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ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA SITUATION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA IN 1997

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1. Overview of development¹ *

The conditions in which the media in Bosnia-Herzegovina operate are very dynamic. In the past years, the media situation has radically changed. The first turnabout took place in 1990 when the dissolution of the socialist system began. New papers of a critical orientation were launched and a generation of young, nonconformist journalists developed. Many of them even today make up the nucleus of the liberal and professionally reputable papers. The media ownership transformation also began.

The first multi-party elections were held in the fall of 1990. At that time, national homogenization was carried out to a large extent in the entire Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia's disintegration began. The national parties which won the elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina were trying to obtain positions for themselves in the media. Many media organizations changed their

¹ Monitoring Report series I and II (June 1996 – June 1997); Elections 96 – Media Monitoring Report, January 1996; Report on the Media Situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Media Plan / Reporters without Borders, Paris, January 1997; monthly media report of Media Plan, July 1997.

patrons – from the hands of the communist authorities they went into the hands of the ruling national parties.

In mid-1991, 377 newspapers and other editions were registered in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as 54 local radio stations, four TV stations, one news agency and the state RTV network with three channels. New laws on information allowed private persons to found radio and TV stations. There were 10 of them on the eve of the war (six radio and three TV stations).

The war stopped the development and almost destroyed the media infrastructure. Most newspapers and RTV stations became propaganda tools of the authorities and other centers of power which were constituted in the partitioned Bosnia. Radio and TV stations from Belgrade and Zagreb competed in Bosnia-Herzegovina's territory for the interests of their states.

Media under the control of the ruling Serb party SDS during the war became centers of nationalistic indoctrination and racist cries. Only with the signing of the Dayton Agreement, the first alternative media appeared in northern parts of today's Republika Srpska (Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Doboj). In the territory of so-called Herceg-Bosna, the HDZ-controlled part of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, even today, as in the war, there exist mostly media of one political option, that of the ruling HDZ party.

Media in territories controlled by the Sarajevo government were more liberal. In big cities, in Sarajevo and Tuzla, and less in Zenica and Mostar, media of a critical and independent orientation were developed. But in local communities, almost with no exception, the media were part of the propaganda apparatus of the local civilian and military authorities. Private radio and TV stations shared that fate. The most influential media organization – state RTV BiH – was under the influence of the authorities in Sarajevo and the ruling Bosniak-Moslem party SDA.

With the end of the war, the media, which during the war had to have a more or less propaganda function, become one of the most important factors of restoring peace and trust or obstructing that aim.

II Media picture of Bosnia-Herzegovina

According to Media Plan's first research, during 1994/95, in territories controlled by the BiH Army (data in other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina could not be reached), there were 105 newspapers and other publications (two daily newspapers), 43 radio stations, 16 local TV stations and the state RTV BiH with one channel each, and four news agencies. A total of 272 active media saw the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the Federation – 203, and in the Republika Srpska – 69. In March 1997 that figure was 490 (in the Republika Srpska 220, and in the Federation 270). According to Media Plan's data, there were 59 radio stations and 18 TV stations in the Republika Srpska in December of 1997. In the Federation – 97 radio stations and 34 TV stations. Total: 156 radio and 52 TV stations. Most radio and TV stations are in state ownership (122), while 50 are privately owned. The rest are in mixed ownership, in transition or undefined forms of ownership. Six daily newspapers are published (Oslobodjenje, Večernje Novine, Avaz – in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Glas Srpski, "Serb" Oslobodjenje and Nezavisne Novine in the Republika Srpska), as well as 10 weeklies. Their publishing dynamics has generally stabilized.

The media expansion in the war, in territories that are today part of the Federation, was helped by the quite liberal conditions for founding media, but also by the significant foreign support. Alternative media and those with an independent orientation have received most assistance (equipment, newsprint and printing costs, training of staff) from SOROS, the European Commission, Council of Europe, USAID and many other international and national foundations. State media in the Federation have been given assistance by some European and Islamic nations. Support to local radio and TV stations in the Federation and Republika Srpska mainly came from local authorities and various organizations in Europe, who were urged by refugee associations there. Assistance from international and national organizations and foundations to independent and alternative media in the Republika Srpska started after the signing of the Dayton Agreement. During the war, all media organizations in this territory were under the direct influence of the Pale regime. An exception is the herald of free journalism in the RS – "Novi Prelom" from Banja Luka, which had been banned.

