin. According to him, the general public and the legislative establishment in Bosnia-Herzegovina should be animated to start treating piracy as a criminal act which results in certain sanctions. As a very important issue, he emphasized the fact that the general public must start believing that when you steal someone's authorial work, it is the same as if you steal their car.

In addition to well-known names from international anti-piracy organizations, Council of Europe, as well as IMC and IREX ProMedia, who successfully organized the conference, the gathering also hosted Kurt Kemper of WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organization, which operates within the OUN. This organization comprises 175 member states, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, and its purpose is to promote cooperation among members in this field in order to protect authors and creators in line with international copyright standards.

The conference presented the first private agency in Bosnia-Herzegovina for representation and copyright enforcement – Sine Qua Non.

It was noticeable that few people from domestic broadcasters took part in the conference: managers, producers, legal experts and editors-in-chief, which diminished the main purpose of the gathering – broadcast copyrights. Still, the conference did bring together at least part of the critical mass of domestic experts dealing with this issue, who are faced with the pioneer task of getting the issue of copyright enforcement moving. The organizers promised generous international assistance.



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(D.T. – D.A.)

## Through Thundering Silence to Media Freedom

(Written for "Media News" by Dr. Stjepan Malovic, Croatian Journalist Society)

Croatian journalists are still not satisfied with freedom of media in their country. Not even the historic turnabout and the end of the Tadjman era following an opposition coalition election victory have significantly contributed to bringing about a change in the poor media picture. One hundred days of the new government have passed without anything happening, and the dissatisfied Croatian journalists on May 3, World Media Freedom Day, held five minutes of thundering silence.

And really, on that Wednesday of May 3, from 1155 to 1200 hrs. in all media organization across Croatia, even in former strongholds of media conservatism, journalists stopped working and were thunderously silent. The protest attracted a lot of public attention, and the organizer, the Executive Board of the Croatian Journalist Syndicate, tested professional solidarity in practice. The general evaluation: excellent! Journalists after a long time had forgotten about partisan, ownership, professional, ideological and other differences. It is obvious that journalists had come to the end of their tether. Public support did not fail to come through, but politicians lukewarmly noted the protest, unlike the International Federation of Journalists which wholeheartedly supported the Croatian journalists' fight for media freedom.

### What About Election Promises?

What had made Croatian journalists decide to hold their thundering silence? The main reason is that "thousands of journalists, media workers and associates today fear for their bare existence due to hidden political and economic ties, outside the reach and influence of officials," according to a protest letter of the Croatian Journalist Syndicate.

How is it possible that in new conditions, when the chains of the Tadjman era which had impeded media have been broken, such a rigid and fierce opinion is made? Have the new democratization waves in Croatia completely by-passed media? What about election promises, and where has support for independent media disappeared which the former opposition turned government had promised so enthusiastically? Is media freedom, which was one of the international community's key conditions for Croatia's admission to European integrations, not "on the table" any more?

These questions are not simple to answer, and it is even more difficult to assess in which direction the relationship between the new government and media is developing. The new government is faced with a very difficulty legacy: an empty treasury, unpleasant surprises in almost every drawer or cabinet which they open in the offices of the former government, accumulated problems, dissatisfied workers who have had enough of waiting and promises, while at the same time it is hard to find solutions in emptied pockets, and unresolved relations in the presidential triangle, in which it is unknown where exactly the competences of the state president, government and parliament start, and where they end...

Still, despite having a lot of understanding, journalists could no longer wait, like the workers of Vukovar, Split, Vrbovac and Zagreb, who are hitting the streets and demanding their rights.

What, then, is the status of Croatian media? Is it really that bad? Let us again use the Journalist Syndicate Executive Board proclamation, which offered a good inventory of difficulties in Croatian media:

- "Vjesnik" and "Slobodna Dalmacija" have been brought to the brink of disaster;
- "Vecernji list," whose tradition and enviable market success cannot be denied, is being undermined;
- At Croatian Television, thousands of employees are fearing for their jobs, as well as an equal number of outside associates who have worked for this organization every day for years;

- At Croatian Radio, a series of well-run regional centers, which have been contributing to radio program diversity for decades, are now questioned;
- At “Glas Slavonije,” the management is threatening to cut the already low salaries of its employees, which are lower than those of any other media workers, without trying to cut back on their own luxury;
- At HINA, for reasons of economy, long-term associates are threatened with dismissal or drastic cuts in fees, although without them this news agency would not be able to cover all events that it needs to cover;
- At EDIT, collective negotiations have been delayed for years;
- At “Jutarnji list,” “Globus,” “Arena,” “Mila,” “Glorija,” collective negotiations have been suspended;
- At Radio 101 collective negotiations have also been suspended;
- The position of employees in small local media is even more unstable and dependent on the self-will of owners and local strongmen;
- Freelance journalists in a number of media, big and small, are not receiving fees for their work, which deprives them of the fundamental human right to be paid for one’s work.

