

deScripto

A Journal of Media in South Eastern Europe

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**Media Reports on
all SEE Countries**

**Country Focus
Romania**

Educating Journalists

- Journalism as a Profession
- Students' Views on their Education
- Training for Minority Media
- Studying Investigative Journalism

imprint

deScripto

Media in South Eastern Europe
Published quarterly

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Mission Statement

deScripto is committed to the enhance-
ment of a climate of critical reflection
on media culture and communication,
in and among the SEE countries.
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Professional School for Journalism,
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Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO),
deScripto is an independent journal of
analysis and opinion dedicated to the
democratisation of the media and the
development of civic society in the SEE
Region.

The views expressed in deScripto are
entirely those of the authors and do not
represent the positions of SEEMO/IPI.

Letter from Editor

Dear readers,

The whole of South East-
ern Europe is in a process
of transition demanding
enormous effort on behalf
of countries, people and
institutions in the region.
These changes have reach-
ed a tempo, which does
not allow the necessary depth this process requires to
engage the daily consciousness of people. Never-
theless, this process also needs the concentrated at-
tention of European countries, which are aware of
the importance of peaceful relations to and between
SEE countries.

We are talking about a partnership of learning. No
side can add to it or use this commodity alone, for it
asks that both sides be involved. deScripto embodies
this insight and engages often-quoted Austrian,
East- and South Eastern groups together in a project
aimed at a mutual future goal.

We want to reach all the experts in the region
responsible for developments and decisions in this
mix of media, education, politics and culture in or-
der to support them in their transitional discourse.
This discourse should help exceed mental bounda-
ries within the region, so that mutual attention, need-
ed to overcome cultural differences, can be focused.
Media is the agent through which this can be achiev-
ed. Therefore, developing a corresponding mentali-
ty between groups and countries is a necessary condi-
tion of media work in the region.

deScripto wants to get involved in this discourse
and mobilise it from the side of persons affected. For
this reason, we focus on a topic in each issue which
in our opinion needs attention. This issue is dedica-
ted to the very complex topic of the training and
education of media and communication profession-
als, especially journalists. These concepts are histo-
rically and culturally conditioned, and very different
from country to country. Still, there is a mutual prob-
lem: journalists want to practice professionally, but
cannot manage without a diverse and intelligent
educational base. The programmes available do not
always meet these conditions. To say it clearly: the
situation is not ideal in any SEE country.

We hope to bring dynamism into the training and
education debate with articles in this issue, which
mostly originate from young journalism students.
This discussion is meant to enrich critical knowled-
ge and consciousness. We would be very grateful for
any feedback.



Thomas A. Bauer
Editor-in-Chief

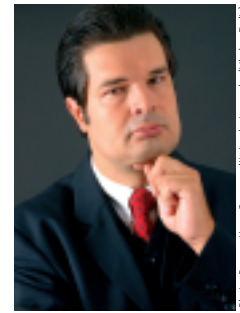
Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers!

Personally, I am concer-
ned about hate speech, and
the unethical or unprofes-
sional reporting of some
media in the region. Some
journalists are working
more as political party pro-
pagandists than as profes-
sionals. It is still possible to find in some papers com-
ment pieces written by editors with an "open call" to
lynch a person only because she or he has a different
political idea or belongs to a minority. During the
spring of 2005 there were several such examples in
the Serbian media following the signing of a Kosovo-
related document by Goran Svilanovic, former
foreign minister (following the 2000 political chang-
es) of Serbia-Montenegro. Not sharing the same
opinion as someone is the right of an editor, but cal-
ling for a lynch is not.

We must not forget that some media and party-
orientated journalists played an active role starting in
the 80s and during the wars in former Yugoslavia as
propagandists serving a political option, party or
state and spreading the ideas of war and hate against
a nation or a minority. If someone asks me how to
differentiate these writers from professionals, I
always give one answer: I do not consider these peo-
ple professional journalists, just propagandists. Of
course, only professional journalists' organisations
have the right to say who is a professional. The idea
that governments or other state institutions can deci-
de who is and who is not a journalist, as they did in
the past and still do in some countries, is as absurd as
the writing of the propagandists. The striving for
professional standards and education of journalists in
South Eastern Europe are for this reason still very
important.

Life also has its sad moments. Between our last and
this edition of deScripto, SEEMO lost two members.
Stojan Cerovic, one of the best known Serbian dissi-
dent journalists, first president of the Belgrade Anti-
War Center (1991-1993) and a founder of the inde-
pendent Belgrade weekly Vreme, died on 21 March.
Perica Vucinic, founder and owner of the magazine
Reporter, died on 27 April. It was the third big loss
for SEEMO in recent months, the other being the
death of Dr. Maria Tacke (formerly Stoppacher), a
year-long partner of SEEMO and former chief of the
Austrian government's Federal Press Service. She died
in Khao Lak in Thailand following the earthquake
and tsunami waves in December 2004.



Oliver Vujovic
Publisher

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deScripto Dossier: **Media Education**

Understanding Journalism

Journalism is a profession in transition. That fact makes education in journalism not easier and demands more than ever before to shift from learning the profession to study the complex environmental conditions of journalism culture. A plea for academisation of journalism formation.

by Thomas A. Bauer

Media companies or editors have not been interested too much in employment of academically educated youngsters.

For a long time journalism education and training in Europe was based on the development of personal talent and skills training. Developing students' already existing personal resources, talents and skills – such as an inquisitive interest in public affairs and the ability to use language creatively - is a practical and pragmatic way to learn the profession. This may be the reason many journalism teachers and trainers are content with simply delivering rules about how to do the job. Any further questions (such as what are you doing in respect to society and why) have been often rejected as idealistic or theoretical games. The didactic method of learning the profession, focused on doing it (not thinking it) worked and works as long as we thought and still think that journalism was simply the capture of events in words or in wordy formats to bring it to public attention. Being able to write or speak rhetorically or figuratively was enough to create a journalistic career.

Great and ambitious concepts such as investigative journalism did not significantly change this way of thinking, except when the requirement for sophisticated methods of research was a special talent for insisting on and gathering facts and results. Media companies and editors have not been very interested in employing academically educated young people because they bring with them more critical theories than practical skills. Many owners found and still find it easier to become commercially successful with journalists who do their job according to the rules of the art. What they may be ignoring is that - besides new technology and market challenges - the ability of the profession has changed to the professionalism of the ability.

Under the conditions of an advanced, organised, democratically self-responsible and market-driven society, journalistic professionalism is much more than just professional journalism. It is the critical

application of analytical knowledge of diverse relevant topics and discourses in research and editorial work in order to give the audience the opportunity to join in public discourse on whatever is relevant to society. Reaching that level of quality demands more than just professionalism, which is in any case a “cold word”. It requires an understanding of the profession, and it necessitates competence, as it is a discipline embedded in an environment of conscious and communicative engagement

Only mixed models in the form of academically driven journalism schools which also provide a practical element will have a chance to convince the practitioners. But American journalism ideals in U.S. universities do not have a tradition in Europe. In many countries there is a two-pillar system in which academic education and professional training are supplied by the media houses themselves. Behind that split system (theoretical education here – practice there) may exist a deep, mutual mistrust between proponents of scientific discipline and everyday practice. Academic teaching/learning and research proclaim the media a cultural good. They are by definition a critical analysis of journalistic practice, with the view that journalism is a self-reflecting system of society and culture.

Media Literacy for Media Workers

Professional education in journalism is more than just the development of personal writing or speaking skills. It is and has to be the planned process of inducing attitudes, transmitting skills and providing knowledge necessary to understand the media as a platform for social discourse. Of course, a university degree provides no guarantee that its holder has achieved personal competence in communication. Indeed the university system often leaves students with the attitude that the principal use of education

Professional education in journalism is more than just a development of personal writing or speaking talents.

is to impress the less educated. However, such knowledge is important to achieve education in active media literacy. Understanding media as a means of societal self-reflection within an economic framework means to be aware of the cultural and public function of media as an economic good. Any good academic programme in journalism should offer general education as a framework for communication. However, media techniques are likely only available if the university programme is specifically aimed at the practice of journalism. Knowledge of equipment, specialised writing and speaking skills, the handling of information, use of description and argumentation, understanding production techniques, media organisation and management, and personal knowledge management – these depend on specific media and communications training.

In general, training in these personal and technical elements can only be achieved if expensive equipment is available. This condition is very often not met at universities. However, many such programmes have been started with minimal university-owned equipment through co-operative arrangements with local media organisations. In this context it is worth noting that a university-based educational programme in communications and media pays substantial dividends to the university because information is made available which might otherwise be missed: there is contact to and the exchange of knowledge from other disciplines. This is the plus of learning and teaching journalism within the framework of an academic community - students are provided with challenging discussions, and they are exposed to several points of view on subjects relevant to the development of society. University-based training in journalism, immersed as it often is by “real life conditions”, may also teach students decision-making competence in a complex world. And it seems to be a greater challenge to learn this than clear-cut journalism skills.

New Shifts in Journalism

Society and its systems are becoming more and more interconnected; organising social life has become a process requiring reliable information. In this context, journalism is going through a transitional process marked by the disappearance of old-style professionals on one side and by new forms of journalism on the other. Journalism itself will not die, but it is changing its function and structure in a fundamental way. Journalism is about following the market, and thus it is expanding into marketing, technology, entertainment, and public relations. Because of these shifts, journalism is leaving the role of societal self-observation, but becoming a provider of discourse-style conversation and conversational discourse. Job market data in many countries shows that media

people do not in general have trouble finding work – and this in an environment of persistently high structural unemployment. This seems to be true especially for university graduates. Due to functional and structural changes numerous new job profiles have emerged, in particular in the field of special interest journalism. All developments point to the reality that journalism is facing a future of extension – even as is changing substantially internally - because society is demanding new profiles. Online communication has stimulated the evolution of new ways of storytelling in hypertext formats, and that alone has been shaping new journalistic talents.

It erodes the distinction between fact and fiction, between information and entertainment, between formats of narration, between print, radio and television, between until now different job descriptions, between management and editorial work, between journalism, public relations, marketing, and advertising, and, last but not least, between the roles of producers and consumers of media.

Programmes, formats, content, style, and even the rituals of using or consuming media reflect the wishes and the will of people to overcome the old-fas-

Understanding media means to be aware and conscious of its cultural and publicistic function as an economic good.



Photo by Thomas Hirscher

hioned system driven by rules and to enter a free and individual experiment in personal life. What emerges is not so different from what is going on anywhere else; it is neither apocalypse, nor paradise. It is the normal madness of a media-minded market. The influence of economic factors on journalism has been proven; it has been the subject of many experiments in many countries under many special conditions. It is as such not a new phenomenon. However, the relationship between economy and mass media – in the new democracies of South Eastern Europe as well as elsewhere - seems to be expanding into a new level of public communication. ■

Small Steps Big Aspirati

by Mathias Huter, Wolfgang Luef and Axel Maireder

Though journalism education is crucial in the development of media so it can fulfil its duties in a democratic system, training in South Eastern Europe is widely varied. However, throughout the region, the same problems exist: antiquated curricula and lack of money. Besides the Forum for European Journalist Students' (FEJS) Annual Meeting in Antalya, Turkey, *deScripto* talked to students from all over SEE, trying to capture their views on professional education, job opportunities and prospects for the future.

A good and substantiated education of young journalism students has to be seen as an important investment in the future.

Following the drastic changes that took place in most South East European countries 15 years ago, and the rise of democracy (sooner or later), journalists' aims and duties have changed dramatically. Before the changes, they were simply mouthpieces for state ideology, with the aim of maintaining the social order of the system. Today the task has changed to that of public watchdog, voice of the powerless, and critic of the powerful – following the basic assumptions of democracy. Although the switch certainly provides a tough challenge, it is not the only one faced by journalists in SEE countries. The changing face of the world media landscape, the rise of media conglomerates, and the decline in social security for journalists are new problems professional journalism has to struggle with. These problems are not, however, unique to South Eastern Europe. They are created in the SEE countries by a difficult economic situation and the youth of the democracies.

In order to establish and strengthen professional journalism so it can meet democratic needs and face the abovementioned problems, top priority must be placed on the education and training of the next generation of journalists. Ethical principals cannot be taken for granted, nor can social, political and economic knowledge. The solid education of young journalism students must be seen as an important investment in the future.

When it comes to Journalism Teaching institution's curricula a significant supply of sociology, law and media theory classes is remarkable.

All About Money

Unfortunately, in many countries journalism education is not seen in this light, and the complaints coming from those countries are the same: the financial base for good education is poor.

"We do not have any technical equipment," says Filip Nekovski, a journalism graduate from Skopje's Ss. Cyril and Method University. "We have informatics in our schedule, but no computers to work with. How does that work?" he asks.

Nika Kurent, a journalism student at the University of Ljubljana, states similar problems exist at her institution in Slovenia: "For the radio course we only have one mini-disk recorder to work with and only one or two cameras for television classes, which is basically nothing. The courses could be really different if we had more equipment."

The lack of money and equipment leads to another major criticism by journalism students: the lack of balance between theory and practice in their education. Many institutions and universities cannot afford enough of the classes needed to provide students with sufficient practical training to supplement their theoretical knowledge. The curriculum throughout South Eastern Europe, especially at public universities, contains a remarkable amount of sociology, law and media theory. On the other hand, writing classes and other applied training courses are scarcely found. In

Towards ons

Students' Views on South East European Journalism Education, Taken at a Young Journalists' Gathering in Antalya

Skopje, “most of the subjects are actually part of the law faculty or the political science department,” Nekovski explains, “we hardly have any precise journalism subjects.”

Old Ideas Prevail

While lack of money is one part of the problem, pedagogic stagnation is another. In the majority of countries, little attention has been turned on curriculum development. Most educational systems still date back from the days when journalists played another role. In the era of socialist Yugoslavia, for example, the academic education of journalists mainly focused on training in certain political views. “In that period, you studied Marxism, socialism and the political history of the Soviet Union or the United States of America. The base was ideological, there was no practical journalism training,” says Vladimir Petkovic from Serbia and Montenegro. The 25-year old graduated in journalism from the University of Belgrade and now works for the daily newspaper Politika. Petkovic explains that such ideological subjects were eliminated from the university curriculum after the one-party system fell. However, the professors have stayed the same. “So theoretical and practical education has stayed poor,” he says. Nekovski, who comes from Macedonia, wonders about the professors at his school, most of whom graduated 40 years ago and are still stuck in the old times. “They have failed to stay up-to-date, they sometimes have a knowledge gap between the years when they started teaching and now.”

Unaffordable Elite Education?

Other universities face a completely different situation. 22-year old Yana Yaneva from Sofia is studying journalism with a minor in business administration at the American University of Bulgaria (AUBG) in Blagoevgrad. The university, founded in 1991, was funded by the American association USAID. Now it “tries to be independent”, financing itself

through student fees, Yaneva says. These fees range from 2,000 up to 12,000 US Dollars a year, depending on a student's financial situation. Nevertheless, students from other Balkan countries, as well as from other parts of the world, are attending the university, which seems to be properly equipped. It has a local radio station as well as a weekly magazine and two online magazines, which are run by the institution. “We are focussing on the American press and the American system of journalism mainly. Many of the professors are American,” states Yaneva. Internships are obligatory; some students do them in America.

“It is a pre-judgement that only children of rich people are studying on the AUBG, this is not true. In general it is mixed,” Yaneva adds. Still, it raises the

The question is raised whether student fees that high lead to a kind of elitist journalism, because not everyone is able to afford the education.

Pictures: Journalism students from all over Europe discussing their profession at FEJS Annual Meeting 2005, Antalya;



“A journalist has to live and stay in touch with the people he is writing about.”
Ahu Özyurt

question whether such high student fees could lead to elitist journalism because not everyone is able to afford the education.

“A journalist who climbs up the ladder, lives in an upper-class neighbourhood and hangs out with the absolute elite cannot be a good journalist for the working or middle class,” warns Ahu Özyurt, a journalist from CNN Türk. “A journalist has to live with and stay in touch with the people he is writing about,” she adds.

While young people in Bulgaria still have the opportunity to study at a “cheap” public university, Moldavians lack the possibility to choose. The fee for attending a university in Moldova is about the monthly income of a middle-class family. “Along with people working outside Moldova, only a few businessmen can afford to send their children to university,” says Igor Taci, a Moldovan studying journalism in the Communication Faculty at Ankara University.