Lack of money and technical problems made some local radio and TV stations stop working from time to time or reduce their programs only to music, information and generally unselective

night satellite programs. The production and technical standards of most local radio and TV stations are distinctly low, so even stations which should be closed according to program-journalistic and technical criteria, remain on air. Still, no station founded on the eve of the war or during it has definitely stopped working, which shows that electronic media are still an important factor of political-ideological influence. In towns, the control of which changed hands, the military authorities would first stop the work of the radio station, and possibly the TV station as well.

The uncertain position of local electronic media started after the war, when the state RTV BiH restored control of its transmitters. A number of TV stations in the Federation stopped working at that time. The biggest post-war blow to electronic media was inflicted when the work of RTV Srpska – Studio Pale was banned, due to non-compliance with the spirit of the peace agreement, which significantly changed the configuration of the radio diffusion system in the Republika Srpska.

Many newspapers are changing their publishing dynamics, design, format and even concept, in a search for secure funding sources. In general, expert analyses show that print media have a higher quality of media production than electronic media, which are expanding in number, but are professionally stagnating or even regressing. Among print media, probably motivated by the struggle for the market, the Sarajevo-based reviews “Slobodna Bosna,” “Dani” and “Svijet,” and the Banja Luka-based “Reporter” are achieving new quality.

III Lack of professionalism – consequences of the war

The war has left big consequences on both media and journalists. Three media systems have been established (Republika Srpska, Bosniak and Croat parts of the Federation), as a consequence of national, political and territorial divisions in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They do not correspond mutually. Used to being a propaganda tool of “their side” during the war, journalists are slowly in peacetime getting used to the authentic role of the media – to inform, to educate and to entertain. For months after the cessation of clashes, many media could not get rid of dirty language and accept the role intended for them by the peace: to be a factor of establishing trust and spreading the spirit of tolerance. RTV Srpska surpassed the others in this.

With the start of the election campaign in 1996, the media situation changed somewhat in certain parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The relatively most significant progress was made in the Republika Srpska, in which the totalitarian media situation was violated by several alternative newspapers critical towards the authorities (Alternativa – Doboj, Novi Prelom – Banja Luka, Panorama – Bijeljina, Nezavisne Novine – Banja Luka) and radio and TV stations (NTV Banja Luka, Best Radio Šipovo). Other private TV and radio stations were also founded. However, they generally avoid dealing with political issues and do not have developed news programs.

The beginning of pluralization in one part of the RS media space is a result of pressure by the international community, foreign assistance, but also of the initiative and courage of journalists. This support has given way to new initiatives: the Banja Luka review “Reporter” started being published last year, NESS Radio Banja Luka was formed, as well as Feniks Radio in Prijedor, and with the help of the OBN network the Alternative TV from Banja Luka and several smaller private radio and TV stations. Current political changes in the Republika Srpska will certainly give a new impetus to media development. Perhaps expansion in numbers should not be expected, but what can be expected is improved quality of the present media and their increasingly democratic orientation.

Media pluralization in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina has had a more favorable start. Liberal media who survived the war or developed during it, (Oslobodjenje, Dani, Slobodna Bosna, Studio 99, Radio Zid – all from Sarajevo, Zetel from Zenica, Front Slobode, RTV TUZLA and Radio Kameleon from Tuzla, SAFAX news agency and some others), significantly articulated the democratic ambiance of the general public in the first months of peace.

They are also bearers of many initiatives for linking media organizations from the two entities, which contributes to decreasing political tension and paves the way for media ties in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Ogledalo – a joint leaflet in several weekly papers in the Republika Srpska and BiH Federation; cooperation between Nezavisne Novine – Banja Luka and Večernje Novine – Sarajevo; exchange among the magazines Reporter, Nezavisne Novine, Dani, Slobodna Bosna, founding of Media Plan’s information center in Banja Luka, Soros Media Center education projects, founding of first inter-entity youth magazine “Nepitani,” launching of a network of program exchange between local radio stations – FONO-SAFAX). However, there have been no significant new media projects in the Federation lately. The latest one is the founding of the third

daily newspaper – “Dnevni Avaz,” which is paving its way on the market both with an aggressive approach and with abundant help from the authorities controlled by the ruling Bosniak party. The long-announced national Bosniak television station – Ljiljan still has not started working. We believe the reason is media saturation.

The situation in BiH Federation territory controlled by the ruling Croat party (western Herzegovina and parts of central Bosnia) is completely unsatisfactory. There is almost nothing new compared to the situation during the war.