Is this dramatic enough? Only one media organization, Radio 101, has corrected an incorrect declaration. In their company, negotiations have resumed. However, this does not diminish the seriousness and dramatic character of the message. We can only add darker tones to Croatia’s media landscape: the Law on HRTV still has not entered parliament procedure. An opening has been announced for a new editor-in-chief, a new team of editors has started working, but Mirko Galic, general manager, at a news briefing several days ago painted a very difficult situation at HRTV, announcing an increase in the subscription fee, because its resources are so depleted that the station cannot even buy new movies and series, let alone produce its own program. “Vecernji list” became the subject of a first-rate sensation when a transcript of a conversation between the late President Tudjman and his internal policy advisor Ivic Pasalic was made public, in which they discussed agreements on the purchase of this highest-circulation daily for the HDZ party. The scandal led to a major debate, which went so far that some politicians, such as Drazen Budisa, publicly asked whether the president has the right to publicize confidential transcripts found in his predecessor’s cabinets and whether he can give them to the media. Namely, in the last 10 days there was almost not a single newspaper which did not publish at least one confidential transcript from Tudjman’s offices.

## **Lack of a Government Strategy**

Croatia has feverishly started to deal with confidential transcripts and secret services, for which media have been used in all possible and impossible ways. Scandals are appearing as if on an assembly line. The latest is an interview given by the head of an association of invalids of the homeland war, who threatened with a coup d’etat. The interview was given to “Globus,” which announced it on the front page and produced the political news of the week.

Meanwhile, important matters remain on the sidelines, even those concerning the fate of media.

The Croatian Journalist Society back in December went public with its “New Media Agenda,” in which it made a detailed inventory of the state of media and offered possible solutions. Journalists did not want to spoil straight away the historic victory of the democratic forces with their demands, but in April they held a gathering at the International Journalist Education Center in Opatija, where once again, calmly and with arguments, they presented the state of media and what should be done. The name of the gathering was “The new government and media,” but it was held without the most important factor: the new government. Namely, one deputy minister and a highly-ranked ministry official who did attend, had come more out of solidarity with colleagues as they are former journalists, rather than relevant representatives of the government. Meanwhile, prominent officials simply ignored the gathering. The situation, in the meantime, has deteriorated. Now the government was faced with thundering silence on World Media Freedom Day. The government is expected to respond.

In the meantime, Austria's "Styria" will probably become the new owner of "Vecernji list," despite all commissions and transcripts on the scandalous sale of "Vecernjak." "Tisak," the biggest press distributor, is bankrupt, and new strategic partners are now sought. It is unknown who will buy "Vjesnik" and when, and until that happens, the government will set aside large funds each month for the once most prominent Croatian paper. Potential buyers wonder where this solution will lead. "Slobodna Dalmacija" has touched its bottom, and the solution is nowhere in sight. The potential, new management of HINA was faced with political games even before the elections, which threaten to undermine any solution...

Many problems, and the solutions are nowhere in sight. What is most alarming is the lack of a government media strategy, which would at least indicate the directions in which the accumulated difficulties should be solved. What the government is doing reminds a lot of the all too familiar old political solutions. The government started to solve the burning issue of HTV only when it was painfully faced with the unacceptable editorial criteria of Obrad Kosovac, editor-in-chief, after which it wanted to replace him overnight. The quickness then turned into a farce, which inflicted most damage on the newly-appointed general manager Galic, who threatened to resign before he had even started to work. The lack of a strategy resulted in poor solutions. Instead of changing the law, appointing a new HRTV Council under the new law, and announcing openings for a new management, the new government did what the HDZ party had been doing before it. It appointed its own people. What we saw was only a colorless re-run of well-known solutions against which these same politicians had once protested. Such solutions will hardly take Croatia into European integrations because they do not correspond with the international understanding of media freedom.

And, finally, what do journalists have to say? Young students of the Croatian Journalist Society's Journalist Workshop asked the other day Jasna Babic, journalist of "Nacional," when the situation, in her opinion, will change. The answer was laconically precise and condensed: "When the present generation moves out."

## S e r b i a

### **New Attacks on Media Freedom**

The authorities in Serbia are planning to launch another war, this time against their own people, which raises the issue of potential introduction of totalitarianism in Serbia, concluded the Press Club held at Belgrade's Media Center on May 10. Freedom of press is threatened in Serbia, as well as freedom of public association, and since recently also freedom of basic movement of citizens.