Enemies or Workers?

Compared to the fees at AUBG, those of Özgür Yaren - who is studying radio, television and cinema in the Faculty for Communication at state-owned Ankara University - are relatively low. Students pay a fee of hundred euro per year, which is low compared to those of other SEE state-owned institutions. “Still, many students complain about the fees, fearing an increase, and think that university education should be free of charge.”

Yaren shines a different light on the “theory vs. practise” question, emphasising the importance of a sophisticated base of knowledge. “I consider it an

advantage that we also cover the theoretical side. Our faculty is known as a very critical one because of that. Others are trying to produce workers instead of academics.”

“Enemies of the media, not workers for the media”, an important Turkish journalist once called students of Ankara University because of their critical views. According to Yaren, there are two different schools of thought in Turkey: The practice-oriented one and the theoretical, “more creative” one. “I know students from the Marmara University in Istanbul, for example, that are not attending their courses but instead focusing on working as journalists during their studies. They do not know who Habermas or Laswell are, but find their jobs easier. I do not think that this is the right way.”

The Life After

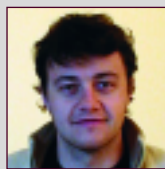
For the human resources departments of media companies, knowledge of Habermas and Laswell does not throw the decision to hire in favour of or against job applicants. Firms seem to prefer well-educated people with broad general knowledge and less know-how in the area of techniques over well-trained students from applied journalism schools. Some even favour specialists without any media knowledge. Nekovski points out: “It is very, very hard to sell yourself on the market after you have graduated with journalism because there is always another guy who graduated in economy, and he is better.”

What to do after graduating is the main concern of all the students. Media markets tend to be concentrated in many countries, and though journalism is a popular profession jobs are rare and hard to find.

“Many students complain about the fees, fearing an increase and think that university education should stay free of charge.”
Özgür Yaren

ad personas

We talked to six students and young journalists from Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Moldova besides the 20th FEJS Annual Meeting



Filip Nekovski, Macedonia
 SS. Cyril and Method University, Skopje

“We have informatics in our shedule, but no computers to work with.”



Igor Taci, Moldova
 Ankara University

“In Moldova, many students are driven by the hope to leave the country.”



Vladimir Petkovic, Serbia and Montenegro
 University of Belgrade

“The Serbian media market is a big anarchy.”



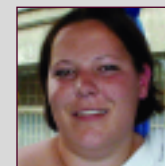
Özgür Yaren, Turkey
 Ankara University

“Our faculty is known as a very critical one because we also cover the theoretical side of communication.”



Yana Yaneva, Bulgaria
 American University of Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad

“It is a pre-judgement that only the rich are studying at our university.”



Nikka Kurent, Slovenia
 University of Ljubljana

“In Slovenia, your value on the market decreases after graduation.”

If there are jobs, they tend to be low-paid. Full employment remains a dream for many young journalists.

As Yaren points out, there are about 30 faculties for journalists in Turkey, “producing thousands of students, who are waiting to start earning money with this profession.” In Serbia, the situation is even worse. “A big anarchy”, is how Petkovic describes the media market in his country. “The number of broadcasting stations and newspapers in Serbia is enormous compared to its population, thus job opportunities are very small. The prediction is that two-thirds of the people working as journalists will lose their jobs.”

In the Republic of Macedonia, the situation seems to be better: “It’s not hard to find a job,” Nekovski says. “There are about 140 media outlets for a population of two million. Most media companies are hardly surviving. You can easily find a job as a journalist, although the salaries are very low.” Yaneva says that Bulgaria faces the same problem: good job opportunities, bad salaries.

In Slovenia, students are confronted with a particular problem: “You do not have a problem finding a job while you are studying, because you are a cheap worker. After graduation, your value on the market decreases,” says Kurent, adding companies pay less tax when they employ students.

Moldova’s students see education as a chance for a better future abroad. “Many people are driven by the hope of leaving the country,” Taci says of the mood in his country, which is often called Europe’s poorhouse. About a quarter of Moldavians have already left, and Taci is one them. He took the chance to study away from home after the Turkish government granted him a scholarship.

Aspirations

While complaining about current conditions, most students have a slightly more optimistic view of future developments. “In the last three or four years, things have moved forward. Supported by sponsors, the faculty now operates a radio station, a digital TV studio and a student magazine,” Petkovic says of his former school.

The questions of antiquated curricula and “theory overdose” are also expected to be solved soon, according to hopeful students. The Europe-wide homogenisation and modernisation of educational systems, and the so-called “Bologna Process” raise aspirations. “If it is adopted well, I think everything will work out fine,” Nekovski says, while Kurent hopes that developments will lead to a system that focuses on practice rather than theory. “The work has just started,” Nekovski states, “but every start is a good start.” ■

ad FEJS

20 Years of Student Networking

General Secretary Katja Zizek
on the Forum of European Journalism Students

Founded in 1985 by a handful of students who wanted to gather for some international chit-chat, the Forum for European Journalism Students (FEJS) has become in 2005 an organisation with members from 34 European countries, aimed at connecting young, prospective journalists. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, students from Portugal to Georgia and from Italy to Finland came together at Antalya’s windy coast for five days to review their role in the 21st century’s “New Media Structure”. Supported by some Turkish “grown-up” journalists and academics, a potpourri of topics was discussed, from

new methods of journalistic representation, storytelling and decision-making to the relationship between journalism and academia. As well as covering the conference, *deScripto* asked FEJS’s secretary general Katja Zizek, herself a student from Slovenia, about the aims of the organisation and her experiences with journalism education in SEE.

deScripto: What are the aims of a journalism students’ forum?

Zizek: We try to connect students and young journalists from different countries all over Europe so they can exchange views and broaden their notions on different countries, cultures and journalistic perceptions. It also provides a chance for students to build up networks for their current or future work, allowing them to easily exchange information on certain

topics from colleague to colleague throughout Europe. We are also providing information - journalistic as well as educational - and we will try to build up an exchange network.

How do you finance your activities?

Our main activity, the annual meeting, is held in a different country every year, and is financed by regional sponsors and participation fees. In some countries, schools provide help for regional activities.

However, as it is developed purely by volunteer work, the need for money is kept within a certain limit.

There is a remarkable ratio of students from South Eastern Europe in your organi-

sation, and the secretariat is based in the region (Ljubljana, ed. note) as well. Do you know why?

In my experience, South East European universities seem to provide less extra faculty education, which means people must search for other possibilities to broaden their views. Maybe that is the reason.

How would you characterise the situation of journalism education in Europe?

It is hard to make a general overview, as the systems highly differ between countries and even schools. But it seems there are still a lot of countries with a lack of practical training for young journalists. Lots of education is still based in communication science departments, but media companies seem to prefer people from applied journalism schools. ■

“FEJS provides a chance for students to build up networks for their current or future work, allowing them to easily exchange information on certain topics from colleague to colleague throughout Europe.”

“There are still a lot of countries, with a lack of practical training for young journalists.”

Voices for the

Educating Minority Media Journalists

by Hannes Goegle

Minority communities are tackling hard times in the mainstream media: thematic coverage is often inappropriate, and minority members are only infrequently included in media reports or are not present at all. The Centre for Independent Journalism in Budapest is implementing a regional project to educate Roma journalists. It believes the active participation of minority journalists can encourage the integration of a whole community.

“I wish to become a good journalist, fight corruption in my country and foster investigative journalism.”
Nikolas Jordan.

“I feel prepared and I think all my colleagues are too. Now we face open doors in front of us through which we see the world with different eyes,” said Nicolae Jordan at his March 2005 graduation party, which included 10 students of the Budapest-based Roma Mainstream Media Internship Programme.

The idea of educating Roma journalists through the internship programme, the first newsroom diversification project in the region, was launched in 1996 by the Hungarian Roma Press Centre. Just one year later, the Centre for Independent Journalism (CIJ) joined the pilot project and in 1998 it was given full responsibility for the programme. Since then, the CIJ has implemented yearly internship programmes for Roma journalists in Hungary, Slovakia (since 1999) and Romania (since 2000).

In 2004, the programme extended into nearby Bulgaria, where it is run through ACCESS, a Sofia-based NGO. In Macedonia, a similar project is planned to begin by the end of this year.

The goal of these programmes is to provide opportunities to talented young Roma, who must have at least a secondary education to participate, so they can develop careers and become integrated into the mainstream media. Frequently, mainstream journalists lack a connection to and understanding of the Roma community.

Interest in the project is high among media professionals as well as young Roma. Recent advertising through the mainstream media, Roma organisations, schools and cultural events have made the project more public. “In our 10 years of existence, we have been in extensive contact with the media, in particular to editors, ensuring the support of major media institutions and internship posts for all participants,” says Janis Overlock, director of Regional Roma Projects at CIJ in Budapest.

And Georgiana Ilie, the Romanian Projects coordinator, confirms: “We have up to four times more

applicants than we can accept as participants; this year we had to choose 15 from 70.” Most of the participants are under 30.

Ten intensive months teach how to practice journalism

Jordan found out about the programme through a Romanian NGO: “I simply sent my papers to the CIJ and was lucky enough to get selected.”

In Hungary, the 10-month programme includes a three-month theoretical introduction and seven months of practical training in one or more media institutions: “We teach basic journalism skills such as radio and television production, provide private tutoring in grammar and stylistics, professional voice broadcasting lessons, and workshops on media law and ethics. In addition, the students have the opportunity to study English and/or Romani,” Overlock explains.

“In Romania,” Ilie says, “editors are very dissatisfied with the academic education of journalists. Therefore, we stress more practical issues and teach the students how to write, how to document, how to double check, etc.”

“The first three months are very intensive: We had courses from 9 am to 7 pm,” Jordan says. “I appreciated the debates focusing on ethnic problems and conflicts, and mostly enjoyed the course on investigative journalism.”

“Our instructors and teachers come both from the region and abroad; they work at renowned newspaper, radio and TV institutions. The more professional the journalists are, the more they are interested in our project and want to share their experiences with the participants, and the less interested they are in an instruction fee,” confirms Janis Overlock from the Hungarian CIJ.

After the theoretical part has ended, “We do an evaluation in terms of strengths and abilities, and

Nikolas Jordan Center payed for rent, transport and scholarship.

Unbalanced reporting is often due to ignorance rather than on propose.

Voiceless

assign participants to the appropriate media: students with a good voice go to radio stations, students talented in politics go to major dailies and so on. Under the guidance of a tutor, they become part of the editing team and get first-hand experience,” Overlock explains.

Ilie adds: “We do not want to special treatment for our participants, we want them to be part of the team, to develop their own initiatives and give them the opportunity to be exposed to various subjects.”

Jordan spent his internship at two major economic newspapers in Bucharest. Overlock clarifies that “during this time, we talk to the mentors, watch and control what the intern publishes, give individual feedback and make a final assessment.”

From time to time, the Roma Press Centre hosts an intern. The centre, created as a non-profit NGO news agency in 1995, provides non-biased reports on Roma issues to international mainstream media. Flora László, who manages international requests, clarifies: “We want the interns to practice their skills and be involved in our newsroom. Indeed, young professionals are in touch with much more experienced colleagues, learn further interview techniques, observe where to get background information, how to edit an article, etc.”

Prospects of educated journalists

Between 1998 and 2005, 72 students graduated from the Roma Mainstream Media Internship Program. “This year, all interns in Hungary got full-time positions at major dailies. Although it is difficult to integrate graduates into the small media market, we have an average employment of 90 per cent after the course. Most of them keep working in the media, in major dailies, while others have set up their own radio programmes,” Overlock says. Ilie estimates the hiring success rate in Romania at two-thirds: “The problem in Romania is that there is no institutional culture and no response from many newsrooms. Every journalist wants to have a good story and many are not interested in collaboration with young colleagues.”

Despite the programmes successes, Roma journalists still constitute a minority among journalists and discrimination still represents a big problem.

However, thanks to the Roma Mainstream Media Internship Programme, it is more common for non-Roma journalists covering Roma issues to consult with a Roma colleague before writing a story.

Overlock hopes “that the interns will become bridges between majority and minority communities. As they progress in their careers, we also hope that they will become role models for other Roma youth, as well as stereotype-busters. As these young journalists succeed, they too will become voices for the voiceless in the media.” ■

Flora László: “One year is not enough. It gives a first hint on what a journalist is like, but still need a lot of practice.”

Pictures: Closing ceremony of Roma Internship Program organised by Foundation for Independent Journalism Budapest Photos by Marcell Lorincz



”Media Competence is the Key“

Lead personam



Photo provided by Tarik Jusic

Media literacy is the key idea underlying new challenges faced by media educators from both sides of the communication partnership: producers and consumers.

deScripto: Media competence has become a key statement in the context of media cultural development. It refers to the concept of people’s power in a democracy. It includes not only competence expected from journalists, but also on behalf of the audience. Within the context of democracy or democratisation of society, media literacy is a construct that supports the idea that media communication is complete only when the audience understands, or better yet, reflects on its possibilities for political and societal participation. It is assumed that such critical attitudes and skills in handling and using media are especially important in the new democracies of the South East. How about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina? What are the structural and environmental conditions here?

Tarik Jusic: Indeed, I agree that developing media competence beyond the narrow circle of journalists and politicians across the wider population is particularly important in newly emerging democracies such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in other transitional societies. The transition to democracy is particularly turbulent in respect to the media when there is an ongoing struggle for control over the means of public communication between various political groups, while civil society is too weak to counterbalance such tendencies. At the same time, there is a rapid proliferation of media in such societies: Bosnia and Herzegovina today has more than 40 terrestrial TV channels, and more than 130 radio channels, plus a significant number of channels from neighbouring Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro.

The country also has seven domestic daily papers and a dozen or so dailies from neighbouring countries. Additionally, we are witnessing the mushrooming of cable operators, and satellite dishes are widely used as well. Keeping in mind that the country has a population of about 3.5 million, we can say that our media system is more than oversaturated. How such a large number of media survive in such a tiny country is another issue. Nevertheless, numbers are not the only problem: For more than five years the country has struggled to establish a functional public service broadcasting system, and is still far from that goal.

There is an ongoing struggle for the control over the means of public communication between various political groups, whereas the civil society is too weak to counterbalance these tendencies.

Another important problem we face is a strong ethno-national division in the country and of media systems between Bosniak, Croat and Serb regions and their respective media. Such divisions also produce an ethnically segregated public sphere. It is obvious how easily such a situation can be abused for the purposes of political manipulation. These and many other problems call for a systematic approach to the promotion of media literacy across society if we want to have mature citizens capable of a critical and productive approach towards the media.

You are responsible for many programmes and projects invented, developed, and executed by Mediacentar in Sarajevo. Looking through the programmes I could remark that – among other things – the Mediacentar is strengthening broad development in media literacy. What is the concept behind the programming, what is the message to the media society, and what are the criteria for measuring results?

For a long period of time, beginning with the very creation of Mediacentar Sarajevo in 1995, the focus

Tarik Jusic holds a Ph.D. degree in Media and Communication Studies, University of Vienna, Austria, and MA degree in Political Science, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

Tarik works as a Program Director at the Mediacentar Sarajevo (www.media.ba), Bosnia and Herzegovina, and specialises in media policy issues and media and ethnic identities, on which he has published several articles in different publications.

tence

An Interview with Tarik Jusic of Media Centar Sarajevo

by Thomas A. Bauer

of our activities was on training journalists. But years of experience have taught us that journalists are not the only participants in the public sphere.

The specific situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (described above) calls for a more comprehensive approach to developing media competence within the wider population as a key precondition for the creation of a functioning public sphere and a vigorous civil society capable of establishing both a critical and productive relationship with journalists, the media, politicians and state institutions and agencies. A responsible and active citizen in a democratic society must be a competent citizen.

When a society is saturated and shaped by the media and its overwhelming flow of information, it is an absolute necessity to have media-competent citizens in order to have a functioning democracy. The Mediacentar tries to contribute to this goal, but our efforts are at the moment at a very basic initial level; the concept of media competence and media literacy are virtually unknown in this country, and it is rather hard to start an initiative from scratch.

We started by working with teachers, ministries of education, and youth NGOs, and we have still a long way to go before we see the first effects of our efforts. What is important to us, at this early stage, is that the concepts of media competence and media literacy have finally made their debut.

In general, Mediacentar Sarajevo, after several years of hard work, has an image of competence and a good profile in society-related media work. What do you think could or should be “copied” by other countries and what should they avoid in their development? Better yet, what can general media education and educational

media work contribute to the goal of encouraging the interest of people in politics and politicians in people in the new democracies of the South East?