IV State RTV networks most influential

Crucial influence on the general public is exerted by state RTV networks. These are RTV BiH (Sarajevo), Srpska Television (Pale – Banja Luka), Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna (Mostar), TV Herceg-Bosna (Široki Brijeg), as well as the RTV stations of the neighboring states of Yugoslavia and Croatia, which cover Bosnia-Herzegovina well. Program effects have lately also been achieved by OBN, the network founded by the international community.

The OSCE and other international factors right after Dayton succeeded to a certain degree in exerting pressure on Sarajevo and Pale and in ensuring in their programs the equal representation of parties which ran in the 1996 elections. However, partiality towards the incumbent authorities and ruling parties was not concealed in informative, documentary and call-in broadcasts, particularly those where the editorial’s stand is pronounced. RTV Srpska surpassed the others in this, as well as media under the control of the Croat Democratic Union, of which some did not even want to broadcast required OSCE messages.

Our analyses show that the media have not had much influence on the creation of a pluralistic political environment and free opinion of voters in the 1996 general elections and 1997 local elections. Namely, a much bigger effect was achieved by the ruling political options that directly or indirectly resulted from the overall radio and TV programs, than by the very formalized and often uninventive pre-election broadcasts and spots of the OSCE, which presented opposition parties or advocated political pluralism. Fear and mistrust, successfully manipulated by the ruling parties, determined the decisions of voters even before the election campaign began.

The international community invested enormous funds in influencing the creation of a democratic environment in the country through the media, particularly RTV. However the infection of the media with warmongering vocabulary and mistrust was too big to enable better results to be achieved in a short time. Part of responsibility for the effects that were lesser than expected lies in the very short time given for election activities, insufficiently planned methods of work (especially in the education field) and insufficient dependence on domestic (local) resources. The launching of an international TV network (first TVIN, then OTN, and now OBN – Open Broadcasting Network) had a noble goal – to break through communication blockades, cover the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina, give balanced information and spread trust among people. However, the manner in which this task was conducted was catastrophic. The aims, strategy and tactics were constantly changed and two precious years and great funds were lost. A certain stabilization in the program field and influence has been noticed lately.

Still, a serious conclusion that can be made is that Radio Television BiH (Sarajevo), thanks to pressure from the international community, but also to its own editorial policy, has generally abandoned propaganda vocabulary, and it approaches with a high level of tolerance the task of giving information and interpreting events and the spirit of the Dayton agreement. This media organization in its programs does not spread hatred and calls for coexistence, but when its overall program structure is analyzed in-depth (not only the informative structure), as well as most views present in journalist commentaries, the conclusion that is reached is that it expresses mainly Bosniak stands and Bosniak cultural and other traditions in the very complex interethnic relations in this country. RTV BiH is not influenced by the ruling SDA party in every part of its program, but it is defining itself more and more as a media organization of a Bosniak orientation. (See monitoring “TV BiH – attitude towards the federal partner,” November 1 – December 31, 1996, and “Attitude towards incidents in Mostar,” February 10 – 15, 1997)

Serb Radio Television, which used to broadcast from two studios – Pale and Banja Luka, in the course of 1997 launched an aggressive campaign against the international community, but also against the spirit of the Dayton agreement, reactivating its warmongering vocabulary. Under the influence of political changes in the Republika Srpska (separation of President Biljana Plavšić from the Pale regime), Studio Banja Luka separated itself. In September of 1997, SFOR, after several warnings to the editorial staff and founder of RTV Srpska, took control of transmitters and practically abolished studio Pale’s program. With this act, the High Representative actually

started applying his new powers in the media field. Unfortunately, this unpopular measure turned out to be more efficient than all other media and political actions undertaken. After that, the media situation started to radically change in a positive direction, although the state RTV concept in the Republika Srpska remains unclear, and part of territory is insufficiently covered. Still, it turned out that it was much more simple to make this move than to turn to much more professional work after it. Serb TV Banja Luka abandoned “inflammatory” vocabulary. It took a much more cooperative attitude towards the international community and had more respect for the Dayton agreement. However, the deeply routed habit of obedience to the authorities has put it in a completely devoted position towards the incumbent authorities in Banja Luka.

The High Representative issued a similar ultimatum-like warning to Croat RTV Mostar. This station opposed the international community’s stands and instead of changing its editorial policy – it completely stopped broadcasting news program. However, the Croat political establishment in Bosnia is not counting on too much effect to be made by Bosnian Croat media. Its strategy is to incorporate Croatian RTV from Zagreb into the Bosnian media space as much as possible, “because it is the real bearer of the overall Croat interest.”