The most drastic example of repression on the part of Serbian police is the arrest of journalist Miroslav Filipovic, correspondent of the "Danas" paper, Agency France Press and IWPR in Kraljevo. On May 8 two State Security inspectors searched Filipovic's apartment and confiscated his passport, address book, tapes, discs and articles, and arrested him. The Kraljevo court's trial chamber on May 11 decided to send Filipovic to Nis, proclaiming the local Military Court in Nis competent in this matter.

Filipovic was suspected of committing the criminal act of espionage and circulating false information and undermining the defensive system of the country, which is punishable by a prison sentence of three to 15 years. Nevertheless, on May 12, and due to the lack of evidence, prosecutor of the Military Court in Niš ordered the release of Mr. Filipović.

On the eve of an announced opposition rally in Pozarevac on May 9 under the name "Stop to terror, for democratic elections," the Serbian police arrested a whole series of journalists. This date, the day of international victory over fascism, was chosen for the rally with the purpose of sending a clear message to the government which is using illegitimate methods and repressive measures to curb different political stands. The rally was postponed following a police decision at the entry point into Pozarevac to prevent the arrival of buses carrying demonstrators, and a new date has been set for May 15 in Belgrade.

The police on May 8, on the eve of the rally, on the road to Pozarevac arrested Mile Veljkovic, journalist of the daily "Blic" and correspondent of the Beta agency, as well as Bojan Tonic and Natasa Begovic, journalists of the paper "Danas."

According to Begovic, the police informed her and Tonic after nine hours of detention that they had been "taken in to check their identities." She said the police were particularly interested in whether the two journalists knew anyone working for foreign media.

Holland's Joel Finks, correspondent for the daily "Handelsblad" from Rotterdam, and David Godfro, correspondent for the daily "Het Parol" from Amsterdam, were arrested with the explanation that they did not have a "permit to stay in the country." They were shortly detained and then deported. Britain's Gillian Sanford, correspondent of the daily "Guardian," was arrested May 9, after which he was ordered to leave town.

On May 9, when the united opposition's youth section organized a campaign in Novi Sad under the slogan "Death to fascism, down with Milosevic, freedom to the people," 25 party activists and four journalists from Radio "Free Europe," Radio 021, Radio IN and TV Montenegro were arrested. Most journalists were taken in for interrogation and released the following day.

The owner of TV Grk, Aleksandar Djordjevic from Prokuplje, on his way to Ljubljana had his passport taken from him and was not allowed to cross the state border, with the explanation that there were some irregularities in his passport.

The Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS), Reporters Without Frontiers, and Helsinki Human Rights Committee have expressed concern over the offensive against independent and opposition media in Serbia. In a statement issued following the latest arrests of journalists, they said this was the gravest attack on free and independent media.

A news vendor for "Nezavisne novine" and member of the Democratic Party, Dejan Demirovic, was beaten on May 6 at 2030 hrs. in the center of Belgrade, and 50 copies of this Banja Luka daily were taken from him.

This is another unscrupulous war waged by the Belgrade regime against independent media and all democratic processes with the use of the most repressive totalitarian methods.

(Data: Media Center Belgrade/Freedom Forum Online)

## **May 3, World Press Freedom Day**

### **Journalist Still Under Attack**

Last year 36 journalists were killed in the line of duty. Most were killed in Sierra Leone – 10, followed by FR Yugoslavia – six. This tragic figure is an enormous increase compared to the previous four years when the number successively decreased and in 1998 fell to 19. Since January 1, 2000 another five journalists were killed, and 84 are in prison.

These are the key figures from the Reporters Without Frontiers Annual Report published in the form of a book on May 3, World Press Freedom Day, established 10 years ago on Reporters Without Frontiers' initiative, and officially proclaimed by the United Nations in 1994. This year the celebration is held with news and reports on repression and threats that journalists are subjected to.

According to the Reporters' assessment, the increased number and scale of armed conflicts in the world is the main reason for violent deaths of journalists last year, although war conventions guarantee them the status of a "non-warring party."

"The risk of working in the journalist profession does not decrease with improvement in technical equipment and increasing potentials of timely on-site reporting. On the contrary. The danger and threats that journalists are subjected to are on the rise. If in 1999 most journalists were killed in armed conflicts, in the previous year 1998 most were killed after discovering corruption scandals or ties between politicians and the mafia," said Robert Menard, Reporters Without Frontiers secretary general.

According to World Press Association data, in 1999 there were 71 casualties among people employed in media, and according to the International Federation of Journalists this figure was 87. The discrepancy in their data is a result of the different criteria used – these two organizations, unlike the Reporters, do not include only journalists among journalism victims, but also everyone else employed in media. These victims include 16 people killed in the bombing of the RTV Serbia building a year ago, among which there was not a single journalist.