Well, this is a tough question. We have certainly learned a few things over the past few years. One is that training programmes need to extend over a longer period of time, and require some kind of continuity in order to have some effect. Fragmented, short-term, unconnected training programmes and projects are not of much use. Another important lesson we have learned is that one way to increase the effects of any programme is synergy with similar activities; many educational programmes can be easily linked together to save resources and increase effect.

A series of workshops can be linked to web presentations and the publication of a book, for example. This is how we plan our activities now. In order to achieve more productive interaction between citizens on one side and politicians on the other, educational media should strive to directly work with relevant stakeholders, together or in separate activities. In this context, we work with journalists to train them in investigative reporting, for example, while at the same time working with youth organisations to train members in basic media competence skills. Parallel to this, we provide training in communication skills to state-agency officials, municipalities' administrations, etc. in order to increase their media competence skills so that they can more effectively communicate with the media and with citizens.

All this is accompanied by research and publication projects that emphasise various aspects of the interlink between the media sphere, citizens and politics. ■

The situation calls for the more comprehensive approach to developing media competence among wider population as a key precondition for creation of functioning public sphere and vigorous civil society

ad MC Sarajevo

The Mediacentar was founded in 1995. It has been an independent education and research institution since 2000. Originally, it was conceived as an education centre, but over time the activities have expanded to include PR training, publishing, media research, the organisation of cultural events, and consultancy services.

Also, it issues publications relating to technical matters and the technology of specific fields or professions within the wider context of media production.

Educated Disclosures

by Michael Ledl and
Christoph Zotter

Searching the truth beyond the surface, being an investigative journalist, became quite popular.



Photo by Thomas Hirscher

Investigative reporting has become a popular phenomenon in South Eastern Europe. Many journalists are eager not just to write, but to become professional and emancipated through educational projects. But there are still some obstacles to be left behind.

Top secret documents handed over at a lonely park bench, code names, and late night phone calls. Such images - of the bold, undercover investigative reporter - are drawn by Hollywood movies. "Courage is just one part of it," reckons Sasa Lekovic, founder and chairman of the Investigative Journalism Centre (IJC) in Zagreb. In his mind good journalism, whether investigative or not, can be compared with the work of forensic criminologists or scientists collecting and verifying each piece of a puzzle. However, the reality in many countries is just the opposite. Journalists often rely on doubtful sources, forego essential information or fail to properly check facts. This situation worries Lekovic: "I think that so-called investigative journalism could easily kill real investigative reporting." Trainers from other countries share this point of view. "In Romania, investigative reporters are sometimes manipulated to blackmail companies or businessmen," says Paul Radu, co-founder of the Romanian Centre for Investigative Reporting (RCIR).

A Popular Phenomenon

Searching for the truth beyond the surface - through investigative journalism - has become a popular notion in SEE countries. Since the fall of oppressive regimes, "after so many years of darkness," as Bulgarian journalist Alexenia Dimitrova puts it, journalists have been eager to change their role in society. Milorad Ivanovic, editor for the Serbian daily Blic, says: "We get the impression that we can influence the happenings in our countries." Lekovic, 45, who has been a journalist more than half his life, adds: "Journalists now have the opportunity to attend free educational courses. Training in investigative journalism is seen as a top qualification."

IJC and its partners, as well as a number of non-governmental media organisations in SEE, arrange free training courses all over the region. Basic journalism skills, such as research techniques and legal knowledge, are being improved. For Lekovic, it is essential that young reporters know how to work

properly. "In my mind every regional reporter can write a good investigative article." In the future, he wants to produce a regional magazine focused on investigative journalism. The reporters and editors should be young journalists who attend investigative journalism courses, he says.

Foreign Money, Domestic Expertise

Money for such new educational projects comes mainly from foreign donors. Financial independence from governments and business groups in their own countries facilitates the work of SEE journalists. Investigative stories are often sacked due to a shortage of money and time. Scoop is one project aimed at solving these problems. Reporters can apply for funding from international organisations while labouring over an article. "Unfortunately, not a lot of people know this," laments Lekovic.

Western donors also try to capitalise - though not openly - on the move to make journalism in SEE countries more professional. Many grants are provided for projects covering human trafficking and organised crime. In such cases, the media must work across borders. Ivanovic says dryly: "Our mafia are cooperating very well, and it is time that journalists try the same." New media ideals are thus seen as a platform for change and an important part of education. Mediacycenter Sarajevo and IJC have established an internet portal to assist journalists by providing a directory of experts as well as training material and expertise. The available information is generated by experienced SEE authors and by renowned organisations, like the Poynter Institute. In Romania, the RCIR created a website to publish crucial articles. "There is a lot of corruption and journalists want to take an active role in fighting it. I think journalists in the region are becoming braver than journalists in Western Europe who, in my opinion, think too much about what the publisher will say," Ivanovic says.

It seems like steps to amend investigative journalism are being taken. But Lekovic's enthusiasm for its future is limited: "I am afraid that it will meet the same fate as some other good ideas. There might be people who do not care too much about professional journalism training and just want to receive grants that are designated for serious institutions. We have to establish standards so it will be more difficult for such people to get these donations." ■



Country Focus Romania

“Impressing Rather Than Informing”

Romania’s Media Landscape 15 years after the Fall of Ceaucescu’s Regime

By Niklas Werklund

The events of December 1989 which brought down Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaucescu were later known as the Tele-Revolution. Not only did the people of Romania witness a popular uprising against an autocratic dictator who had ruled with an iron fist over the country’s population for 24 years, they were also able to watch Ceaucescu’s execution, broadcast on national television. When the Ceaucescu-era ended, the people of Romania experienced freedoms they could only have dreamed about before. The first free elections were held in over 40 years and other basic human rights such as freedom of the press and freedom of speech became accessible to everybody.

Emotion Over Information

Now, 15 years after the regime has disappeared, marked changes have taken place, particularly in newspaper content. Although national newspapers, radio and TV stations are still largely owned and thus influenced by the state or large media corporations, journalists are able to voice their opinion and at times criticise the government.

Journalism in Romania “is still very emotional and aimed at impressing rather than informing people,” says Iona Avadani, secretary of the Centre of Independent Journalism of Romania. However, many newspapers have gone through a maturing process and have established a balance between tabloid news and quality reporting.

Evenimentul Zilei started as a tabloid in 1992 and, according to the Netherlands-based European

Journalism Centre (ECJ), is today among the most serious dailies in Romania. Scinteia (the flame), which was the largest newspaper in communist times, has changed its name to Adevarul, and earned the reputation of being a quality paper. It is one of the best-selling papers in the country, according to an ECJ report.

There Is no I in Team

Another issue that concerns a lot of journalists is the law. Newly drafted Criminal Code libel clauses eliminate imprisonment as a punishment for this misdemeanour and decriminalise insult.

At the same time many journalists still face libel suits and have to deal with harassment and even physical assault because of articles they have written, stated a report by the Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) of Romania in a publication earlier this year. According to the ECJ: “Self-regulation is virtually non-existent in Romania and there is no moral or ethical code known or recognised by the profession.” With that in mind, it would be easy to blame the journalists themselves for the high number of existing libel suits.

Without pointing a finger, it is clear that the Romanian government, pressure groups and journalists must work together, and journalists themselves must cooperate to support each other. We do not need specific laws,” suggests Dan Tapalaga, spokesman for the Ministry of Justice, “We need strong trade unions for journalists to protect their rights and interests.” ■

*“Romanian journalism is still aimed at impressing rather than informing people.”
Iona Avadani,
Centre of Independent
Journalism of Romania.*

*“Self-regulation is virtually non-existent in Romania.” European
Journalism Centre*



Bravehearts on the School D

To learn to write without losing job or soul –
journalism education: a balance act

By Solmaz Khorsand and Niklas Werklund

Journalism is sexy. Young people around the world long for this job that can take them between trouble spots and into the lime-light. Those in Romania are no different.

“Journalism is personality and the strength to remain it during this job.”

“Journalism is personality and the strength to stick with it during this job,” Dan Tapalaga says in imparting his beliefs to journalism students.

He was head of the political department of broadsheet *Evenimentul Zilei*, but after difficulties with Swiss owner Ringier, he voluntarily left his workplace. Now he is teaching journalism at the University of Sibiu, and is a spokesman for the Ministry of Justice.

“First of all, I try to convince them (the students) that journalism is a special job where you need to use and defend your own personality, which means to fight with politicians and fight with authorities, and you must have the courage to do this,” he says.

Being an independent journalist who travels around the world covering sensitive topics and revealing corruption is exciting, but it also means danger, especially in a country where libel laws can land you in jail.

Fortunately, imprisonment as a punishment for libel was eliminated from the Romanian Penal Code recently. Nonetheless, journalists face many difficulties, including workplace insecurity, low salaries, harassment and interference from politicians and owners. “Students have to face the reality. I am talking about poor standards in journalism, opportunism, and corruption. They see how the owners of newspapers refuse to publish hard news or investigations in order not to lose business, or worse, because they are blackmailed,” says Brandusa Armanca, a professor for TV news and production at the University of Sibiu.

These are some of the reasons why no more than 30 per cent of graduates choose a job in journalism over public relations and communications.

Tough Greenhorns

Despite stumbling blocks, many young people strive to be in the profession, and the trend is increasing. “Journalism is still very attractive for many young people, as it gives them the opportunity to become involved with fascinating and dynamic phenomenon represented by the mass media,” explains Ilie Rad, professor at the University of Cluj.

According to Armanca, more than 20 authorised faculties now include journalism studies. “Every year there are four to eight competitors for one place,” she says. As well as the universities in Bucharest, Cluj, Sibiu and Tamosara, there are private and more expensive faculties and academies which also offer journalism education. She estimates the number of “pure” journalism students – those who study journalism apart from public relations, communications or other related subjects – at between 600 and 800 each year.

The boom in journalism education centres started right after 1989. During Ceausescu’s dictatorship, the Communist Party-run Stefan Gheorghiu faculty was the only place to go for journalism-minded young people. The required condition: a communist attitude.

After the fall of communism, the first faculties were opened with the help of Western countries, which supported the development of free and balan-

“Universities should prepare graduates for this: how to avoid getting into trouble, what their rights are and who can defend them.”



esks

Romania's Big Players

Media Ownership Overview

Three major media groups have divided the Romanian media market among themselves, and two more are just starting to get into the game.

Swiss group Ringier owns best-selling tabloid *Libertatea* (circulation: 200,000/day) and leading business weekly *Capital* (which also has strong general interest coverage, and a circulation of 50,000/day). After acquiring sports daily *ProSport* (100,000/day) from Mediapro in 2003 and the broadsheet *Evenimentul Zilei* (ca. 100,000/day) from German company Gruner&Jahr in 2004, it now owns the three top-selling daily newspapers in Romania, as well as some other big titles.

Another major player is the Mediapro group. Along with major TV channels, it owns the country's largest news agency, *Mediafax*. One of the most lucrative operations owned by the group, however, is *Mediapro Film Studios*, located outside Bucharest.

Another powerful competitor is the Voiculescu group, owned by businessman and politician Dan Voiculescu and his family. The company owns *Antena 1*, the second-largest private TV network, and *Romantic FM*, and at the same time has invested heavily in a re-launch of its daily journal *Jurnalul National* (150,000/day), a move that turned it into one of the most important newspapers in Romania.

The Micula brothers, owners of a food and drink commercial empire, are relatively new to the game. Their recent investments include the daily *Realitatea Romaneasca*, which has an insignificant circulation, and a TV station that has not yet gained a respectable audience share. Based on their investments, they pose a relatively little threat to the big three.

Another rookie on the media market is a union of *Petrom* employees. *Petrom* is the main petrol company in Romania, recently sold by the government to Austria's *OMV*. This new media group controls or has stakes in broadcast and print media outlets such as *Prima TV*, *Realitatea TV*, the daily *Ziua* and the local daily *Telegraf*, states Alex Ulmanu, director of Romanian media NGO *StartMedia*, in his report for the European Journalism Centre. ■

ced journalism education to create or recreate an awareness of certain journalistic standards, such as differentiating between information and opinion.

Preparation: Inadequate

Although the situation is not comparable to that in communist times when newspapers were full of propaganda, current standards still leave much to be desired. "One can find biased, unprofessional or sensationalist reporting in almost all major newspapers, including leading quality journalism publications such as *Adevarul* or *Evenimentul Zilei*," stated the Dutch European Journalism Centre in 2004.

Ioana Avadani, Secretary General of the Centre of Independent Journalism in Romania, says universities are not doing enough to stop this kind of journalism: "There is still a fracture between academic and professional life. In many cases, universities look down on the "media industry" instead of preparing the students to face it and to cope with its real problems and find viable solutions, make ethical decisions, etc."

She continues her criticism with: "Universities should better prepare graduates for this: how to avoid getting into trouble, how and where to seek protection and assistance, what their rights are and who can defend them." The centre organises courses intended to train journalists that interference and pressure should not be job accessories.

Although political interference is part of journalistic reality, politicians do not seem to be interested in journalism education. At least not yet. ■

Data

Main TV Channels

channel	audience share	owner
TVR 1 & 2	28,1%	public
PRO TV	15,4%	CME, Ion Tiriacc, Adrian Sarbu, Mediapro
Antena 1	13,1%	Voiculescu Family
Prima TV	7,1%	RBC, Prima TV Staff
Acasa TV	6,6%	same as Pro TV

Main Private Radio Channels

channel	audience share	owner
Europa FM	19,1%	Lagardere Active, Radio Intern. SA
PRO FM	10,7%	CME, Adrian Sarbu, Ioan Tiriacc
Radio XXI	7,7%	Fundatia Secolului XXI, Lagardere Active, Radio Intern. SA

Main Dailies

title	owner
<i>Libertatea</i>	Ringier
<i>Adevarul</i>	Adeverul SA (Tinu)
<i>Evenimentul Zilei</i>	Ringier
<i>Romania Libera</i>	WAZ, EEDF
<i>National</i>	WAZ, N&V Press
<i>Ziua</i>	Ziua SRL, Sorin Rosca-Stanescu
<i>Jurnalul National</i>	Jurnalul SA (Voiculescu Group)

Main Weeklies

title	owner
<i>Capital</i>	Ringier
<i>Academia Catavencu</i>	by journalists

DATA: Media Ownership and its Impact on Media Independence and Pluralism, Mirovni Institut, Ljubljana 2004



“Too Short and

Mostly Inconvenient, Romania’s Minorities Fight For a Better Broadcasting Deal

by Hannes Goegele

Coverage of ethnic issues and minorities’ access and direct participation in mainstream media shape public understanding and open a variety of debates regarding minority issues. Among East European countries such discussions have become part of governmental agendas; ethnic minorities are part of society and their integration challenges the progress of these countries.

“The most relevant way to get in touch with minorities is through the regional radio stations.”

Romania appears to be on the highway to EU membership in 2007; negotiations over accession were completed at the end of 2004, and the European Council decided to sign the country’s Accession Treaty in April 2005.

Under the heading “Minority Rights and Minority Protection”, the latest “Regular Report on Romania’s Progress towards Accession” declares that relations to minorities other than the Roma “did not present major problems during the reporting period,” although it did not mention the presence (or lack thereof) of ethnic minorities in public broadcasting.

“If you turn on the TV five minutes too late, it could be that the programme is already over again.”

Of Romania’s total population, 10.5 per cent are ethnic minorities, of which the Hungarians and Germans are the most influential. In spite this high proportion in the general populace, minorities have little presence in public broadcasting. Two TV and seven radio channels provide the necessary information and entertainment.

“Ethnic minorities in Romania focus their media interest on newspapers first, then on radio and only after that on TV programmes,” states Áron Balló, a Court of Honour judge for the Hungarian Journalists’ Association in Romania (AZMR). However, when financial problems play a role, people in general choose radio broadcasts over newspapers.

Mainstream Media to Integrate Minorities

Indeed, “the most relevant way to get in touch with minorities is through regional radio stations, which are part of the Romanian Broadcasting Corporation (ROR). Romanian radio broadcasts 121 hours per week in several languages, including coverage equivalent to 7.15 per cent [of broadcast time] at the national level and of 10.77 per cent at

the regional level,” explains Melinda Borbely, deputy secretary general of Romanian Public Radio and deputy director of regional radio channel Tirgu Mures.