It is exactly on that issue – whether Bosnia-Herzegovina can have a single state (public) RTV – that the interests of the three ruling political parties clash. The Bosniak political leadership requests a single state RTV, but provokes suspicion because it displays a desire for Bosniak dominance in the program. Croat politicians request a national radio television station, and are less interested in participating on the principles of complete equality in building an entity RTV, which is in line with the character of the BiH Federation (Bosniak-Croat federation). The Serbs so far have not shown any interest in anything that is common, because they proceed from the opinion that the Republika Srpska is an independent state. While discussions continue, RTV BiH, which is the successor to the former Radio Television Sarajevo, is collapsing in terms of equipment, program and staff. The Duesseldorf-based Media Institute has prepared a draft Law on Radio Television (commercial and public), but there is still no agreement on it. This stalemate concerning public media blocks any ambitious definition of a media development strategy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially for electronic media. The High Representative has made several initiatives in that field, including the necessity of passing new and modern legislation, but there are still blockades on part of the local political forces. Public RTV networks are the most influential, and without their democratization, professionalization and finding the most favorable

legal status, there can be no radical progress in the field of media pluralism and professionalism in Bosnia.

V Education – priority in media development

Media Plan monitors and analysts, during two years of permanent media monitoring in Bosnia-Herzegovina, have noticed many unprofessional actions and manipulation of information and have presented it to the public. The most frequent among them were so-called negative selection of information, changing the sense of news items, usage of a small number of sources of information and citing only state and official sources, giving comments before giving the news, passing judgment without arguments, dirty vocabulary, public preference of one and discrediting of another political option.

State electronic media in the Republika Srpska and parts of the BiH Federation controlled by the HDZ are even today in the direct service of the ruling parties and a factor of maintaining political tension and spreading mistrust. State electronic media in the BiH Federation have a far more balanced program.

Therefore, professional education of journalists remains the main direction of the media development strategy. However, a cloud of a terrifying business crisis is hanging over the media skies in Bosnia. Used to being supported on donations, most media organizations are not managing well on the media market which is in its infancy. This, let us call it market, particularly in the Republika Srpska, is still not ruled by real economic laws. Almost no one can survive on selling newspapers and on commercials, and even state RTV networks live miserably without enough money. People who head media organizations know little about media management and marketing. Training in media business is equally important as boosting journalist professionalism.

With quality competition, those who are bad will collapse, but the problem is if projects, which have a chance on the market and which have acquired a reputation, collapse because they are not run well.

Education so far has mostly been based on the principle of training. "Crash" courses were organized and visits to media organizations were made. Although numerous, they were expensive, unplanned and they yielded insufficient effects. An exception is the highly-professional system of work applied by the Soros Media Center from Sarajevo, the BBC school for RTV journalists, and the announced school of journalism by Media Plan Sarajevo and ESJ Lille, which is due to open in October. Efficient projects which have a chance of developing include those that link journalist and management training and technical support (Internews). Or, support to local organizations for educating their own media education experts (Media Plan).

VI Independent and alternative – what is that?

The request to identify "independent" and "alternative" media in Bosnia-Herzegovina always puts analysts in a dilemma. What criteria to apply and does everyone who reads such reports understand these terms in the same way? Therefore, we will elaborate the criteria used by Media Plan.

Media Plan experts generally do not use the term "independent media," but instead "media of an independent orientation." This terminological difference is not insignificant. Absolutely independent media do not exist even in theory, and in Bosnian circumstances they often have many restrictions. Closest to this name should be media:

- which are on the market, that is, media with an independent economic basis,
- which do not accept politically-conditioned donations,
- which are privately owned, therefore have no editorial restrictions by the state,
- which are outside the reach of political and military censorship,
- which are outside the reach of pressures and conditions imposed by the state, big advertisers, political parties, centers of economic power and political and economic underground,
- which have a high level of authorial liberties of journalists and editorial independence,
- which consider the highest criteria of journalism to be -- professionalism, not self-censorship.

None of these criteria are displayed completely in the current situation here. Only by combining them is it possible to reach the answer of which media have an "independent orientation."

The criterion of independence based on the market is for the time being generally inapplicable. The media market is just appearing and few can support themselves on advertisements and other services. Still, we assess that some media organizations (Slobodna Bosna, TV Hajat – Sarajevo, Radio M - Sarajevo, Radio Kameleon – Tuzla, NTV – Zenica, Zenica, Radio Vicom – Bosanska Gradiška etc.) ensure an independent orientation to a significant degree by having their own income.