(“Vecernje novine”, May 3, 2000)

## **Journalist Help-Line**

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina launched a “Journalist Help-Line” to commemorate World Press Freedom Day. This represents a further step in OSCE’s efforts to put a halt to the disturbing trend of intimidation aimed at undermining a free and independent media in the country.

OSCE Senior Media Advisor Regan McCarthy said the help-line will be a focal point of contact for journalists who feel that their freedom of expression was violated. Since last November, the OSCE Department for Media Affairs received 63 incident reports pertaining to journalists’ rights of freedom of media, 17 of which concerned defamation, 13 of which involved an explicit threat, and nine involving a direct physical attack.

In the Republika Srpska 21 cases were registered and 44 in the Federation. The OSCE is particularly concerned that a significant increase of pressure on journalists has occurred during the BiH Municipal Elections 2000 campaign period. McCarthy emphasized that biggest pressure is put on journalists in cases when they write about war crimes and corruption.

In a move to help promote journalists’ rights throughout the country, two media outlets have already linked their homepages to OSCE’s Incident Report Form on its website at [www.oscebih.org](http://www.oscebih.org). The OSCE Mission intends to link the FreeMedia Help-Line to all Bosnian-Herzegovinian media house websites in the country.

(“Dnevni avaz”, May 4, 2000, IMC Statement)

## **In Defense of Professional Interests**

The Independent Union of Professional Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (NUPN BiH) reminded that journalists in our country are still under a lot of pressure from the local authorities, they do not have free access to information, and most of them do not have social insurance or material security.

The Independent Union of Professional Journalists called on all journalists in the country, despite the existence of a number of journalist associations, to unite in defense of professional interests and to work together to create more favorable working conditions and to ensure more freedom for themselves, according to a statement issued by NUPN BiH in commemoration of World Press Freedom Day.

(“Oslobodjenje”, May 4, 2000)

## **More than 90% Journalists Consider Themselves Threatened**

An OSCE spot survey carried out among representatives of 50 media outlets who attended OSCE’s Country-Wide Journalist Conference held on March 13, 2000, depicted a rather gloomy picture of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s media environment – 92 percent of the surveyed journalists consider the status of journalists’ rights unsatisfactory. Asked about current trends, 50 percent of the media representatives felt that journalists’ rights are increasingly encroached upon; 38 percent stated that the number of violations would stagnate.

While 74 percent of the journalists asked to participate in the survey felt that their freedom of expression and movement is being impeded, 62 percent have personally experienced intimidation and interference with their work, including direct and indirect pressure applied by both political parties and elected or appointed government officials.

The spot survey also indicates that journalists in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not report many of the incidents. If they decide to do so, they prefer to report cases to international organizations or journalist associations rather than to the police.

When asked how to improve the journalists' rights situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 40 percent of the journalists emphasized that public awareness needs to be increased. On the other hand, 49 percent think that court proceedings and police actions need to be monitored more closely. Only one-third surveyed think that their rights are guaranteed by the domestic judicial system.(OSCE Press Release)

## **T h e I n t e r n e t**

### **Cyber War in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

#### **Computer Stagnation in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Bosnia-Herzegovina has around 25,000 Internet users, while for example Slovenia has around 250,000, with a constant rise of 25,000 new users each month! This picture of computer stagnation of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population is completed by the fact that access to the Internet in this country is still a privilege, not a right as in the rest of the developed world.

While in some western countries even the smallest shop or average family have their own websites, in our country this is not the case even with extremely successful companies. Even media outlets in Bosnia-Herzegovina seriously lag behind their neighbors, not to mention how much they lag behind world-known outlets. Students, due to lack of a university network, are forced to pay very high prices even for operations on the global net that their colleagues in the world have had for free for a long time now. For the rest of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian population, the Internet is still terra incognita.

The situation is even bleaker if we take into account the fact that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Internet sphere is in complete chaos. Although the right to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian domain (ba – stands for our country on the Internet) has been given to UTIC, the University Internet Center, the Center has done almost nothing to promote the global net in this country. It has gone commercial and become an ISP (Internet Service Provider), and has therefore become an unfair competitor with other Bosnian-Herzegovinian companies which sell Internet services, and which do not have a privileged position or the Bosnian-Herzegovinian domain in their possession.