Local and regional stations have more space to integrate minority languages into mainstream programmes; frequencies do not interfere, more hours can be transmitted and there are more advanced economic and technical possibilities.

“Radio Tirgu Mures is a regional broadcasting station with an estimated audience of one million listeners in the whole of Transylvania. We have radio programmes, broadcasts, music and advertising,” claims Borbely. “We broadcast in three languages: 50 hours a week in Hungarian, 3.5 hours in German and 1 hour in Romanian.”

In public TV broadcasting, the situation is slightly different: “Channel 1, the national broadcaster, and channel 2, the regionally adapted broadcaster, transmit daily minutes or hours in Hungarian, and have much shorter German and other minority language programmes, except for on the weekend. Depending on where you live, minority coverage is divided into regional windows,” states Balló.

These programmes are not telecast during prime time, thus the audience is very limited in its access. “The programmes are too short. If you turn on the TV five minutes too late, it could be that the programme is already over. In addition, there is no consistent schedule: the times are changed very often, creating further confusion,” Balló adds.

Education of Journalists

Another problem lies in the education of minority journalists: “There is no high-quality academic media training in Romania. There is no journalistic

Inconsitant”

education in minority languages at all. Only one year ago, the private Sapientia University in Cluj introduced a multilingual media section, which emphasises a practical approach to becoming a journalist,” Balló says.

“We often have to translate news from Romanian into Hungarian. Thus the quality of journalism drops drastically,” Borbely articulates.

More to Weaker Groups?

Inexperienced and young journalists face pressures such as political censorship and editorial interference which they are not prepared for.

“However, Hungarian journalists in Cluj, for example, discuss very hot issues on TV, and do a good job. However, they receive little feedback because of the disadvantageous timetable,” Balló says.

Generally speaking, the Romanian government currently favours smaller minorities, a very positive move on one side, but difficult for Hungarians living in Romania.

“It is a common trend to give less to Hungarians because they are a united community with a strong identity, and to give more to weaker groups. The National Minority Council, responsible for many minority issues, does not distribute financial aid in accordance to proportionality among ethnic groups. It is true that - related to the number of members - Hungarians get less and Germans more subvention,” Balló confirms.

24-Hour Broadcasting

However, the idea of setting up a 24-hour Hungarian programme is included in the government’s four-year working plan.

Since the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in

Romania (DAHR) is part of the ruling coalition, and since Deputy Prime Minister Béla Markó is an ethnic Hungarian and supervises EU relations and education, this possibility is made more real.

“Hungarians are spread all over the country. In order to ensure national coverage, Romania first would have to install the necessary transmitters, which is technically difficult and expensive. But it would only be fair in consideration to taxes paid by ethnic Hungarians in certain regions,” Borbely argues.

Plans Far From Reality

However, no improvements have taken place since the 2004 elections. A promise by the former prime minister to grant money for a 24-hour private Hungarian station has been rejected and the focus has switched again to public broadcasting.

“We face big financial troubles. Government resources are restricted and private economic investors are not interested in putting money into minority media,” Borbely explains.

Despite the difficult financial situation, it is easy to slip into a reverie. “Minority and majority communities need to get separate frequencies. Now I have to turn on the TV or radio, and watch or listen to the same station broadcasting 20 or more hours a day in Romanian and wait for my turn to catch a minority language programme. If, for example, all Hungarian minority TV programmes from Bucharest, Cluj and Timisoara could have a common frequency, I would only have to keep in mind one frequency, which would be the first step towards a 24-hour broadcasting service in Hungarian,” Balló says.

But no one knows when the plan to construct a central studio in Cluj or Tirgu-Mures will meet reality. ■

“In minority languages there is no journalistic education at all.”

“It is a common trend to give less to Hungarians because they are a united community with a strong self-identity and give more to weaker groups.”

Journalists on the Records

The Romanian Secret Service: A Relict Says Hello

By Solmaz Khorsand and Niklas Werklund

Everybody knows those B-movies in which an ambitious journalist, investigating a hot story, phones an indispensable source and suddenly hears a strange noise on the line. At this moment he realises Big Brother is listening.

In Romania, the line between B-movies and reality was often thin, and disappears even now, 15 years after the fall of communism.

At the end of January 2005, the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) had a premiere. For the first time since its establishment in 1990, the SRI – which succeeded Ceaucescu’s political police “Securitate” – publicly admitted tapping journalists’ phones.

Two “suspicious” Romanian journalists working for foreign media were accused by SRI Director Radu Timofte of “collaborating with foreign secret services”. Timofte added publicly it was the organisation’s grounds for the tapping. He refused to reveal the journalists’ identities or media outlets for which they worked.

Just two years ago, Virgil Ardelean, head of intelligence at the Interior Ministry, asked for an analysis of phone-tapping opportunities at news agencies Mediafax and AM Press. The ministry ensured at the time that the phones of both agencies were not tapped.

“The fact is that we do not know if they are doing this on a regular basis or not. It is impossible to control it,” says Razvan Martin of the Media Monitoring Agency (MMA) to *deScripto*.

“Of course the majority of Romanian journalists are tapped by the secret service. Why? Because people in the secret services still have the same mentality and the same orientation as they did with the former Securitate, and they perceive media as the enemy,” explains Victor Roncea, head of the foreign policy department for central-right newspaper Ziua. In his experience, the Romanian media react in a rather relaxed way to tapping activities and make

fun of director Timofte. Journalists assume he is afraid of a potential dismissal, and is therefore trying to create a high profile for himself before the new government.

Assumed Connections Between Secret Service and Kidnapped Journalists in Iraq

Apart from this recent scandal, the Romanian media has drawn connections between the Romanian foreign secret service – Romania has nine secret services - and three kidnapped journalists in Iraq. Journalist Marie Jeanne Ion and cameraman Sorin Dumitru Miscoci (both from Prima TV), and Eduard Ovidiu Ohanesian (from the daily Romania libera), were kidnapped on 28 March 2005 in Baghdad.

According to the MMA, the three journalists’ Iraq trip was financed by Syrian-Romanian businessman Omar Hayssam, who is a close friend of Ion’s father and a former Socialist senator. For one year Hayssam has not been allowed to leave Romania because of an ongoing investigation into corruption and tax fraud. In April he was arrested. One of his business partners, Mohammed Monaf, accompanied the journalists to Iraq, acting as a translator. These are the facts that have emerged during mushrooming kidnapping rumours.

Pascale Bonnamour, head of the European desk for Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in Paris, doubts a connection exists between Hayssam and the kidnappings. For RSF, the journalists are victims who must be released as soon as possible. But she admits that there are some strange elements to the case: “I was very surprised that the tape came that fast.” Usually video tapes came one or more months after a kidnapping. Another strange aspect was the content of the video tape, in which the kidnappers neither identify themselves nor demand a ransom. In the meantime the three journalists were released. ■

“The fact is that we do not know if they are doing this on a regular basis or not. It is impossible to control it.”

Razvan Martin of the Media Monitoring Agency

Albania: Media Depending on Governmental Money

Albania is heading for important parliamentary elections. On 3 July 2005, it will be decided which of the two main protagonists in this campaign - the ruling Socialist Party (SP) led by Prime Minister Fatos Nano or the opposition Democratic Party (DP) - will rule.

The international community has repeatedly emphasised the importance of free and fair elections in the country, pushing especially hard for the integration of European structures.

Small Market, High Competition

When it comes to the media and its fair and balanced political reporting, the premises are far from perfect: The country's tiny advertising market of an estimated 15 million Euro has had a major impact on the development of media and its freedom. Twenty-three daily newspapers with a total circulation of only 70,000 to 80,000 are competing for their share of the "advertising cake". In addition, some of these papers are sold at near or even under the cost of production. This brings into question how the approximately 150 media outlets in Albania are able to survive.

According to official facts, only 45 per cent of media revenues come from advertising and five per cent from sponsors. The remaining 50 per cent comes from "other sources", often the owner's other businesses.

Pressure Through Government Advertising

The biggest source of advertising money is the government, which spends more than USD 1 million per year for ads and other notices. Up to 60 per cent of all advertising comes from (partly) state-owned companies.

In his essay "In search of an 'Exit'", Henri Çili, a professor at the Communications Department of the University of Tirana, describes this money as "a powerful tool for the government, which 'selects' the media groups that will receive government advertisements in accordance with their pro-government editorial policy. Those that oppose the government are punished. There are no clear legal regulations surrounding the allocation of government advertising, which leads to policies for distributing funds created at the whim of the government, local authorities and directors of public enterprises."

Obviously, such a stick-and-carrot policy is not the best way to support pluralism of ideas.

In its press freedom report 2005, Freedom House listed Albania in 107th place, a decline of two spots

compared to 2004, and categorised the country's media as "partly free".

According to the survey, Albania's independent media organisations are active and diverse, but remain vulnerable to government and partisan pressure: "Journalists stay clear from sensitive topics, particularly those relating to Nano and the ruling Socialist Party."

Intransparent Financing

A 2004 human rights report published recently by the US state department criticises a lack of transparency in the financing of media outlets: "Publishers and newspaper owners continued to edit news stories to serve their own political and economic interests."

Çili adds: "Finally, being unable to tell the truth about their owners and working without contracts themselves, journalists have lost an important part of the professional morale to report the truth about the government and to implement the professional code of ethics."

Creativity in Manipulation

The government seems to have found new, indirect ways of manipulating the media. For example, state-owned facilities are leased at low prices to media holdings that are less critical, and the Socialist government maintains control of public broadcaster RTSH by appointing members of the broadcast regulatory agency.

This conflict between authorities and the media also manifests in law suits filed by officials against well-known journalists. Even Prime Minister Nano takes newspapers to court.

All these measures have had an effect: In mid-June 2005, members of the Media Monitoring Board came to the conclusion that the main television stations in the country have given the electoral activities of the SP twice as much space as those of the DP.

The board, installed to monitor electronic media coverage of the election campaign, only received approval at the end of May. If violations of Electoral Code provisions for the media are noticed, the Central Election Committee may fine the respective media.

By organising training workshops for journalists and discussions about international standards and rules for electoral reporting, the Albanian Media Institute, the OSCE and the Central Elections Commission hope to improve the standard of reporting during the election run-up. The aim is for a free and fair election. It is a big goal. ■

in Short

Common Distribution Agency Wanted

According to the Tirana-based Albanian Media Institute, a group of publishers from 14 daily newspapers have petitioned the government to enable them to establish a common agency for the distribution and sales of daily press around the country. The publishers stressed the need to establish a serious and solid infrastructure for selling print media in the country, which is plagued by a weak distribution system at present. They expressed their intention to carry out a feasibility study and build press newsstands accordingly.

Court Overruling NCRT's Decision on TV Closedown

The District Court ruled on 30 March that Shijak TV will continue broadcasting, thus partially revoking the decision of the National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT) to shut down the television station, says the Albanian Media Institute. According to the verdict, the NCRT's decision was deemed hasty, as it incorporated the most severe measures possible without first making use of other means at its disposal, such as reducing the group's broadcast license by 50 per cent. NCRT made its decision last December because of debts the station had to the regulatory authority, as well as its continuing use of pirated programmes.



by Ana Simundza

in Short**Cyber Crime Convention Signed**

In the middle of February 2005, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Convention on Cyber Crime, as well as an additional protocol to the Criminalization of Racist and Xenophobic Acts via Internet. According to Mediaonline, the documents were signed by charge d'affairs Miranda Sidran and confirmed by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Permanent Mission to the Council of Europe. The cyber crimes convention guards the public against a wide range of offences, including child pornography, electronic fraud and breaches of copyright, and protects against threats to security networks.

Conference on Local War Crimes Trials

On 14 and 15 April, a two-day training workshop focusing on media coverage of war crimes cases being transferred from International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to local courts in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro was held in Sarajevo. According to Media Centre Sarajevo, journalists from those countries took part in training sessions dealing with various aspects of covering the trials in order to improve their reporting. The conference was funded by the United States Institute for Peace, and organised by Transitions Online, a non-profit media development organisation and online news magazine. Participants' stories were to be posted on the Transitions Online website, which is read by 200,000 people a month, and participants were to be paid for their work.

Bosnia & Herzegovina: Television Tax Chaos - Old Problems in New Attire

Late in February 2005, Public Federal Television (FTV) sent about 90,000 payment orders to residents of the Bosnian-Croatian Federation who had not paid their FTV tax. Tonka Knezevic, director executive for FTV fee payments, stated in the Sarajevo daily Dnevni Avaz, another 80,000 additional orders are being prepared. The FTV has also dispatched 180,000 money orders to the courts, which have been asked to exact payments from the property of debtors. Collection of payments has been quite successful in the Tuzla canton, while in territories with a Croat majority population enforcement has mostly failed.

The gravity of the current situation becomes clearer in light of the fact the money from obligatory taxes makes up about 60 per cent of the income of all three nation-wide public broadcasters in BiH (BiH RTV, also known as PBS BiH, Federal RTV, and Republika Srpska RTV).

As Boro Kontic, director of Media Centre Sarajevo, pointed out in his interview to *deScripto*, paying the fee is not only a question of legal responsibility and paying broadcasters their due; the fees collected ensure the financial independence of broadcasters and create the possibility of professional standards.

"If the tax is not collected, some people could use their money to influence broadcasters, and use them for their own personal interest. The price of this abuse is high for all," he explains.

Political Circles Urged to Boycott the Tax

Croats of the BiH Federation pose the gravest difficulty to collection. Many Croats refuse to pay the tax, claiming public RTV does not sufficiently represent Croatian linguistic and political interests. The situation worsened in recent months when Bosniak political circles also started to urge people to boycott the tax because the service is not "sufficiently Bosniak". Still, Knezevic vows that RTV will remain steadfast in its collection of debt through court enforcement.

At the beginning of this year, after a long period of discussion, it was decided the compulsory RTV subscription fees would be collected by way of telephone bills. The directors of federal and state broadcasting services, and two telecom operators in the Federation of BiH agreed that 6 Marks (3 Euro) of RTV tax would be added to the telephone bill. In 2003, a similar agreement was established between the local telecom operator and RTV in the Republika Srpska.

Agreements Caused by International Pressure

Radenko Udovicic states in his Media Online 2004 report that collection through telephone bills was expected to increase the amount paid from 23 to over 80 per cent. However, pressure from both politicians and citizens eventually resulted in the possibility of telephone bills being paid separately.

The collection of the compulsory tax is more successful in Republika Srpska – around 60 per cent of fees are paid compared to barely 50 per cent in the Federation of BiH. It is more difficult to collect the tax from the Federation of BiH because political conditions are more multifaceted.

The only reason it was possible to reach an agreement with operators at all was due to international pressure. However, even now with the fee linked to telephone bills and enforced through the courts, collection is far from succeeding.

Peculiar Difficulties

Croat refusal to pay the tax has numerous side effects, the main one being the further perpetuation of national divisions.

The Islamic Religious community forbade the public broadcasting service from broadcasting its central Ramadan Bairam celebration (the greatest Muslim holiday) from Bey Mosque in Sarajevo. The outcry came because neither Federation nor BHTV1 appropriately communicated the importance and ceremonies of the holiday, according to the Islamic community, which added it deserves such space for religious devotion.

A second reason was that Bosniaks are bearing the burden of the RTV tax because Croats are not paying.

The situation is further complicated by peculiar difficulties. A couple of months ago, the Federation TV broadcaster requested that the Communication Regulatory Agency stop the broadcast of terrestrial television programmes from neighbouring countries via cable.

Viewers watch the same or similar programmes on other channels and the broadcaster says viewers feel they do not have to pay tax to the FTV when they are already receiving the channels they want on cable. Although rejected, the FTV request annoyed the Croats, who believe the move was made to remove Croatian Television (HTV) and TV Nova from Zagreb, thus preventing Croats from watching programmes in their own language. ■



by Maria Yaneva and Ognian Zlatev, Media Development Centre, Sofia

in Short

Best Journalistic Investigation Awards 2004

According to the Sofia-based Media Development Centre, the annual awards ceremony for the Best Journalistic Investigation in 2004 was held in Sofia on 17 May. The event was jointly organised by the Investigative Journalists Association and the Media Development Centre with the support of the British Embassy, the Sofia-based Open Society Institute, and the Guardian Foundation (from the UK). The materials presented were evaluated using the following criteria: social impact, value of evidence and justification, original topic and approach, best style and risk. In the category 'National Media', first prize was awarded to Yana Yordanova of Capital weekly (Sofia) for a series about radical Islam in Bulgaria, and in the category 'Regional Media' the selection committee gave first prize to Radostina Gineva, of the Haskovska Maritsa daily (Haskovo), for the series 'How Excavators Razed to the Ground 500 Houses in Hisarya District'. The first-prize winners receive a traditional statuette by sculptor Milko Dobrev.

