

# *deScripto*

A Journal of Media in South Eastern Europe

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How Psychology  
Becomes Politics

Milo Dor: Where Myth  
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## *Changing* **Faces**

Identity in South-Eastern Europe

## 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.  
Published quarterly as a joint project of  
the University of Vienna, Webster  
University Vienna and the Vienna  
Professional School for Journalism,  
under the auspices of the South East  
Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO),  
deScripto is an independent, journal of  
analysis and opinion dedicated to the  
democratization 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!

You are holding the first issue of a new magazine that we hope will give you some insight into the media landscape in South East Europe. Both SEEMO and its parent organization IPI are dedicated to supporting any idea that helps shine some light on the movements and developments in the fields of media, society and democratization.

deScripto means "of the written word," a way of saying that we are a journal of writing about writing, in particular, of writing about the media. This journal hopes to become a reference point for what you want or need to know about media and communications development in South East Europe, and how it affects public discourse in those countries.

deScripto sees itself as the mouthpiece for this discourse. It aims to actively integrate a great diversity of media-relevant ventures, to bring issues and events from the worlds of economics, politics, management, professional education and society into the discussion. To achieve this, we will give you an up-to-date account of relevant facts, developments and change in the South East European media landscape; we will deal with fundamental issues of how the media intersect with politics culture, and to evaluate them critically and independently, through the youthful, yet sharp eyes of journalism students. The aim is to mobilise the discourse on media and media democracy between decision-makers in media, politics, economy, science, culture and education – and to support them in their responsibilities and efforts for social, interactive and mutual understanding

If it then happens that experts working in the media come together in order to get involved in discussions on the range of media issues and learn from each other, or come together in cooperation across the country – then deScripto will have reached its aims: an agency of intellectual exchange on media development, media quality, media culture, and media cooperation. This is not a scholarly journal, but rather one that hopes to shed light on and contribute to critical media analysis. Media communication is a fragile and sensitive resource of societal democratization, and it needs to be taken seriously.

deScripto will be published quarterly a year, beginning September 2004, followed in December, March and June. Each issue will have a dual, the-



## Letter from Publisher

## Dear Readers!

It is my honor to present the first issue of deScripto, the new magazine published by the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). The aim of this quarterly publication is to serve as a source of information on media developments in South East Europe, to report on the state of press freedom and to cover developments in journalism in the region.

SEEMO is the owner and publisher of this magazine, but the real work was done by Prof. Thomas Bauer and his team from the Vienna University. Herewith I would like to express my sincere gratitude to them, and to our correspondents and sources in the region.

Feedback, comments and suggestions are encouraged, and should be sent to our SEEMO office in Vienna (by e-mail to: descripto@seemo.org or to SEEMO-IPI, Spiegelgasse 2/29, 1010 Vienna, Austria). This will be of assistance in preparing the next issue of deScripto magazine.

Oliver Vujovic, Publisher  
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

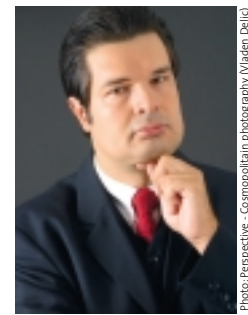


Photo: Perspective - Cosmopolitan photography (Waden Deic)

► matic and a country focus. We start with a thematic focus on Identity, a topic central to the evolution of media democracy in each of these countries, and conversely, so closely tied to the societal function of media itself. The country focus begins with Bulgaria. The journalistic work is done in great part by young people – students, who study communications and media at the University of Vienna, at the Professional School of Journalism in Vienna or at Webster University Vienna, with the support of faculty mentors. The students join the project as a voluntary professional internship, thus learn to get involved in a media related discourse – and learn to know the Balkan and the South East European countries as an important part of our European future.

Thomas A. Bauer, Editor-in-Chief

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# Creating Common Ground

*“A diverse European Vision and a Flood of New Ideas”*

Interview with Thomas A. Bauer,  
Editor in Chief of *deScripto*

by Daniela Süssenbacher

*South Eastern Europe is an enormous, multinational and culturally-mixed area that has risen to the top of the European agenda. The expansion of the European Union dominates today's political, social and economic discourse, and with the Milosevic trial currently underway at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, residual issues from the Balkan conflict still dominate media coverage.*

*In this setting, a range of projects have been initiated by the EU and other international organizations to strengthen ties with the region. With the journal you now hold in your hands, we launch a publication that will focus on the issues and perspectives of the countries of South Eastern Europe, in the hope of shedding light on these pressing concerns.*

*In a recent interview, director Thomas A. Bauer, discussed his goals for deScripto, and the possibilities, consequences and potential problems facing a project of this kind.*

## Reinforcing a Communication Process

First and foremost, says Thomas Bauer, *deScripto* involves the creation and organization of a special communication space, providing both a framework and a foundation for community building. Beyond the technologies themselves, the media need to challenge us to fulfil our social and cultural responsibilities. So also in the Balkans, the media need to provide a social and cultural framework. To accomplish this, will require a renewing of the existing communication infrastructure, and a rethinking of the existing culture of media production and consumption.

According to Bauer, the challenges of this project are to “create a kind of common ground through the sharing of ideas, through empathy, participation, and an acknowledgement of difference,” while confronting the range of cultural, social, political traditions and the variety of religious experiences. The basic intention is to help set a positive tone and an understanding of the close ties – both geographically and culturally – within South Eastern Europe itself and between these countries and the European Union.