This is not the end of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Internet confusion. BIHNET, the Internet provider of the PTT BiH Telecommunications company which covers the so-called Bosniak part of the Federation, thanks to technical superiority (which is a result of generous international donations), has a monopoly over connections, that is to say over the Internet infrastructure, and rents out Internet lines to Bosnian-Herzegovinian providers. When this long-expected state operator appeared, it brought with it a very unpleasant surprise – high bills even for the pockets of those who are better off than the average. According to our information, BIHNET users pay a monthly Internet subscription of 10 DEM, and each hour spent on the Internet costs an additional 1.64 DEM. However, each time you connect you have to pay this entire amount. For example, if in one hour you are disconnected for example 10 times (which happens very often), you pay 16 DEM for that period regardless of how much time you actually spent on the Internet in that one hour! You should add to this the price of telephone impulses, which is 0.026 KM per three minutes, in the period from 0700 to 1900 hrs. After 1900 hrs. one connection costs 0.91 DEM, regardless of how long you stay on line. Provided, of course, that you are lucky enough not to be disconnected already after the first 15 minutes! In this period, the price of telephone impulses is 0.026 KM per six minutes.

In addition, it is generally known that BIHNET is unable to guarantee the confidentiality of user passwords because other people often connect to and exploit your address, and with it also your pocket. Due to this, BIHNET warmly advises its users to change their passwords once a week, but it does not bear any responsibility for potential damage inflicted in this way.

Hence, it is not surprising that BIHNET has only 12,000 users, while at the same time is not willing to give any answer to the question of the balance between prices and quality of its service. Providers and users are helpless in this regard. Is there any use in criticizing a company which has exclusive rights to Internet space!?

The situation is not improved at all by private providers, which completely ignore one another. There is not a single joint project or interest that could bring them together to start fighting to improve their position. The only thing they have in common are the high costs and poor quality of services which reflect in slow connection and endlessly busy lines. In addition to this, there are no legal regulations protecting the rights of Internet users or defining the terms “piracy” or “Internet crime.”

Some Internet providers were faced with a problem right in the start when they tried to register their company, because the term “Internet provider” does not exist at all in the court register of businesses. “When we registered ourselves, our company was registered as a company offering ‘other computer services,’” says Adnan Gusic, director of SmartNet.

In order to analyze the situation regarding the providing of Internet services in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to respond to issues related to some of the most frequent problems in this field, we sent our questions to the following companies: BIHNET, EkisSa, Logosoft, UTIC Sarajevo, and SmartNet. We used data from daily, weekly and specialized Bosnian-Herzegovinian papers. We also talked to Emmanuel Van Damm, Internet lecturer at Media Plan’s School of Journalism and owner of a French computer company, who made a short analysis of BiH Internet services.

## **Who Does the “ba” Domain Belong to?**

When Bosnia-Herzegovina, following the signing of the Dayton agreement, was given the “ba” domain on the Internet in 1996, UTIC, the University Tele-Information Center, was proposed as the official holder of all rights. At that moment it was the only organization technically equipped to hold rights. Another reason why this organization was chosen was because it was the most suitable for administration and allocation of the state domain since it was the most “neutral,” and this would also avoid giving these rights to the post office. This kind of network exists in all developed countries, and its purpose is to enable academic citizens, which includes students, to have free access to the Internet. The aim is to provide better education facilities to this part of the population, with particular emphasis on learning about new technologies and the Internet.

UTIC has not done much to promote the Internet in Bosnia-Herzegovina and bring it closer to students. It continued to operate commercially: a new domain costs 250 KM for the first year, and 150 KM for each following year. Sometimes it behaves quite independently (it organizes presentations, sells equipment...). Students still have to pay for Internet access, although they have lower fees. This means that students use Internet services offered by UTIC at 50 percent lower rates. Links used by other university schools also have to be paid for. The Media Plan School of Journalism, which teaches journalists about new media technologies, pays BIHNET for Internet hours at the highest rates.

The Government of Slovenia decided to donate certain funds for creating a much needed computer infrastructure and to create BIHARNET, which would enable five universities in Bosnia-Herzegovina to link with one another and with the European academic network and the Internet. Formed with consent of all universities in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the exception of the University of Sarajevo, it was supposed to provide free access to the Internet for all universities and education institutions in the country. However, due to opposition of the University of Sarajevo, which UTIC is part of as one of its organizational units, BIHARNET’s request to take over administration of the “ba” domain was rejected. The reason given was that UTIC staff maintain this domain must be in the hands of a local institution, emphasizing that there is “too much Slovenian influence” on BIHARNET. Serious accusations have been exchanged between supporters of BIHARNET and UTIC. UTIC, in its campaign to disqualify BIHARNET, claims that the Government of Slovenia did not donate this project to help the development of Bosnian-Herzegovinian universities, but to usurp administration over Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Internet domain. BIHARNET’s supporters qualify this accusation as a “nationalistic stupidity which conceals UTIC’s abuses.”