Bulgaria: Journalism Education 16 Years After the Changes

In the years following the 1989 changes in the country, journalism education and professional training in Bulgaria has been a recurrent topic of discussion among key players in the field – the media industry, the University of Sofia's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications (FMJC), and the two most-known vocational journalism trainers (Media Development Centre and IREX ProMedia). As in any other business, the journalism education market appears to be quite competitive.

Several other state or private higher education institutions also provide journalism education or specialised journalism programmes of some sort, though they are not very influential in debates on general strategies for journalism education in the country. Despite the existence of degree courses at several provincial universities, journalistic training has been, and remains, concentrated in Sofia.

Besides the FMJC in Sofia, full educational courses are also offered by the Politics and Mass Communication Programme of the private New Bulgarian University, Sofia (BA, MA and PhD programmes), by the Department of the Humanities and Arts at the private Chernorizetz Hrabar University in Varna (BA programme) and by the Department of Social Sciences at the American University in Bulgaria (BA programme).

Shorter-term educational programmes can be attended at the Facultative Training Centre at the state University for National and World Economy, Sofia (five semesters, 14 courses), at the state National Sport Academy, Sofia (four semesters, seven courses), at the Humanities Centre in the Free University of Bourgas (four semesters, 11 courses), at the Culture and Arts Department in the state Neofit Rilski Southwestern University in Blagoevgrad (MA in Public Communications and Culture), at the Centre for Specialisation and Qualification in the state SS Cyril and Methodius University of Plovdiv (four semesters, 16 courses) and at the Free Education Department in the state Economic University in Varna (four semesters).

Most of these institutions either use the doyen programme at the University of Sofia's Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications, or hire their own professors. Yet, despite the advantages of a basic academic education in journalism at the FMJC, the faculty has serious problems which should be seen as an example to be followed by others.

Generally, all traditional establishments providing educational degrees in journalism (FMJC in Sofia included) have similar problems and challenges.

Among those are: the ability to provide strongly dedicated full-time academic staff with practical experience; attracting foreign professors, adjunct practitioners or young associates motivated to further pursue an academic career; lack of contemporary textbooks; hopelessly outdated equipment (if any in some cases); rather theoretical curriculum; and lack of responsibility and practical support for students' internships and practical training in the course of study. The first serious attempts to put the FMJC curriculum in line with European standards were only made last October for the first time in the last 15 years.

Slight Differences in Strategies

Different educational institutions vary slightly in their strategies to tackle these problems. FMJC, being the oldest and most influential journalism education establishment in the country, undoubtedly has more opportunities to achieve positive results to this end. In 1999–2002, the faculty coordinated an institution-building Tempus Phare programme in partnership with the Ecole Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille, the European Universities Continuing Education Network (Bristol), the Liverpool John Moores University, the Universidad Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona) and the Stare Music Academy in Sofia. It was aimed not at faculty or educational programme development, but rather on building the capacity of Bulgarian journalists to report on EU issues. The result was a raised belief in the capacity of the FMJC faculty to address the topic and included the publication of four journalism manuals.

The faculty is also a major beneficiary of the project "Technical Assistance for Improving Professional Standards of Journalism in Bulgaria", one of the biggest projects to support journalism in the country in terms of the scope of activities and number of direct beneficiaries. The programme, run by an international consortium led by the BBC World Service Trust, has allowed the faculty new opportunities to modernise its curriculum and academic staff by supporting international internships with various Western universities with the aim of designing new courses.

For its part, the media industry – big and influential national outlets included – still does not provide regular (if any) in-house training for journalists. Just recently some national media with foreign ownership began to offer training opportunities for their staff through their international affiliations (e.g. Capital weekly and Dnevnik daily, affiliated with



Handelsblatt and the WAZ Group of newspapers 24 Chassa daily, Trud daily and 168 Chassa weekly). Media groups with full Bulgarian ownership are following the lead (e.g. Darik Radio, Focus Net, etc).

Yet, quite different and difficult is the case of the regional media, outlets of which are relatively small and generally focused on their own survival. They have constant problems with the number of journalists they can afford to hire and consequently with specialising in specific topics, foreign language training of journalist staff, office space and equipment.

On the other hand, the industry as a whole supports the individual efforts of journalists to pursue further professional qualification. As a rule, this support is mainly moral, usually granted in the form of a short-term release from work. In very few cases it is financial, in terms of covering admission fees to educational courses, travel expenses, etc. It is no exaggeration to conclude that the media industry does not invest in its human capital. Further professional qualification of journalists is left to their discretion and judgment in terms of areas of interest, educational level and degree, contacts, and financial resources.

Thus the main providers of practical training are vocational training institutions, which offer a wide variety of tailor-made courses of various duration, various formats and for a wide range of target groups. These include short-term (three-day to two-week) and long-term courses (up to six months); courses for students in journalism, young or mid-career journalists, as well as for future trainers; training in specific topics; foreign language training for journalists; reporting/production techniques and skills; and pedagogical training. Besides training courses, such organisations also provide the media community with journalistic exchange, study visits and the opportunity to share experiences at the SEE and international level.

Strong Demand of Journalistic Training Outside of the Major Centres

Two 2001 and 2004 media training needs assessments conducted by the Media Development Centre indicate a strong demand for training, particularly outside of major centres. Nearly 50 per cent of regional journalists admit they need training compared to just 26.5 per cent in Sofia. In the regions, training is seen as an antidote to the isolation suffered by many media professionals in the country. Besides the value of the training itself, other main benefits of training activities for regional journalists are the opportunity those courses give to share experiences with colleagues and build contacts.

The educational needs articulated in these surveys include professional standards, basic formats, editorial policy, working with sources, foreign language

skills and access to information. TV and radio journalists are eager to improve their technical skills while newspaper reporters express a desire for courses on analysis and interpretation.

As mentioned, the Media Development Centre and IREX ProMedia are the only two institutions in Sofia currently providing practical training in line with international standards to meet these needs.

The Media Development Center has been active in Bulgaria and in SEE since its establishment in 1998, and over the past six years the center has implemented about 220 national, regional and international training courses and media-related events, gathering more than 3,000 media professionals.

The centre's training programmes in Bulgaria and SEE – their content, format and practical impact – received high grades from all course participants in course questionnaires and post-course interviews, as well as from their media outlets. The MDC survey (2001), which also shed light on the popularity of its services, shows that journalists and media managers put the centre among the top-rated training institutions in Bulgaria after Sofia University, and before other training institutions like IREX ProMedia Broadcasting Centre, the BBC, the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, Deutsche Welle, Reuters, etc.

MDC: The Main Practical Training Recourse

In difference to IREX ProMedia, which specialises in TV broadcast training, the Media Development Centre is the only facility in the country equipped to provide professional hands-on training to journalists and media managers from all types of media – broadcast (TV and radio) and print. It works with foreign experts provided by the BBC, the Deutsche Welle Radio Training Centre, the Deutsche Welle Television Training Centre, the Guardian Foundation, and the Fulbright Commission and Knight Foundation, as well as with a wide range of eminent Bulgarian experts and journalists.

Undoubtedly, vocational training has its disadvantages, as it is not systematic or sustainable in the long-run, not always coordinated with the providers of other educational opportunities and with academic institutions in particular, and it does not provide acknowledged degrees.

However, for the moment it remains the main practical training recourse for working journalists in the country and provides an opportunity for them to raise their professional qualifications.

Finally, it seems the main stakeholders have reached a consensus on the market concept that where there is demand, there is a market niche for everybody, though some coordinated joint efforts in journalism education might help further improve professional journalism standards in the country. ■



Croatia: Journalist Suspended Due to Carelessness and Unprofessionalism

Tihomir Ladisic, a journalist from Croatian Television (HTV) political talk show "Otvoreno" was suspended for one month in early March due to unprofessional behaviour.

Vladimir Roncevic, HRT director of informative programming, punished Ladisic with the suspension and reduced his salary by 30 per cent. According to Rijeka daily Novi List, Ladisic had invited Rijeka Mayor Vojko Obersnel onto the show and cancelled when Obersnel was already en route to Zagreb.

In an interview with the daily newspaper Vjesnik, HRT Director General Mirko Galic says, "I am sure that he [Ladisic] would not do the same to guests which he invites home for dinner. If he would, it would be an example of extremely bad manners." Galic denied that such drastic punishment may be linked to political pressure, stating it was a reaction based on common courtesy to Obersnel.

Zdenko Duka, vice-president of the Croatian Journalist's Association (HND), called the punishment too drastic, although he did not disagree that Ladisic's actions were unprofessional.

Ladisic commented on the case in Novi List: "It is unbelievable that I am being punished for something that was not even shown on TV. Daily news-room life often demands last minute changes, and that is exactly what happened here."

Similar suspensions and fines have been handed out to Denis Latin and Aleksandar Stankovic, hosts of HTV political talk shows "Latinica" and "Nedjeljom u dva" respectively. Latin had his show censored because of a controversial video document on Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader. Stankovic was fined because of vulgar behaviour towards guest Nenad Ivankovic.

In Ladisic's absence, his show will be hosted by well-know journalist Hloverka Novak-Srzic. ■

in Short

Serbian Journalist Beaten in Zagreb

On 13 March, Goran Tadic, sports journalist for the Vojvodina- (Serbia and Montenegro) based TV Banat, and two of his colleagues were beaten in Zagreb by hooligans from the town's football club "Dinamo Zagreb". They were attacked in the center of town by four unidentified individuals at around 4 p.m. following widespread riots before a handball game between teams from Zagreb and Belgrade.

New Croatian Daily

On 2 March, Austrian media house Styria Medien AG launched a new daily newspaper in Croatia, called 24 Sata (24 Hours). The new project employs about 100 personnel, among them 50 journalists. 24 Sata is published daily, contains 40 to 50 pages and its price is 3 Kuna, half of the price of other Croatian dailies.

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by Michael Ledl

in Short

Motion on Cyprus Problem Approved Unanimously by EFJ

A motion proposed by the Union of Cyprus Journalists (UCJ) about the situation in Cyprus was approved unanimously during the annual meeting of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), held in Bilbao on 3 and 4 April 2005. The approved motion expresses profound concern over continual obstacles imposed by the Turkish Cypriot administration and the Turkish army restricting the free access of journalists to all information sources in the Turkish-occupied north of Cyprus, says a UCJ press release.

European Court Issues Ruling in Case of Murdered Journalist

The European Court of Human Rights ruled on 31 March 2005 that Turkish authorities did not conduct an effective investigation into the July 1996 murder of journalist Kutlu Adali in Cyprus, and ordered the government to pay 20,000 Euro (US \$26,000) in damages to his wife, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

Cyprus: Implementing or Changing a Code of Practice?

Issues that are charged with emotion – like the complex relations of Cyprus to the EU and to Turkey – require special diligence by the mass media. The Code of Practice for journalists demands objectivity and the separation of news and opinion. There are easier tasks.

“As arguments heated up and voices were raised, one representative walked out, and the polarisation of opinion began to mirror the dichotomy of views that split society during last year’s referendum,” said Stefanos Evripidou, writing for the daily newspaper Cyprus Mail, of the strained atmosphere at a 31 March 2005 press conference. On this day, Intercollege’s Mass Media and Communications Institute (IMME) was presenting its new study.

IMME was analysing media response to events during the period between the New York Agreement (13 February 2004) and Cyprus’ accession to the EU (1 May 2004), only one week after a referendum on the Annan Plan. The main intention of the plan was to create the United Cyprus Republic, covering the island in its entirety and representing an important move towards normalisation.

As the referendum drew closer, the front pages of both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot media began to resemble political campaign posters. Comments found their way more and more into front page news reports. The main theme in the Greek media was that the Greek Cypriots were not treated fairly (in the plan), and the impression was given that the Turks got everything they wanted. The Turkish Cypriot press, meanwhile, was marked by its concentration on the comments of Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash. Whether promoting or criticising him, the whole process was reduced to one individual. When the votes were counted for adoption of the Annan Plan, 65 per cent of Turkish Cypriots had voted for the plan, and 75 per cent of Greek Cypriots against it. It failed. Media had made its contribution.

Sufficient Level of Objectivity?

Mass media has a great responsibility. Almost everything we know about policy and political processes comes from the mass media. And especially in times of fundamental decisions, elections or referenda, objectivity and impartiality in news reporting is enormously important. “The need to distinguish between news and opinion is emphasised in the standards of good practice the profession sets for itself,” says research leader Nicos Philipou. Though these boundaries are often somewhat blurred in

every day journalism, in an ethnically divided country with a divided press the danger and the consequences of fusing opinion with hard facts becomes even bigger. The role of the media is to ensure that citizens have the resources available to make an informed choice, especially when dealing with “a tense, complex and polarised attempt to reconcile a deeply divided society,” says David Officer, member of the research team.

A number of journalists were dissatisfied with the manner in which the study was conducted. “It did not maintain sufficient levels of objectivity,” states Andreas Kannaouros, president of the Union of Cyprus Journalists (UCJ). He is concerned that the study named specific media organisations and drew comparisons. Furthermore, he argues, news and opinion cannot always remain distinct, especially under highly emotional circumstances. Andreas Sophocleous, head of the IMME, counters that the study was based on the industry’s own standards using its Code of Practice, which lays down the separation of news and opinion in the press: “It’s your code, either implement it or change it.”

However, it is important to remember that it is not just up to journalists to inform the public in an objective way, the public should inform itself in an objective way - by consuming many different sources of information. ■

Advertisement

balkan anders

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The aim of the magazine is to give a differential and detailed picture of Balkans, which might lead to a correction of the often negative impression of the region, based on prejudice and ignorance. Short clippings and quotations from already issued publications about politics, culture, science, religion, history and current problems, which are easy to read, should mediate a multi-coloured picture of South East European countries.

We do not only want to inform about Balkans, than also directly from Balkans, through help of our editors placed in the capital cities of the region.

Editorial staff: Christine von Kohl (responsible), Vedran Dzihic and contributors in all Balkan regions.

The magazine is published 6 times a year.

Greece: Austrian Cartoonist Sentenced for Blasphemy

Despite being a EU member state, the media in Greece still struggles to assert its voice freely under an often-conservative government. This became clear in the case of Austrian cartoonist Gerhard Haderer who, after a substantial legal struggle, was found not guilty of blasphemy on 13 April by a Greek appeals court.

On 19 January 2005, Haderer had been issued a six-month prison sentence after being convicted on charges of blasphemy for the publication of his book "The Life of Jesus."

The book satirically portrays Jesus as a hippy who, among other things, crosses the sea of Galilee naked on a surfboard, binges on alcohol at the last supper, and visits with the late Jimi Hendrix in heaven.

After the book first appeared in Greece in February 2003, the Greek Orthodox Church submitted a complaint, to which Athens public prosecutors responded by ordering all copies of the book seized. Sales of the book were suspended pending the completion of legal proceedings. The book's sale caused no problems when it was released in several other European countries. The Greek judiciary's reaction to the book was widely regarded as a severe move against freedom of speech and expression.

"Criminalising and punishing an author for the contents of any book, even if it proves offensive to many people, is certainly contrary to the principles contained in the OSCE commitments on freedom of the press," said Miklos Haraszti, OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. "This is the first time in more than 20 years that a book has been banned in Greece," he added.

Haderer, who remained in Austria without serving his sentence, described the ruling as "absolutely scandalous".

Several international organisations reacted to the verdict. SEEMO immediately responded to the ruling by issuing a letter of protest to the Greek government on 7 February stating, "SEEMO strongly condemns the sentence against Haderer, whose book has also been published in other countries without raising any controversy. The court decision is a clear attack on freedom of expression and is against all international standards. SEEMO urges the Greek authorities to annul the sentence and to accept cartoons as a form of free expression in any democratic society. We also urge the Greek Parliament to revise the existing law under which Haderer was charged."

Human rights activists in Austria, in collaboration with Haderer, began lobbying politicians and collecting signatures of protest. The resulting petition was presented to the EU several days before the Greek appeals hearing on 13 April, and included the signatures of public personas such as Nobel Prize winner Elfriede Jelinek.