The criterion of "unconditional donations" is much more important today for assessing independence than the position of the media on the market. We have accepted it in a positive sense. Donations by their nature are conditional – they are given to support or develop some activity preferred by the donor. Most donations given by the international community are aimed at supporting media professionalism and democratic character of program. However, in official circles in both entities, these donations are treated as a subjugation of the media, an anti-national, unpatriotic act or imposition of values that do not belong here. Of course, there are also "gray donations," which nothing is known about. Donations from some Islamic nations given to some media (IC 7 Kakanj or BM Radio Zenica) were conditioned with the application of Islamic customs in business communication and in the organization of work of these media. On the other hand, Studio 99's exit from the TVIN/OBN network was publicly explained with "conditioning on the part of the international community which hampers Studio 99's independence." There are also, although they are rare, speculative moves of some radio and TV station owners. At the beginning of their work, they declare themselves to be media of solely professional criteria, and when they get donations, they abandon this concept. In this analysis, under "unconditional donations," Media Plan has dealt with international support to pluralist and liberal journalism.

"Private ownership" can only partly be regarded as a pure criteria of independence. It is known that the ownership transformation process was suspended by the war and that it has not continued (laws have just been adopted). The pre-war socialist social ownership is today treated as state ownership, although its titular actually still does not exist. A number of the media carried out ownership transformation before the war and those media, according to the journalists, are now in the hands of journalists or have mixed ownership (both private and state). The authorities revoked these rulings in the war, so these media now do not know whom they belong to (Radio Konjic, Radio Zenica). Officially, a revision of all pre-war transformations will be carried out in the Federation. Large media organizations, such as Oslobodjenje, will also be subject to this.

During the war, radio stations with unclear ownership were founded under war laws. There were cases of the local authorities requisitioning privately-owned equipment and mobilizing journalists and technicians to make a public municipal radio or TV station. After the war, these people are requesting the return of requisitioned equipment and regard the station to be private. On the other hand, the authorities gave a number of private entrepreneurs whom they support some special concessions (free premises, equipment and so on), so owners of such stations, although formally considered to be private, are regarded as belonging to the state or municipality. Even without a contract with the municipality on exercising a public function, they actually have that function, which often consists of promoting the stands of the local authorities. Such is the case with Radio Slobodno Brčko (Rahić), ASK Radio, TV Fiva Sarajevo, etc. Privatization laws in the Republika Srpska still have not been passed.

Officially, "military censorship" was not introduced in the war either in the Federation or in the RS. There had been different forms of information control, but mostly "agreements" with editors and directors. That system was especially efficient in territories covered only by state media. Political censorship was carried out through directors and editors whom the authorities (actually the political parties) had named in the state media. The biggest effect in the political determination of program was achieved through journalists' self-censorship, which was proclaimed as a professional act of journalistic responsibility for the uttered word. This form of censorship is very present even today and is urged in the name of "patriotism" and "national interests."

It is impossible to efficiently monitor the different "media conditions" imposed by the state, political parties, economic centers of power and the "underground." They are visible in public incidents, and indirect conclusions are reached through a quality analysis of media content.

"Authorial freedom and editorial independence" are the criteria we applied on media regardless of their ownership. We noticed that this criterion was pronounced also for some radio and TV stations which are formally owned by the state or municipality. Such is the case with radio and TV Tuzla (Radio Tuzla is owned by the municipality, and TV Tuzla is undergoing the transformation process) and RTV Mostar (unclear ownership), Radio Zavidovići, etc. In the Republika Srpska, most private radio and TV stations are oriented towards commercial, non-political program.

The term "alternative media organization" is less complex. In our analyses, under the term "alternative" we looked at media which by their editorial-political orientation differ from the dominant media environment. Therefore, these are media which are trying to make the monistic media ambiance into a pluralistic one. There are two kinds of media here. The first depend on some political party or state structure and have a recognizable political option that they more or less advocate (e.g. NTV Banja Luka, Nezavisni Radio Banja Luka or Radio Tuzla). If they are backed by a party, they should as a rule not be regarded as media of an independent orientation, but they are alternative. The second example is Studio 99. It is open information-wise towards different political options, but it has its own recognizable committed stand which is close to the stand of part of the opposition, although it is independent of the opposition. Therefore, the character of program, not the ownership status, determines who may be called an "alternative media organization."