The Sarajevo and Banja Luka governments have been refusing for the last six months to sign a proposed text of a Joint Statement of the Governments of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, in which they request “official support to the project with minimum obligations regarding responsibility for the fate of the project.” After spending three million marks for the project, the Government of Slovenia refused to further finance it without support of the local authorities in both entities, according to a foreign official working in Sarajevo who has been informed why the project was suspended.

As a result of all this, one of the rare international project in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been terminated. University teachers and students in all three educational parts of the country have been left without free Internet links via BIHARNET, because Slovenia’s Telecom terminated international connections as of January 1. Students are now writing to politicians, such as Edhem Bicakcic, appealing on them to sign the Joint Statement with Dodik’s government. They have been left at the mercy of local commercial providers. An academic network in Bosnia-Herzegovina de facto does not exist.

## **BIHNET as the Big Boss**

Bosnian-Herzegovinian cyber space is effectively ruled by state PTT companies, among which BIHNET is the only Internet operator in the so-called Bosniak part of the Federation. This means it is the only owner of cables, or in other words the Internet infrastructure. You can connect to the global net only through this company. And while in the United States the world’s biggest computer equipment production giant Microsoft lost a court case in which it had been accused of having a monopoly, our local monopolist is not faced with this danger. However, PTT BiH officials maintain there is no monopoly in their case because, according to them, the very fact that there are a number of private operators rules out the possibility of monopoly! On the other hand, among private providers there is neither communication nor even a possibility of raising the issue of trying to improve the situation.

EKIS company has recently been disconnected from PTT BiH telephone lines. Mr. Hadzialic says EKIS suffered a lot of damage over a six-month period due to BIHNET negligence: it took forever to connect, and users’ mail often got lost. No one from BIHNET responded to his constant complaints, and then the company decided to make a radical move – it stopped paying its bills. This is why all EKIS lines were disconnected. “This only proves that they can do whatever they want, because you, as a user of their services, do not have the alternative of going to someone else,” Hadzialic says, adding that there are three operators in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Republika Srpska Telecom, HTP (which covers the so-called Croat part of the Federation), and PTT BiH.

Our everyday lives are hence reflected in the computer sphere: one country and three operators! There do not overlap and therefore there is no competition among them. Each one gets its own share of the unrealistically high profits by ruling their own backyard with sovereignty, without any danger of the other two.

What would be an advantage in any other country is not an advantage here: three operators, who could start a healthy match on common ground by competing in quality and low-cost services, are operating separately due to political reasons. As a result of that we have: a divided market which due to its confined character does not allow the Internet to become more popular; a monopoly of operators who know that no matter what they do, their position is guaranteed, and are therefore not putting much effort into enhancing their services. And, finally, we have users who suffer the most damage in this whole Bosnian-Herzegovinian charade.

According to Faruk Telibecirovic, owner of the private provider Logosoft, BIHNET does not actually have a monopoly that allows it to do whatever it wants. “That company has legal ownership of all links, including links necessary to enter the Internet. Even if there is a monopoly, it is legal, because it is legally relevant,” says Telibecirovic. According to him, the problem lies in investments, which are lacking. He says anyone can establish satellite links and become an Internet operator if they set aside a large sum of money. So far, there has not been much interest in doing that and therefore PTT is still the only owner of cables, or in other words the infrastructure. “Something else, which is a problem, are the high rates that providers pay to lease telephone lines necessary to connect to the Internet,” says Telibecirovic. He says leasing a package of 30 telephone lines costs a provider in Bosnia-Herzegovina 34,500 DEM monthly, while in Croatia, for example, it would cost 3,750 DEM.”

Senad Gusic, owner of the company “SmartNet,” maintains that connection quality would be much better if legal deregulation is carried out, or in other words, if in addition to PTT, other subjects also become owners of the Internet infrastructure. “If the law allowed it, I am sure there would be some parties interested in investing money and linking up with a satellite to become Internet operators,” says Gusic.

## **War of Private Providers?**

According to Haris Hadzialic of EKIS, there is unfair competition among private providers, and even cases of obstruction of each other’s work. Because of this environment, his company has suffered a lot of damage, he says. “We at EKIS were sabotaged by a man who was with us for training, and who now works with a competitor company. Since I did not have hard evidence to prove the damage caused by the collapse of the entire net system, which was caused by the sabotage, I could not initiate court proceedings because I did not have the evidence that our courts would admit,” says Hadzialic. According to him, Bosnia-Herzegovina presently has 15 Internet providers – three state-owned and 12 private. This number is unrealistically high for such a small market. Of this number, perhaps only two companies are providers in the real sense of the word. “Many companies, in addition to being providers, also sell computers and have other additional activities. They hamper the development of the Internet because they take the market and create a monopoly. Although the developed world has codes which regulate this field and stipulate that providers should not be involved in other commercial activities, this is not the case in our country,” says Hadzialic.