The Greek authorities had even issued a European Arrest Warrant, using a EU law introduced in June 2002 designed to ease extradition procedures between member countries.

After all the protest, on 13 April the Court of Appeal of Athens reversed the decision by the Court of First Instance and acquitted Haderer. It also ordered the return of confiscated books to Greek publisher Oxy Publishing S.A. ■

In Short

Assault on Homosexual Journalist

On 11 April, journalist and homosexual rights activist Gregory Vallianatos was physically assaulted by Alex Kougias, an Athens-based, high-profile lawyer. According to the Greek Helsinki Monitor, "Vallianatos... was repeatedly punched in the head after being called a 'faggot'." According to Kougias, the attack occurred in response to "offending statements" made by the journalist in a television programme on 28 February, when, referring to a series of publicised homophobic statements made by the lawyer, he commented that "they are probably due to some failed homosexual relationship [he] had when he was younger."

Kougias is currently facing disciplinary measures by the Athens Bar Association.

Show not Broadcasted Because of "Non Existant" Language

On 20 March, the NET television station refused to broadcast an episode of popular weekly programme "Taxidevontas stin Ellada" (Travelling in Greece). Programme presenter Maja Tsokli explained to SEEMO that Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) executives felt the show contained "controversial and possibly dangerous material," due to its representation of "non-existent" languages and minority groups in the Greek territory.

Greek representatives were strongly criticised by the commission and the programme was aired a week later on 27 March. The broadcast features residents of a Florina village saying they felt themselves Macedonian, and that the Greek state banned the use of their mother tongue [Macedonian].

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in Short

TMC Sanctions Bota Sot and Pavarësia

In May, the Temporary Media Commissioner (TMC) issued formal sanctions against newspapers Bota Sot and Pavarësia for violating the Central Election Commission's media election rule and the TMC print code of conduct during Kosovo's parliamentary election campaign in September and October of 2004. The decision imposes a fine of EUR 130,000 on Bota Sot and EUR 14,000 on Pavarësia. The TMC's decisions are based on findings by a panel of the Media Hearing Board. Independent research commissioned by the Council of Europe confirmed these findings. As in all such cases, the newspapers have a right to appeal the TMC decisions to the Media Appeals Board, a panel established by UNMIK Regulation 2000/36 and consisting of two international judges and one Kosovo judge.

TMC Introduces Improved Licenses for Broadcasters

On 29 March 2005, the Office of the Temporary Media Commissioner announced a plan to issue new licensing documents to all existing and future broadcasters in Kosovo. This new license will replace and improve on the old TMC licenses by eliminating certain deficiencies and bringing the licenses in line with European standards. The new licenses consist of five parts: A Certificate of License, Part 1 - General Terms and Conditions, Part 2 - Technical Terms and Conditions, Part 3 - Programme, and Part 4 - Mapped License Area. One important feature of the new licenses is that they will clearly identify the owner of a radio or TV station as the licensee whether the owner is an individual, an NGO or a private company.

Kosovo: Initiative for Systematic Mid-career Journalism Training

Kosovo has witnessed a media boom since the end of conflict in 1999, thanks to an atmosphere of freedom coupled with donor generosity.

But the mushrooming of dozens of local broadcasters and a recent rise in the number of daily newspapers has not been matched by growth of a qualified workforce to staff these media outlets. In fact, Kosovo has never had a fully equipped academic institution to educate journalists.

The vacuum in the sector has been filled mainly by ad hoc training programmes organised and funded by international and donor organisations, including the OSCE and the Faik Konica School of Journalism, a non-academic training institution which has been told to wind up its operations once current trainees finish their studies.

Although the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) in Kosovo took the step of preventing more quasi-qualified professionals in newsrooms, there is still no confirmed plan in sight to establish a school with the academic credentials to provide a bachelor's degree programme in journalism.

Having realised the importance of properly equipped human resources for media in a transitional society, OSCE has stepped in with an initiative to lay the groundwork for systematic and professional mid-career training for journalists in Kosovo through the foundation of a "Kosovo Media Institute".

The institute will employ the expertise of the Danish School of Journalism, which has already

been credited with establishing several similar institutions in South Eastern Europe, including those in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and the Danish School of Journalism, a team of consultants have been working since last autumn to build up consensus within the media community in Kosovo on how such an institute should help address the human resource needs of the mass media.

In this context, a working group involving representatives from both Albanian and Serbian language media and local/regional broadcasters has already had two meetings. It focuses mainly on the modalities and content of the training that will be provided to journalists and technical staff once the institute has been established. The tentative schedule for the rest of the process includes two more meetings before legal steps begin to register the Kosovo Media Institute as a non-governmental entity owned and operated by the Kosovo media community.

Although there are challenges to be overcome, it is hoped the institute, once operational, will not only help raise the level of professional standards in journalism but will also become a major partner in media development efforts in a broader context, including research and analysis in various topics. ■

* Kosovo is administered under the civil authority of the United Nations Mission to Kosovo (UNMIK), pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1244 from June 1999. We deal with Kosovo separately and not within Serbia, because the legal status of the two jurisdictions is very different.



South East Europe Media Handbook 2004/2005

...is a new publication realised by South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). Its aim is to enhance better understanding of the media situation in South East Europe and to serve as a source of information concerning press freedom violations in 2004. Next to detailed country reports, the publication contains a database of all important media in the region. You can order "South East Europe Media Handbook 2004/2005" for a payment of 30 Euro.

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Addition

This report was written at the beginning of the year. In the meantime, there have been some changes which confirm that the Albanian language print media in Macedonia are trying to find different ways to survive. On the one side, the Macedonian edition of Koha Ditore continued publishing after few months pause and the Macedonian edition of the Kosovo daily Lajmi started being published. So at the moment there are three dailies in Albanian language in Macedonia.

But, on the other side, all three continue to have serious problems in getting advertising and have very low sale (according to some distributors all three papers have less sold copies than Fakti at the best times when it was the only daily on the market). On top of that, the bad distribution remains a big problem which makes their chances for survival harder.

Fakti faces serious problems (the six months period in which the publisher managed to secure conditions for its publishing are ending and it is not clear what will happen after that period). The Macedonian editions of Koha Ditore and Lajmi are surviving thanks to the support for the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA, which now supports Koha Ditore) and the fact that well known businessmen Bexhet Pacoli stands behind Lajmi. As for the weekly LOBI – after six months of fight for survival, the weekly which is on the market for four years and had 203 issues, is forced to stop publishing.

by Iso Rusi

Macedonia:* Closure of Several Albanian-Language Newspapers

The Albanians of Macedonia have had at their disposal many television and radio stations in Macedonian, including RTVM (TV and radio channels), four private TV stations with national concession (A-1, Sitel, Kanal 5 and Telma), three radio stations with national concession (Kanal 77, Antena 5 and Radio Ros) and a large number of local public and private electronic media.

There are also eight daily newspapers (Dnevnik, Vest, Utrinski vesnik, Vreme, Makedonija Denes, Nova Makedonija, Vecer and Makedonski Sport), three weekly political journals (Kapital, Aktuel and Fokus), the monthly newspaper Forum and other periodical journals.

However, three Albanian print media ceased publishing in January 2005: Flaka, Koha Ditore and Lobi. The only one left is Fakti. The closures are blamed on the economic crisis, low sales, and constant interference by political and economic groups.

The newspaper Flaka was part of the Nova Makedonija group before it was sold: Flaka was then privatised. The following drop in profits led to the closure of Flaka. Employees hope the newspaper will be revived, and are considering selling the paper to try and improve Flaka's economic position and solve its current problems.

The weekly journal Lobi has suffered the same fate as the other newspapers. The reasons, according to Editor-in-Chief Iso Rusi, were mainly financial circumstances, followed by the current political condition. He adds that not only newspapers but also local public radio stations have been in a very difficult financial and technical situation for years. There is no doubt the Albanian media is experiencing numerous difficulties at the moment, concludes Rusi.

He adds that considering the retraction of foreign investment in Albanian media, he believes it will be a long time before the necessary circumstances are in place for the Albanian media to survive in the market.

The Helsinki Committee Demands Liberty in the Field of Information

In a recent evaluation of the situation in the Albanian media, the Helsinki Committee in Macedonia criticised the current government, accusing the BDI (the Democratic Union for Integration, also known as DUI - the leading Albanian political party) of prohibiting publication of Lobi and Koha Ditore in Macedonia.

The committee concluded these newspapers had to close their doors because they wrote critically about the governing party, adding pressure against

the papers represents a restriction of freedom of opinion and of the press. The BDI's attitude, according to the Helsinki Committee, has left the Albanian population with a single daily newspaper in Macedonia and a single national television channel.

To end this barricade, this institution has asked for the help of the international community, particularly in supporting the independent media.

BDI spokesperson Ermira Mehmeti does not accept the accusations of the Helsinki Committee, calling them irrational and nonexistent.

Spokespeople for the opposition parties, Sulejman Rushiti and Qenan Aliu, are very critical about the troubling situation of the Albanian media in Macedonia. Rushiti states the Helsinki Committee is totally correct and is driven by an ideal to promote democracy.

Rusi states the BDI not only did not help the Albanian media, but contributed to the creation of unfavourable conditions for its work and survival.

Today, with a single TV station that has a national concession in Albanian, no radio stations with a national concession, and a small number of existing local radio and TV stations, the situation of the Albanian media in Macedonia is troubling and highly unsatisfying for the Albanian population there.

Iso Rusi: Biography

Iso Rusi has been publisher and editor-in-chief of the Albanian language weekly Lobi since its start in 2001. Rusi is also a political analyst, and speaks often to international organisations and the media.

Prior to Lobi, Rusi was a regular contributor to the Balkan issue of the Institute for War and Peace, as well as to AIM (Alternative Information Network) for the Balkans and a columnist at Koha Ditore before the conflict in Kosovo. He has written opinion pieces for the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

He was editor at the weekly Fokus from 1996 until 2000, and before that, from 1992 until 1996, he was media coordinator at the Soros Open Society Institute in Skopje. This period marked the start of private media in Macedonia, and Soros was one of the main media donors.

During his last 10 years in Yugoslavia, from 1982 until 1991, he was a correspondent for the liberal and most popular newsmagazine Danas from Zagreb, and contributor to the Slovenian daily Delo. ■

* Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Macedonia

**in Short****New Audio-visual Law on the Way**

A new law regulating the field of TV and radio stations will be adopted until the end of 2005. Vera Galcovschi, a leading member of the Audiovisual Coordinative Council (CCA), called the current audio-visual-law obsolete. As Moldpres reports, Galcovschi specified that the draft contains regulations on advertisement as well as on protection of minors from programmes including violence and pornography. The broadcast of TV and radio programmes via internet is also regulated by the draft which has already been considered by experts of the Council of Europe and was sent back to Chisinau for adoption. The CCA itself demands sufficient funding from the Parliament to establish a centre for monitoring radio and TV broadcasts.

Journalists Want Their Own Trade Union

The prospects of setting up a journalists' trade union are researched by a project of the Association of Economic Journalists and the Moldovan Press Freedom Committee. A survey carried out for the project shows that 78 percent of the media professionals are in favour of a specialised trade union. At the moment, the only option for Moldovan journalists is to join the trade union of culture workers.

Moldova: Unequal Campaign Conditions Overshadowed Elections

A lot of attention was directed to the Republic of Moldova in the first months of 2005. International media as well as organisations like the European Union, the OSCE and numerous NGOs paid close attention to the country's political situation. The reason for this uncommon interest was the parliamentary election that took place on 6 March 2005.

This election was seen as an important turning point, setting the direction of the country's future politics.

There were concerns that the decision would not be fully free and democratic in the run-up to elections. Hundreds of observers were sent by various institutions to monitor the campaign as well as the election itself.

The topic of biased media and fair reporting on opposition parties' election campaigns was a great focus of attention. As monitoring reports issued by various organisations after the elections show, at least some of the concerns were justified.

The OSCE and the European Union were pleased that elections fulfilled democratic principles, but at the same time criticised surrounding conditions.

"The fact that these elections generally complied with OSCE standards was undercut by negative aspects of unequal campaign conditions and constrained media coverage that were already noted in the 2003 election and have no place in a democracy," said Kimmo Kiljunen, delegation head for the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

A Long List of Problems

A report issued by the OSCE Mission to Moldova stated that "shortcomings included the obstruction of parties' campaign activities, instances of harassment of candidates and opposition media, reports of pressure on public employees not to campaign in support of opposition parties and instances of abuse of public resources."

An example of such harassment is the case of *Moldavskie Vedomosti*, a newspaper known for being critical of authorities. Its deputy editor-in-chief was running for the parliament on an opposition party's list.

According to Infotag, in February the newspaper's offices were searched and photographed by policemen without a warrant. The reason given was an anonymous call reporting the presence of illegal Russian immigrants in the building, but no one was found.

An Interior Ministry spokesperson said similar searches had been conducted at other newspapers as

well, and that police had the authority to carry them out.

Diversity of opinion during the election campaign was basically provided by private newspapers, but did not extend to electronic mass media, according to monitoring carried out by *Coalitia 2005*, a cooperation of almost 200 NGOs with the goal of achieving free and fair elections.

Biased Public Television

In a report published one day after the elections, *Coalitia 2005* stated: "National TV and radio stations were marked by partisanship in favour of the governing party." Specifically, public stations *Moldova 1* and *Teleradio Gagauzia* were accused of giving government officials more opportunity to promote their views than opposition candidates, who were also discriminated against in news broadcasts.

In addition, most private channels, including the only ones with national coverage, *NIT* and *Pervii kanal v Moldove*, were criticised by *Coalitia 2005* for supporting the government.

Also members of the Broadcasting Coordinating Council (CCA) animadverted several foreign TV channels airing programmes on Moldovan territory. *Pervii kanal v Moldove*, which is a local affiliate of Moscow-based *ORT*, was accused by CCA members of violating current legal provisions and misinforming the public through political propaganda.

Reforms Demanded

Seventy-five of 101 members of parliament re-elected Vladimir Voronin to be president of the Republic of Moldova on 4 April. Sixteen of these votes came from parties other than the ruling Communist Party, which received 46.1 per cent of peoples' votes.

Opposition parliamentarians from the Christian-Democratic People's Party as well as the Social-Liberal Party backed Voronin's re-election, basing their support on major democratic changes in Moldova's internal and foreign politics.

According to a report issued by the Independent Journalism Centre, planned reforms in the media include increased transparency of parliamentary and government activities, an amendment to the country's broadcasting law and the promotion of *Teleradio Moldova's* public status. The closure of government-sponsored newspapers *Nezavisimaia Moldova* and *Moldova Suverana* has also been proposed. ■



Montenegro:* No Believe in Media's Political Independence

At the meeting "Media and Society - Montenegro 2004" in Podgorica in February 2005, the Montenegro Media Institute presented research results of a study called "Freedom and Responsibility of Media in Montenegro", carried out by the Agency "Damar".

This survey, based on an opinion poll held in December 2004, shows that more than half of the citizens of Montenegro believe that media is interested mostly in topics surrounding political power. Indeed, the random sample of 1,005 respondents from nine Montenegrin municipalities showed low confidence in the media's capacity to fulfil its role in society and maintain political independence.

Majority Believes in Economic or Political Influence

A high percentage - 80 per cent of the people polled - think the media is under economic or political influence, while 51.3 per cent of those polled believe the media focuses mainly on political topics.

As well as believing the aim of the press is mainly to provide daily political information, poll respondents have the opinion that the press has only a limited influence on society - only 14.2 per cent of those polled believe the media is fulfilling its social role and duty as public watchdog over those wielding political and economic power.

Since it recognises the responsibility of the media to play an important role in society under the best possible conditions, the Montenegro Press Organisation has started an initiative to enhance the active participation of citizens in public processes to better inform them and provide them with more engagement opportunities.

Developing PR campaigns for members of the Montenegro press, and increasing cooperation with government institutions through specific programmes increases the engagement of media representatives and is an important process for civil society. The survey shows that public Montenegrin Television (RTVCG) is still the most-watched medium with 46.3 per cent of those polled tuning in, followed by the press, which has a following of 46.2 per cent. After this come other commercial TV stations, which have a 42.5 per cent share of the media market, then radio with 20.2 per cent, and finally, only 5.6 per cent of poll respondents say they get their information via the Internet.