The first private radio in the Republika Srpska was radio BIG from Banja Luka. Many expected it to become the guiding star of independent journalism. In the meantime, Radio BIG avoided many offers of donations and claimed to have therefore preserved its independence as a commercial radio. Still, its not too abundant news program has in the meantime become a stronghold of official policy from Pale, perhaps by the will of the owner, and perhaps due to strong pressure on him. Therefore, an independent owner, but not independent journalism.

Most media organizations in the Republika Srpska, which call themselves independent, are close to the orientation of President Biljana Plavšić, and even of the new RS government, and generally express Serb national interest. This still does not mean they are becoming "dependent." This is more a choice of a more democratic option, and only after the political situation stabilizes will it be possible to say who has succeeded in maintaining the criterion of "independent orientation."

Alternative media and media of an independent orientation are based in the western part of the RS. All have appeared in the first and second year after the Dayton plan. The region of Pale, eastern Bosnia and eastern Herzegovina are covered only by regime media. An impetus for founding private stations was given by the Decision of the RS Government on allocating rights for the temporary usage of radio diffusion frequencies (October 1996). Frequencies (with paid

licenses) were given to 15 private radio stations. Probably out of fear of having their expensive frequency taken away from them, only four stations broadcast their own news program. By the same decision, 11 private TV stations received frequencies, and nine have started broadcasting.

The first media organizations of this nature in the BiH Federation appeared in the beginning of 1992, and their number kept increasing during the war. Some of them have a pronounced civic orientation. A pluralistic media situation ever today characterizes large urban centers in which the multiethnic values of coexistence have been more or less preserved and in which political life is also pluralistic. Today alternative media and media of an independent orientation best cover Sarajevo and Tuzla, followed by Zenica, Mostar and Visoko. For the first time radio stations with a certain indication of an independent orientation have appeared in the part of the Federation that is controlled by Croat authorities (Radio Neum and Family Radio Valentino).

In Media Plan's opinion, the process of development of new media organizations of this sort is stagnating, but some local media formally founded by the authorities, in the situation of insufficient funds, want to break away from them. Latest media analyses of five of the best known electronic media organizations of an independent orientation (RTV Mostar, NTV Zetel, TV Hajat, TV Tuzla and Studio 99), show that in addition to a business crisis, they are also in a professional crisis (poor quality of radio and TV production). These flaws lessen the effects of their independent editorial policies. There are no serious expert surveys that would give credible results on the real scope and influence of these stations.

VII What now and how to go on?

International support to the establishment of modern and democratically-oriented media in Bosnia has been huge. Still, media transformation cannot be carried out in a single breath, in such a short time. Unlike other countries in transition, consequences of a war and the heritage of an old system have to be overcome here parallel with one another.

Generally, in our view, the international community should:

-- continue to give support to state bodies in passing modern media legislation at entity level, and efficiently assist in resolving and defining these functions at the level of the entire state.

-- lend assistance to media organizations and responsible institutions with regard to ownership transition in the process of privatization or revision of earlier ownership transformations.

-- employ efficient pressure on the ruling structures and give assistance, especially to journalists, in transforming state electronic media into public media.

-- continue to support various forms of education of journalists and media staff, oriented not only to journalists, but also to managers, marketing and market research experts, new media technologies and protection of copyrights.

-- motivate the development of existing and formation of new local organizations and institutions dealing with education, media research, surveys and new technologies.

-- provide efficient funds for supporting existing ones and founding new media organizations.

Direct assistance to media organizations should be based on the following criteria:

-- independent orientation of the editorial staff regardless of nature of ownership,

-- professional independence and authorial freedom,

-- respect for the code of journalism,

-- promotion and protection of human rights,

-- media quality and reputation achieved in the public so far,

-- ability of adapting to the media market.

We expect the international community to continue to help so-called small, local projects, because they are the basis of the development of local democracy. Priority support should be given to those who have succeeded, and to new ones only if their ideas and announced effects are exclusive, therefore it should be more restrictive than so far. An exception are priority areas.

Investments in large projects should satisfy two criteria:

first, they should give efficient support to restoring trust and implementing the peace agreement in the global field (entity and inter-entity)

second, such projects should generate a new media environment and development of modern journalism and new technologies.

The long-term strategy of OBN should be defined within this issue.

Finally, the international community and donors should have more trust in domestic media staff and experts.

Sarajevo, January '98