His colleague, Faruk Telibecirovic, does not agree with him. “There are no codes anywhere in the world which would prevent a provider from representing a foreign firm or dealing in some other commercial activity. The West has healthy market competition in which most providers also sell commodities and services, including computer equipment,” underlined Telibecirovic, adding that a bigger problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the unfair competition in which some companies are cutting prices or providing free Internet use, which damages other providers.

A consequence of the dispute between the state-owned BIHNET and UTIC is that these two companies communicate with one another via the United States, although they are located a mere 1,000 meters from one another! Namely, if someone from UTIC wants to send a message to a correspondent on BIHNET, the message goes to Vienna, and from there to the United States to a satellite from which BIHNET receives its signal.

## **Our Place in the World**

If a list of countries with prices of telecommunication resources were to be made, Bosnia-Herzegovina would probably be in first place. The postal company in Sarajevo charges providers 20,000 DEM for access to the Internet. In Europe and the United States most providers receive this service for free. Furthermore, providers compete with one another with lower prices in order to attract more users, which reduces the costs of using the Internet to a reasonable level. On the global, world market, there are around 100 operators, of which 10 are notable. Each one of them possesses one part of the Internet, or in other words the technical resource. Among Internet providers there is healthy, market-driven competition in which they all, with lower prices and quality service, struggle to attract as many users as possible. The world computer market has made so much progress that Internet access in some western countries is free of charge because the user, who comes upon many advertisements, will probably buy something, and in addition he will also pay his regular telephone bill. In the United States, for example, you can get a free PC with free Internet access, and in return you will be bombed with an ocean of advertisements.

Internet subscription in the United States, Germany or France costs around 30 DEM per month, and it has lately become the practice not to pay anything for the connection to the net. According to the earlier mentioned Emmanuel Van Damm, in France and in some other developed countries, the costs of all Internet services are being lowered. He pointed out a current problem in his country, the problem of monopoly over the Internet, which is also present in our country. Namely, certain operators are at the same time also providers, which leads to the problem of poor quality and monopoly. This is the case

with French Telecom (FT), which has 70% to 80% monopoly over the Internet. “Thanks to its financial power, FT three years ago, when the global net started spreading in France, kept lowering the cost of its use by which it attracted a large number of clients and soon reached the number one position. This led to a lot of dissatisfaction among private providers and there is currently a strong campaign underway to terminate this monopoly over the French Internet sky,” says Van Damm.

When asked to give his opinion on the status of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Internet scene, Van Damm said that in the next six months, or one year at the latest, rates in Bosnia-Herzegovina should start going downward because, due to lower costs of services, an increasing number of users will connect to the Internet via other countries. He says this will force local companies to go in step with them and to start cutting down prices.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, according to Logosoft owner Faruk Telibecirovic, is far from having free Internet access because in our conditions, due to lack of a market, that is impossible. “We should take into account the fact that in Bosnia-Herzegovina there are only 20,000 computers, while in Croatia this number is 60,000. If we were to offer free Internet access along with every computer, we would not catch up with our neighbor even in two years,” says Telibecirovic. According to him, only foreign donations can help to do something more to popularize the global net in our country, and to give the University what is normal everywhere else in the world. “Perhaps something can be done in this regard if, for example within the Stability Pact, the issue of Internet expansion is raised in order to open up Bosnia-Herzegovina in terms of communication,” suggests Telibecirovic.

One of the conclusions of our research is that the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina, due to a low living standard, is almost computer illiterate. How else can we interpret the figure of a negligible 25,000 users!? War is being fought over the local “ba” domain, and its biggest victims are Bosnian-Herzegovinian academic citizens who, unlike their colleagues in the rest of the developed world, have almost no privileges and can hardly set aside the money needed to use electronic mail. As for surfing the Internet waves, they can only dream about it for a long time to come. No one listens any more to reports that rates for using the global net will be lowered. They are probably taught by experience that when the state grabs monopoly in a certain field, it does not let go for a long time. There is still no legal protection of private providers, who pay the state a lot of money to use Internet lines. Since they hardly communicate with one another, there is little chance that they will launch a collective initiative to improve their position any time soon. Rare use of the Internet on the part of media as a source of information or dissemination of their own production, still does not enable media problems in this field to be examined.