It is important to mention that Western countries gave financial support to Montenegrin state Tele-

vision (TVCG) during the fight against Milosevic.

However, once the new government was formed, TVCG ceased to be the main focus of attention for Western representatives of democracy and their interest in its activities began to decline.

While TVCG's news coverage has become considerably more balanced in recent years, its original bias has tended to be replaced by blandness. This apparent change of attitude constitutes the basis and the starting point for initiating the long-awaited process of transforming the Montenegrin state-owned media.

Ready to Forgive

An interesting question was included in the survey: "Are people prepared to forgive the media their inadvantage in reporting, in particular if publishing untruths about public figures?" Some two-thirds of respondents are ready to forgive.

An earlier survey from 2003 showed that only nine per cent of respondents were prepared to forgive unprofessionalism in the media. Are times changing for the media in Montenegro? The answer is yes, to some degree.

In fact, the implementation of Montenegrin media laws at the end of 2004 boosted a transparent tender process. The new distribution system, based on an open-skies broadcasting strategy and a frequency plan, ensures that all tenders are announced publicly and defines criteria for application.

It also takes the decision-making process away from the government, putting it in the hands of civil society members through control by the Council of the Broadcasting Agency.

Degree of Freedom not Great Enough

While the power of independent and private media has greatly increased recently in Montenegro, journalists are still almost daily being sued for defamation in Montenegrin courts. International presence has contributed to the development of freedom and responsibility of the media, but not to a great enough degree. International attention is still somewhat focussed on the media, but more on little stakes.

The OSCE continues in its mission to support media committees and especially internet providers' and users' associations with the aim of helping develop a free and pluralistic internet market. ■

* Montenegro is part of the State Community of Serbia and Montenegro. We deal with Montenegro separately and not within Serbia and Montenegro, because of the significant autonomy of each of the two Republics.

In Short

Ministry Co-finances Magazine for Blind People

On 31 March, Assistant Montenegrin Culture and Media Minister Zeljko Rutovic and Secretary of the Association of Blind Persons Fadilj Mucic signed an agreement to co-finance 12 issues of magazine *Zvucna revija*, the only media for blind people in Montenegro.

Analysis of the Montenegrin Media Situation

In the middle of April, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro presented an analysis of the media situation in Montenegro which criticised most local outlets as not being supportive enough of Montenegrin independence and stated that foreign donors' financing of private news agency MINA was problematic. The analysis also cited certain private electronic media which should receive "material help" and claimed some media are not reporting favourably on politicians and political issues. SEEMO reacted to this controversial report with a press release stressing that journalists and media outlets have the right to report independently, without state influence or pressure.

Antena M Awarded

In April, the Antena M radio station from Podgorica received the 2004 annual award for best radio station in Southeastern Europe from the Network of Private Radio and Television Station Associations of Southeast Europe.



in Short

**In Memoriam:
Stojan Cerovic and
Perica Vucinic**

Stojan Cerovic, one of the most respected Serbian journalists, unafraid of Milosevic, who dedicated his life to the struggle for professional journalism in Serbia, died at the age of 56. He actively came into the public stage in the early 1990's when he co-founded and wrote for the Belgrade weekly news magazine *Vreme*, in which he predominately criticised president Slobodan Milosevic's politics and abuse of power. Perica Vucinic, the owner and editor-in-chief of *Reporter* magazine, died on 27 April. He was also a very respected journalist, who managed to illegally export his magazine by boats over Drina river to Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Milosevic era, when *Reporter* was forbidden in Serbia.

**Slavko Curuvija:
Unsolved Mystery**

On Monday, 11 April, the sixth anniversary of the murder of Belgrade journalist Slavko Curuvija was remembered. His liquidation happened in front of the building he lived in, and his wife was an eyewitness to the tragic event. The potential direct cause can perhaps be traced to events of just five days before his death, in an article published in *Politika Ekspres* in which Curuvija was accused of welcoming the NATO bombing and betrayal. What is crucial is that despite firm promises by all democratic governments over the last couple of years this case has not been solved, and the murderers have not been found and brought to justice.

Serbia:* Media Pressures & Anti-Semitism

After the October 2000 democratic changes in Serbia, media workers felt that many pressures from the time of Milosevic's regime would be relegated to the past and that journalists would be liberated and secure in their ability to do their job properly at last.

However, it is the common point of view among leading experts in the media sector, such as the chairman of the Association of Independent Media (ANEM), Slobodan Stojic, and the general secretary of the Organisation of Independent Journalists of Serbia (NUNS), Svetlana Preradovic, that after the political fluctuations of five years ago, pressures on media did not stop, but simply adopted a slightly different form. Those pressures come from various sources, which are, according to Stojic, in a certain manner interrelated and closely linked to all levels of politics. He adds that the same people, that had great influence during the pre-October regime, still play a leading role, along with another significant group concerned about the extremely sensitive issue of the Hague War Tribunal.

Many journalists receive threats over articles about Hague Tribunal suspects. Furthermore, members of NUNS firmly state that many attacks come from members of the financial elite such as criminals and "new businessmen". Preradovic recognises two essential patterns of imposing pressures on journalists: starting lawsuits for libel and attempts by political parties and their members at the local level to influence editorial policy, especially in the case when local authorities own media outlets. The first technique originated straight after the political transformation, and from the period 5 October 2000 till July 2004 a remarkable amount (350) of court cases were filed, according to data collected by NUNS.

The precise number is certain to be higher, due to the fact this has become a very common and popular practice, and because many of the publicly announced warnings and litigations came into legal procedure much later, or were used solely as tools for sensationalism and propaganda.

The interesting thing is that none of the lawsuits were filed by public prosecutors; all were exclusively the result of individuals claiming damages by illegal journalistic activities. Civil suits were induced predominately by people demanding compensation (often an unreasonable amount of money) for non-material, psychological harm caused by journalistic work.

Analysing these facts, NUNS came to the conclusion that the majority of people who filed suits are from the former or the new political elite, including financially powerful tycoons successfully operating under the new circumstances in the country.

Disputed articles revealed more or less publicly familiar unethical and illegal activities of such people. Although these cases were often generally known, and for the appearance of struggling with corruption and monopoly were brought to the court of law even during the former regime, they were never prosecuted due to the ineffective and careless work of the judiciary and authorities.

The second type of pressure, exerted by the local political establishment over local, state-owned media outlets, has been expressed through classic despotic and autocratic practices, including firing and relatively openly threatening journalists. In such an environment the integrity of journalists is seriously affected.

A good example given by Preradovic and reported by almost all media houses and news agencies, including RTV b92, is a recent event at TV Apolo in the city of Novi Sad. After the local authority changed and the Serbian Radical Party came to power, many journalists at the station were automatically kicked out by the new directors without justifiable reason, while others received threats that they would meet the same destiny.

Under this wave of intolerance toward media and open-minded people in general, anti-Semitism has been born in Serbia over the last 15 years. According to Stojic, recent calls for anti-Semitism and the boycott of independent RTV b92 represent the culmination of similar activities elsewhere and are part of the continuum of "a widespread racist and anti-Semitic campaign escalating in Serbia".

Posters covered downtown Belgrade containing a picture of the TV b92 logo and the Jewish Star of David, accompanied by the following text: "The boycott against anti-Serb activities, lethal influence on Serbian youth, support of Kosovo independence, encouragement of drug abuse, homosexuality and other Western diseases and support for multiracial new world order." Similar graffiti was found on several non-governmental organisation buildings, such as that of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the Centre for Humanitarian Rights.

The reasons for such intolerant movements can be linked to the effects of a decade of almost constant war, suffering and crisis in all spheres, from economic to moral. Nevertheless, Stojic's opinion is that the current government should finally realise the seriousness and damaging effects of media pressure and anti-Semitism, and start to deal with this problem responsibly. ■

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Slovenia: Widespread Xenophobia and Hate Speech

Xenophobic tendencies, especially involving neighbouring foreigners and ethnic minorities, but including the radical exclusion of 'the others', are present in the Slovene media. Reporting about the 'erased' and the Roma proves the assumption that present xenophobia could not possibly exist (at least not to the degree it exists today) unless such attitudes found a place to dwell in a post-modern state.

Civil Death of "The Erased"

In 1999 and 2003, the Constitutional Court found the constitution had been violated by the removal of 30,000 individuals from the Slovenian registry of permanent residents in 1992. It demanded that authorities compensate the 'civil death' of the 'erased' people.

The 'erased' mainly belong to so-called 'new minorities' including ethnic Serb, Croat and Bosnian Muslims, Kosovo Albanians and Roma, who had been living in Slovenia when it was still a part of Yugoslavia and who had not acquired Slovenian citizenship after Slovenia became independent.

In April 2005, Amnesty International again called for a quick reversion of the policy and compensation for the remaining 'erased'. This mass denationalisation was, according to 'Prevent genocide', a partially successful policy, causing over one-third of the targeted population to leave Slovenia.

The status of the 18,000 'erased' which stayed in Slovenia remained unresolved for 12 years – exposing the victims to massive violations of human rights: they could not travel, get married, go to school or university, or receive pension or health care. Some found themselves on the edge of bare survival when the sudden loss of their papers forced them to give up their jobs and residences.

While ultranationalist politicians characterised the "erased" as war criminals, no legal or other institutions, nor the general public, seemed to care. For more than 10 years the systematic violation of human rights and suffering of the 'erased' did not penetrate public discourse. They "were constructed as a cultural Other exactly through humiliation and exclusion from all spheres of life," writes Jelka Zorn in 'The Politics of Exclusion'.

"It is this silence of what happened to us that hurts the most," reads an anonymous diary record of 2002. Public debates only heated up when the 'erased' awaited solutions in 2004. But then, according to Media Watch, the Slovene media chose to focus on the 'unjustified' amount of money to be paid by 'honest citizens' to the victims, thus reinforc-

ing negative public opinion towards the "erased".

The openly expressed hostility towards individuals of the 'wrong' ethnic origin, characteristic during the first half of the 90s, damaged the society as a whole. Zorn writes: "It resulted in the all-embracing public normalisation of exclusionary public discourse and practices."

No Problem Being Described as a Racist?

A public opinion poll carried out by Slovene organisation CATI revealed that "the majority of Slovenes have little problem with publicly describing themselves as racist..." – 61 per cent of respondents described themselves as very, quite or slightly racist. Another opinion poll showed in 1998 that people from former Yugoslavia, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, homosexuals, Roma and Jews are among the most unwanted social groups in Slovenia.

This corresponds to treatment of the Roma, as a representative minority in Slovenia, by the media. "Out of 131 accounts [...], only one falls short of our hypothesis that the media write about ethnic minorities only when they are involved in some conflict", reads the study "We About Roma" by Karmen Erjavec, Sandra Basic-Hrvatina and Barbara Kelbl. It reveals how Roma are built up to be the 'negative other' in the media, and how "media exclusion and isolation couples the spatial, economic, cultural and social ghettoization of a minority". In the last years several conferences on this topic were held by the Peace Institute in Ljubljana.

Within the scope of his analyses "Xenophobia: A Catalyst of Hate and Defamation Speech in Slovakia and Slovenia", Andrej Skolkay observed that the media in Slovenia are not very critical towards each other with respect to possible hate speech. According to his study, the dailies Delo and Dnevnik are known for their "sometimes very radical hate speech toward Roma," while racist comments can be found in the right-wing weekly MAG. Tonci Kuzmanic, who analysed a column published in the Sunday edition of the weekly Delo called 'Nocna kronika', condemns such forms of hatred in the media, stating they should be taken extremely seriously "as a direct incitement to more or less violent action against those who are seen as other and different". His study exposes the column as a vehicle for "unprecedented dehumanisation of those seen as 'other' and different in Slovenia" and reveals numerous criminal passages of radical intolerance towards foreigners, 'those from the south', 'Balkan creatures', 'refugees', 'Muslims', 'chicks' and women in general. ■

in Short

Nations – States and Xenophobias: in the Ruins of Ex-Yugoslavia

... is the name of an international seminar that was held on 13 and 14 May, 2005 in Piran, Slovenia, by the Slovenian Peace Institute and the Croatian Political Science Association, with the aim to analyse xenophobic manifestations, to reflect critically on media images of the state/nation in post-socialism and contribute to conceptual understanding of nations/states with regard to the post-war Yugoslav situation.

Closure After 50 Years of Gospodarski Vestnik

The last issue of the Slovenian economic magazine Gospodarski Vestnik appeared on 14 February 2005. Following the dropping of circulation rates from 1991 till today, the projections read that the well-known fifty year-old magazine would fall below the profitability line in 2005. After the closure of Gospodarski Vestnik, the economic daily Finance will take the magazines Manager, Tajnica, Trgovina and Eco under its wings and continue with all their information activities. While, according to ONASA, twelve employees of Gospodarski vestnik will be transferred to Finance, "the solutions are still being sought for the remaining 38 journalists and editors".

Freelance Journalists – Ways out of the Grey Zone

Freelance journalism is one of the most urgent problems of Slovenian media politics. The lack of protection for freelance journalists and its negative impact on the media independence was among the addressed topics of the conference about Freelance Journalism in SEE, which was organised by the Ljubljana Peace Institute and held in Ljubljana, on 1 and 2 April 2005.



in Short

Controversial Penal Code in Effect

Firstly amended after 78 years, the new Turkish penal code will go into effect on 1 June. The law was supposed to take effect on 1 April, but after strong protests by journalists and media organisations, fearing new limits on freedom of expression, it was postponed. According to the Turkish Journalists Association, it contains several restrictive clauses for journalists. For example, prison terms can be longer if a crime was committed through the media, and the concept of "insult" is defined very vaguely, limiting the media's room to manoeuvre.

Prime Minister Feels Offended by Animal Cartoons

After suing Cumhuriyet newspaper's editor and caricaturist for a cartoon showing him as a cat a few months ago, Prime Minister Erdogan continues to feel offended by humorous drawings. Now, the humor magazine Penguen was sued for depicting him as an elephant, monkey, camel, frog, snake, cow and duck. In publishing these cartoons on 24 February, the magazine supported the protest of cartoonists against Erdogan because of the lawcase against Cumhuriyet. According to the Media Network Bianet, Penguen may be ordered to pay 40.000 YTL.

Turkey: Low Job Security Threatens Journalists' Independence

Once upon a time, Turkey's newspapers were owned by life-long journalists who led family-run media companies and were aware of their professional liability and social responsibility. Journalists working for them were honourable representatives of their profession, contributing their knowledge and creativity to the company's success. Once upon a time...

The big conglomerates that have taken over the media in the last 20 years are more interested in making a fast buck than quality journalism. The relationship between media owners and their employees has also drastically changed; salaries for journalists have strongly dropped and many of the special social rights they had earlier have been lost.

Bad Working Conditions

Although the media sector is expanding and newspaper writers and broadcasters work at a "highly sophisticated level", work conditions for journalists in Turkey in 2005 "are mostly bad, and for many journalists really bad," says Zafar Atay, vice-president of the Türkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyet (Turkish Journalists' Association, TGC).

The process of media capitalisation is not a uniquely Turkish experience, but the country can be seen as an indicator of a bad labour situation in general for journalists. According to local media scientists and journalists, a few institutions are to blame.

First, the country's communication faculties "produce" a tremendous number of graduates every year, many of them motivated to become journalists, which pour into an already overcrowded labour market, beating down salaries.

Picking up some of these young people, media companies offer low-paid jobs under low-rights contracts. Although Turkish law recognises special contracts for journalists (Clause 212, Act on Labour-Management Relations in the Press), which grants them special labour and social rights seen as necessary to ensure independence and professionalism in journalism, most cannot reap those benefits.

Most media moguls refuse to sign 212-contracts, thus forcing journalists to work under ordinary labour contracts, "basically reducing all journalists to the level of ordinary labourers and invalidating the privileges that go with being a journalist," says Asli Tunc, media scientist at Istanbul's Bilgi University.

And it is not only young professionals who are obliged to accept these unfavourable contracts, in recent years media companies have also forced long-term journalists to change their contracts to their

disadvantage, offering dismissal as an alternative to non-acceptance.

Weak Unions

Media moguls such as Aydin Dogan, who owns more than half of Turkish media today, have solved their problems using the above strategy. Since Turkish union law obliges journalists' trade union's (Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası, TGS) members to be "real" journalists (which means working under the provisions of Law 212), union membership in the media sector has gone down dramatically.

Today, according to the TGS, only 3,700 of approximately 12,000 journalists are members of the union, and only 600 of them have collective contracts, negotiated between the union and media owners.

All other contracts are set up by media companies, without co-determination by workers' representatives. Some are not even in accord with the current labour law, set up in the spring of 2004. Strengthening all workers' rights regarding job security is still ignored in some contracts.

Everyday Self-censorship

As a result, editorial independence is becoming a theoretical concept. In practice, "self-censorship takes place every day," states Erkan Ipekci of TGS.

Since big conglomerates are not only into media but other businesses as well, company interests are sometimes reflected in newspapers and on television. Dogan's empire is particularly widely criticised for "using media as a tool to gain more power in other business sectors," says Tunc. Connections to the politically powerful, often needed to enforce interests in other industries, also seem to affect the independence of reporting, according to the company's critics.

"Media moguls are interested in keeping good relationships within the political sphere," Ipekci points out, adding as long as "journalists do not have power to fight their bosses" and "lack the possibility of collective action through the union, journalistic freedom will be an ineffective concept". ■

SEEMO Activity Report

From 30 January to 3 February 2005, some 20 SEEMO members from South East Europe participated in the international seminar „Developing European Values III“ in Vienna. The seminar was organised by the European Academy Vienna, in cooperation with SEEMO. This year, the theme of the seminar was „Role and Responsibilities of the Media – Closing the Gap?“, having as thematic focus the image reflected by the media about the EU in different countries from South Eastern Europe, the sources of information about the European integration, the importance of independent media and the use, as well as the limits of new media in the European



Photo: SEEMO

Velimir Ilic, Minister of Capital Investment of Serbia and Rodolf Bohmann, Bohmann Verlag, Vienna, at the Conference Traffic Cooperation Vienna - Belgrade, organised by SEEMO in cooperation with Bohmann Verlag, City of Vienna and TINA

information process. On that occasion, the participants visited following institutions and officials in Vienna: Andrea Leitner, City of Vienna Press and Information Service, Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Arno Riedel, Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Reinhard Platzer, Kommunalkredit Austria AG, Karl Doutlik, Representation of the European Commission in Vienna, Rainer Newald, TBWA Vienna Public Affairs, H.E. Traian Chebeleu, Romanian Ambassador to Austria, H.E. Shpresa Kureta, Albanian Ambassador to Austria, Fritz Edlinger, Society of Austrian Arab Relations (GÖAB), Friedhelm Frischenschlager, OSCE and Heinz Vetschera, National Defence Academy.

In April 2005, SEEMO organised the Conference on Traffic Cooperation Vienna - Belgrade, in cooperation with Bohmann Verlag, City of Vienna and TINA. It was a part of the event „Days of Vienna in Belgrade“. ■

The South East Europe Media Organisation

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is a regional non-governmental, non-profit network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from media in South East Europe. With its committees, SEEMO aims to create a bridge between international media activities and the media developments in the region. SEEMO was founded in October 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia.

One of SEEMO's main activities is protecting press freedom by helping journalists and media outlets in South East Europe. During the last four years, SEEMO has assembled over 3,000 editors-in-chief, media executives, leading journalists and public persons from the region in various meetings. Between 2002 and 2004 SEEMO organised 14 Dialogue meetings between editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe.

SEEMO also gives two annual awards for outstanding achievements in the field of media: "Dr Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding" and the SEEMO Human Rights Award "SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe", which is presented on 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

SEEMO has two regular publications:

1. De Scripto, a quarterly media magazine for South Eastern Europe.
2. South East Europe Media Handbook (SMH), an annual publication covering media developments, which includes selected media contacts.

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Your Excellencies!

Recent SEEMO Protests

PRESS RELEASE GREECE, 3 Nov 2004

SEEMO is alarmed about the recent physical attack on Philippos Syrigos, sports editor of the Athens daily *Eleftherotypia* and a radio and TV presenter.

According to information before SEEMO, on Monday, 18 October 2004, Philippos Syrigos was attacked in the parking space near Super Sport FM radio station, while going to his car after a radio show. He was attacked at about 4 p.m. by two unknown men wearing helmets.

One of them hit Syrigos on the head with a metal bar, while the other one stabbed him several times in the back.

The two perpetrators managed to escape. Syrigos was rushed to a hospital where he was forced to undergo an emergency operation and treatment for his injuries. He was released from the hospital on 23 October.

SEEMO calls upon the authorities in Greece to find and bring to justice those responsible for the attack. SEEMO would also like to remind the Greek authorities that freedom of expression and a safe working environment for journalists are basic principles of any democratic society.

PROTEST BULGARIA, 19 Nov 2004

SEEMO is alarmed about the recent arrest of a Romanian journalist in Bulgaria.

According to information before SEEMO, on Tuesday, 16 November, Romanian Pro TV reporter George Buhnici was arrested by Bulgarian authorities for filming smuggling activities on the Romanian-Bulgarian border. Buhnici used a hidden camera to carry out his investigation which Bulgarian law considers as spying. He faces up to three years in prison if found guilty.

SEEMO is further informed that Buhnici is still being held in detention and awaiting charges to be brought against him.

SEEMO strongly condemns the arrest of the journalist and urges the Bulgarian authorities to immediately release Buhnici.

We would like to remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental principle of any democratic society and we hope that the Bulgarian officials will do everything possible to secure his immediate release.

PRESS RELEASE CROATIA, 29 Nov 2004

SEEMO is alarmed about the pressure exerted on Croatian journalist Helena Puljiz by the Counter Intelligence Agency (POA).

According to information before SEEMO, on 5 October, Puljiz was taken by POA employees to an interview. The talk soon turned into an attempt to bribe and blackmail the journalist. She was asked to cooperate with POA and also to deliver information about her colleagues. POA threatened Puljiz that in case she refused, it would make public compromising details about her private life. She was interrogated for five hours. This case was then reported to the Croatian Council for Civil Supervision of Intelligence Agencies and is now being discussed in the Parliament.

SEEMO urges the Croatian Government and Parliament to urgently investigate the pressure POA used against the journalist and ensure that all the details are made public, while respecting the private sphere of Puljiz, as well as to prevent such practices happening in the future. We would also like to add that the SEEMO office in Vienna has been informed of similar uses of pressure against Croatian journalists by the police and intelligence agencies in the recent past.

Furthermore, SEEMO was informed that the position of freelance journalists in Croatia is continuously worsening under the present labor law, tax law and copyright law. The Government has been refusing to amend the unfavourable legal regulations regarding the freedom and financial independence of freelance journalists, as proposed by the Freelance Journalists' Chapter (FJC) and Croatian Journalists' Association (HND).

SEEMO urges the Croatian Government to amend these laws according to international standards. SEEMO would like to stress that it is vital for journalists to do their job freely and that independent media are crucial for democratic development in any country.

PRESS RELEASE MACEDONIA, 17 Dec 2004

SEEMO is deeply concerned about restrictions on the free movement of journalists in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM).

According to information before SEEMO, on 6

December 2004, Ali Ahmeti, leader of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), and Arben Dzaferi and Menduh Thaci, leaders of the opposition Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), visited the village of Kondovo, a suburb of Skopje, for a meeting with a paramilitary group stationed there. They were followed by a group of journalists working for print and electronic media in Skopje. After entering the village, the journalists reported seeing some 200 men in black uniforms.

Before the talks started, the journalists were forced to leave Kondovo and were told they would be given statements by the participants later.

The reporters waited several hours for the meeting to end and were then approached by Ahmeti, who accused them of giving false reports.

SEEMO strongly condemns the attempt to restrict journalists from reporting on this event and the verbal attacks made by Ahmeti.

We would like to stress that the free movement of journalists is a fundamental principle of any democratic society and we hope that the authorities will provide an explanation about this incident.

PROTEST CROATIA, 18 Feb 2005

SEEMO is deeply concerned by the decision by a Croatian Court to uphold a suspended jail sentence given to a journalist under the Criminal Code, as well by reports that the Croatian security service has tried to discredit a group of journalists.

According to information before SEEMO, the County Court in the town of Split recently decided to uphold the sentence against Ljubica Letinic, a journalist for Croatian Radio and Television (HRT), after she filed an appeal.

On 12 July 2004, Letinic was handed down a two-month suspended prison term sentence by a Municipal Court in Split for defaming a local businessman in the television programme "Latinica" in March 2002.

SEEMO regards prison terms for defamation, whether suspended or not, as a gross violation of internationally accepted standards. Along with numerous other inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, we believe that defamation should be treated under civil law, not as a criminal offence subject to state punishments.

Finally, SEEMO has been informed by a group of five Croatian journalists that the Counter-Intelligence Agency (POA) recently accused them of meeting with representatives of foreign secret services.

Zeljko Peratovic of the daily Vjesnik, Gordan Malic of Globus, Ivica Djikic of the Feral Tribune, and Ivanka Toma and Marijo Kavain of the daily Jutarnji list, are calling for an inquiry after an article in the Globus weekly claimed that the POA, led by

its former chief Franjo Turek, had tapped their phones in 2003 and 2004 because they were suspected of participating in a media-intelligence campaign against Croatia. The reporters said that a published POA document described their articles on investigations by the Hague war crimes tribunal and the functioning of security services as "a premeditated, organised and coordinated campaign to disseminate misinformation jeopardising national security."

SEEMO urges the Croatian authorities to investigate this case and to allow journalists to work freely.

We would like to remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists, without any pressure, is a fundamental principle in every democratic society.

PROTEST SERBIA, 24 Feb 2005

SEEMO is alarmed over the recently presented Draft Criminal Code in Serbia.

According to information before SEEMO, the latest Draft Criminal Code, which is to be discussed in the Serbian parliament in March, still contains criminal provisions for libel and defamation.

In addition to fines, the Draft Law provides for prison sentences of up to six months for defamation committed through the media or at a public event.

The punishment for libel, i.e. for revealing false information which could harm the honour and reputation of those concerned, can also be punished by a fine or a prison sentence of up to six months. If the libel was committed through the medium or at a public event, the law provides for prison sentences of up to one year, or three years if the person harmed has "suffered heavy consequences."

SEEMO regards prison terms for defamation, whether suspended or not, as a gross violation of internationally accepted standards.

Along with numerous other inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, SEEMO believes that defamation should be treated under civil law, not as a criminal offence subject to state punishments.

We would like to remind you that SEEMO already criticised the existence of libel and defamation provisions in the Criminal Code in letters to Serbian authorities in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004.

We also provided, in 2001 and 2002, the then Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic with a detailed analysis titled, "An Examination of the Serbian Criminal Code and Its Restriction on Freedom of Expression", which included recommendations on what Serbia should do to bring its laws into line with internationally accepted standards on freedom of expression.

Therefore, we call again on the Serbian authorities to initiate the process of removing repressive laws that criminalise defamation and libel. ■

Review

PUBLICATION REVIEW

David Dadge: Casualty of War: The Bush Administration's Assault on a Free Press

by Kristina Benkotic

Is America, which considers itself a freedom champion, leading the world into an era of repression of global press freedom? David Dadge, editor at the International Press Institute, presents a critical examination of the worldwide state of press freedom in the wake of 11 September 2001. As the U.S. government imposes constraints on news reporting both at home and abroad, it reveals a profound ambivalence to the long-cherished right of press freedom. Following the Bush administration's lead, several foreign governments have sought to justify repressive measures toward their own media. Will our right to information become a casualty of the global War on Terror? According to *Publisher's Weekly*: "In this well-documented account of what Dadge sees as the White House's knee-jerk response to a free and sometimes critical press, he weaves together some of the disparate statements and actions of the administration into an almost prosecutorial litany of the ways in which both the American and foreign press are less free ..." *American Journalism Review* sees the book as "...firm but not shrill, accusatory but not hysterical . . . a cogent, compelling argument that a free flow of information may itself be a partial antidote to terrorism. . . . Dadge [delivers] example after example of how the Bush administration has constricted the information flow at home and overlooked serious abuses abroad..." *Casualty of War* is available on the Amazon and Barnes and Noble websites, as well as directly from the publisher, www.prometheusbooks.com ■

PUBLICATION REVIEW

Luis Alvin Dej: Etika u medijima, primeri i kontraverze

(Luis Alvin Day: *Ethics in Media Communications, Cases and Controversies*)

by Kristina Benkotic

The Belgrade Media Center has published a Serbian translation of this book, written by Louis Alvin Day, and originally published in English by Thomson/Wadsworth Learning, Belmont, Canada. The book is written in an accessible style. Topics in this very good book include: ethics and moral development, ethics and society, ethics and moral reasoning, truth and honesty in media communications and media and privacy. Although the book is primarily directed at journalists, public relations experts and students of journalism, its popular style also makes it attractive to the wider public. Every editor should read this publication, especially the interesting case studies presented. This book is a "must" for schools and universities teaching media and communications worldwide. The author is an expert in media law and ethics, with experience as a TV and radio news reporter, writer, and editor. He also worked for two years in public information with the U.S. army and has taught at Louisiana State University. ■

PUBLICATION REVIEW

Magazine Link

by Kristina Benkotic

Magazine Link, which concentrates on the electronic media, has been published for four years in Serbia. It is a useful source of information for professionals working in radio and TV in Serbia, as well as for Serbian-speaking people in other countries. One of the topics in the May edition is "Professional licenses or journalist certificates", which taps into subjects of conversation among Serbian journalists. Guy Pineau, from the Sorbonne-Nouvelle University in Paris, France, leads a discussion in this issue about local television in Western Europe. The next issue of *Link* will be published in September 2005. ■

Preview

Festival

Regional Radio Festival

Place Neum, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Time September 2005
Info fresta@drc.ba

Long term objective of this Festival is to establish an annual event designed to promote professional journalistic standards and civil society values. The Festival's participants are journalists as well as representatives of local governments, NGOs and organisations interested in protection of freedom of public and professional education of journalists.

Besides debates about law on free access to information and the role of media in the processes of European integration.

Summer School

“For Transitional Justice and Dealing with the Past”

Place Kopaonik, Serbia
Time 11-18 July 2005
Info summerschool@hlc.org.yu

The Humanitarian Law Center (SCG), Research and Documentation Center (BiH) and Documenta (Croatia) invite university students and NGO activists from Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, BiH and Croatia to a summer school.

Topics to be discussed are: retributive and restorative justice, truth-telling mechanisms, collective memory, reparations, international tribunals and criminal law, domestic war crimes trials...

Course

TOL Summer 2005 Foreign Correspondent Training Course

Place Prague, Czech Republic
Time 16-30 July 2005
Info www.tol.cz

The Internet newsmagazine Transitions Online (TO) is presenting a summer course for college and university students to prepare them for a career in international journalism. The Course will include professional writing (sources, subject matters and story structure) as well as individual information on career planning.

Conference

2nd Annual Telecom Conference - Telecom in Central & South East Europe

Place Belgrade, Serbia
Time 27-28 June 2005
Info www.easteurolink.co.uk

Key points that will be discussed: Overview of legislative and regulatory developments in the telecommunication sector; promoting competitions, new technologies, corporate experiences and strategies and governmental interests in investigation.

Course

Freelance Newsgatherers from Central and Eastern Europe

Place Kotla, Poland
Time 27-30 July 2005
Info www.dfglondon.com/training/hostile.php

Aim of this course is to give freelancers an overview of broadcaster and practical operating needs as well as new technologies and improving their own safety.

Conference

Democracy and Human Rights in Multiethnic Societies

Place Konjic, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Time 11-15 July 2005
Info www.rokkan.uib.no/bihdemocracy

The Panels will turn round special topics like “Inter-Media: Clusters, Crossroads and Complexity”.

Conference

SEEMO Dialogue Meeting

between media executives and editors-in-chief from **Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro**

Place Opatija, Croatia
Time 13-15 October 2005
Info info@seemo.org

Conference

SEEMO Dialogue Meeting

between media executives and editors-in-chief from **Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro**

Place Tirana, Albania
Time 10-12 November 2005
Info info@seemo.org

de Scripto

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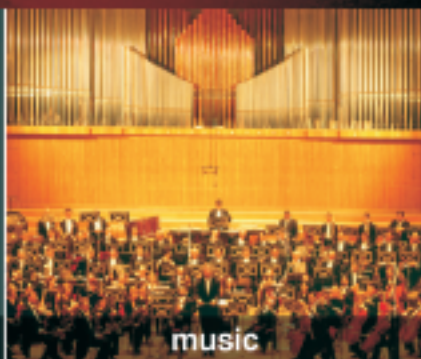
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