When we divide all this into the three nationally established parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, we get a picture which is far from being ideal: it is a confusion which only few people understand who find this situation profitable. (Darija Tankosic)

**Note:**

In writing this article, in addition to interviews with the directors of the companies SmartNet – Senad Gusic, Logosoft – Faruk Telibecirovic, and EkisSa – Haris Hadzialic, we also used the archives of the specialized magazine “Info,” the magazine “Dani,” and the daily “Oslobodjenje.” PTTBiH answered our questions by fax, and by the time this issue of “Media News” was closed, after a long procedure and good will on our part, we were still not able to schedule an interview with responsible persons at the UTIC university center. We would like to thank other Internet providers who were interested in helping our research.

## **N e w s**

### **Conduct in Line with the Code**

The Independent Media Commission (IMC) welcomed the news that editors-in-chief of Bosnian-Herzegovinian press have publicly committed to the BiH Press Code. An IMC press release stated that the fact that 19 newspapers and magazines across the whole country have supported the IREX ProMedia

initiative by advertising their commitment in their newspapers, also by signing an accompanying pledge that their publications and staff will adhere to the Code, is encouraging.

The IMC, OSCE and IREX ProMedia continue to work closely with journalist associations to establish a Press Council, which will have as part of its mandate the implementation of the Press Code and the protection of press freedom, said the press release. (“Oslobodjenje,” May 3, 2000)

## **Summer Media School in Neum**

Sarajevo-based Media Plan is opening a Summer Media School in Neum, a small tourist resort on the Adriatic coast. The school is intended to train journalists and other media staff, as well as people working in media production and public relations. Classes will be held in the form of seminars, roundtables and workshops.

This year’s session will last from June 17 to 30 and will be held at Hotel Stela. A seminar will be organized for lecturers from Media Plan’s School of Journalism, a journalist workshop on how to research violations of journalist rights and freedoms, and a roundtable on the topic “Media and humanitarian law.” A course will be held for managers and people working in public relations on how to search the Internet and create websites.

## **A w a r d s**

### **Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina**

Ozren Kebo, journalist of “Slobodna Bosna” magazine, was proclaimed best journalist in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1999 in an event organized on May 5, 2000 by the Association of Journalists of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which gathers journalists from the Federation. RTV BiH was proclaimed best television station, Radio Fern best radio station, and “Dnevni avaz” best daily newspaper. Mensur Osmovic, “Dnevni avaz” editor-in-chief, refused to receive the award due to “obvious violation of media freedom on the part of the Federation authorities, specifically on the part of Edhem Bicakcic, Federation prime minister.”

### **Norwegian Writers Association**

At a ceremony organized in Banja Luka by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway on May 3, 2000, the director and editor-in-chief of “Nezavisne novine,” Zeljko Kopanja, was awarded for highest achievements in freedom of expression in 1999. The award was handed to him by the chairman of the Norwegian Writers Association, Kirsten Alnes.

## **I n t e r n e t**

### **Defending Cyberspace**

Some of the world’s leading Internet security experts are gathering in California to develop a battle plan to combat computer virus attacks. The Internet defence summit, although planned some time ago, comes just days after the so-called Love Bug virus wreaked havoc on the Web.

The Love Bug virus underlined the fact that, when it comes to cyberspace, governments are unable to fulfil their traditional role as defenders of the people. Therefore, say the summit’s organisers, it is up to the private sector to develop a strategy to combat hacking and computer viruses.

They say the main aim of the San Jose meeting is to devise a blueprint for some sort of global early warning system against Internet attack.

Source: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/worldamericas/newsid\\_741000/741697.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/low/english/worldamericas/newsid_741000/741697.stm) -BBC News

## **UK to Launch Online Spy Network**

A few weeks back, Russia's secret service agency raised privacy watchdogs' hackles when it admitted it could intercept and monitor all Russian Internet traffic.

On Sunday the British government acknowledged that it was building a system that could do the same thing in Great Britain, ostensibly to help catch money launderers, terrorists, paedophiles, and other criminals who do business online.

The British system, called the Government Technical Assistance Centre, will have its hub in the headquarters of the MI5. All of Britain's Internet Service Providers will be connected to the GATC through dedicated lines (which they will have to pay for themselves).

After its scheduled completion by the end of the year, the system will allow British police and secret service agents to intercept every bit of the country's Internet traffic. But absolutely nothing will be intercepted without a warrant, the British government insists.

The British government's acknowledgement of its planned system is sure to re-ignite speculation about the existence of Echelon, a supposed international electronic surveillance network. Privacy advocates and a number of politicians are convinced that the system exists, but government officials in Europe and the US have repeatedly denied it.

Source: <http://www.wired.com/news/lycos/0,1306,36031,00.html> - Lycos / Wired news / Reuters

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