## Is Unity a Plus for South Eastern Europe?

Most western communities seem to be frightened by “dividing lines,” while recognizing that these alone can never maintain peace. That’s why the preferred expressions used to describe the shared qualities of a national area seem to be “unity” and “identity”.

The conflicts within South Eastern Europe show that there can often be less connecting countries and cultures than dividing them, even within a small geographical area. This phenomenon represents “one common European stereotype of dealing with proximity,” Bauer says. But the issues this project is hoping to address, have more to do with the perception that these circumstances do not necessarily have to lead to separation and disconnection.

Thomas Bauer thinks of the name South Eastern Europe as a kind of code for a minority cultural orientation. As a “historically evolved accumulation of different cultures, the region offers an extraordinary tradition of difference,” he says.

In an area like the Balkans that has always been such a mix of cultures, we find specialised cultural archives and memories that crisscross through religion in an extraordinary way – so that nearly all states can be seen as “multicultural societies” with many positive as well as negative consequences.

*deScripto* is not, however, intended as a kind of social therapy for the Balkan, insists the project’s founder. Referring to the complex cultural-historical changes the area faces, more effort should be placed on a special sort of cultivation process, that involves successful communication and networking events which will undoubtedly always be carried by, transformed or rebuilt through the media itself.

## Media Culture as a Workshop for Cooperation

The project also focuses on aspects of European culture and society, its many areas of interest and opportunities to learn, and launch the existing cultural framework into a transformation process. At least in the context of media production, the building of

## ad personam



**Thomas A. Bauer** is full-time professor at the Department of Media- and Communication Science at the University of Vienna.

Head of two South East Europe - related projects: JetiC: An EU-Tempus project for establishing a sustainable journalism qualification in Croatia – together with ICEJ Opatija, Croatia and University of Zagreb, Journalism Studies: an educational cooperation between universities of Vienna and Zagreb.

Research focus: media theory, media culture, media education, transversal subjects in professional development: health-communication, environmental communication, inter-religious communication.

Last publication: The Culture of Diversity. A Theoretical Orientation for the Cultural Practice of Social Cooperation. Zagreb 2004



open-minded communication cultures is very important for all afflicted and concerned communities.

For more than two decades, Thomas Bauer has been intensely involved with analysis and discourse on the issues of South East European media and its relation to the rest of Europe. His activities as both instigator of and participant in a broad range of scholarly media projects have continually reminded him that responsibility needs to be faced, reflected and seen in a wider social and geographical context. The most important issue – the communication flow between the different communities – needs to be addressed in a media dialogue.

Bauer sees the purpose of a project like *deScripto* to mobilise the media discourse, to encourage a face-to-face active dialogue on the economic, political, religious and cultural issues in the public forum the media provide. But beyond these goals of new ideas, impulses or information pools, we can bring the communicative setting down to a local level, to a level that allows the local communities to learn something about themselves through confrontation and engagement with others, a process that benefits all involved. Rather than removing or avoiding problems, it is a process of working towards a better understanding of the problems themselves.

The project's profile, says Bauer, is "a critical analysis and discourse-related reflection on European society and media cultures, that works with introspection and self-knowledge as positive result of exchange and confrontation with the experience of foreign-ness". In short: The project contributes to self-actualisation – for the Balkan Region and for Europe itself.

### Cracking Invisibility

Thomas Bauer argues that the concept of "Balkan as a region" should only be seen as a metaphor for Europe itself. Balkan questions can only be asked and answered – if ever – through a discourse on the term "European Identity." For example, simply the way the "Balkan file" has been treated during the last decade shows an implicit denial of our shared history, and thinking back to World War II, the refusal of European cultural, political, and intellectual centres to work on human problems like "subjection to authority". At the very least, it is possible in this context to protest the phenomenon of invisibility that has characterized these countries so long "hidden" behind the Iron Curtain.

"*deScripto* is a gesture of sheer cultural curiosity," says Bauer. "These young journalists – from Austria, Central and South Eastern Europe and beyond – can become professionals and experts, if we force them to reflect." The confrontation with a problematic region can be "quite fruitful," he says, "if we can

draw an important connection between social and cultural problems and future strategies.

"We are not missionaries", Bauer emphasises, "but we are inspired by a wonderful European Vision and a flood of new ideas." It is with these, that the *deScripto* team will move ahead on a kind of new cultural Diaspora, providing an impetus and creating the systems to put these complex themes into a critical perspective. And at the very least, the students will work to build on a virtual space of reflection, communication and empathy with the media world of South Eastern Europe. ■

Advertisement



## South East Europe Media Handbook 2003/2004

...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 2003. 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 2003/2004" for a payment of 30 Euro.

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# Opening Dialogue Windows

## *Making New Pathways to Communication*

IPI Director Johann P. Fritz on SEEMO and Media Development in South Eastern Europe

by Axel Maireder

ad personam



Photo: IPI

**Johann P. Fritz** has been Director of the International Press Institute since 1992

Think about it: Public Broadcasting stations are acting less and less like state propaganda centres; there is increasing private competition to the state news agencies; and throughout the former Yugoslavia, hate speech is in decline – these are some of the important changes to South Eastern Europe's media landscape in the last 10 years, Johann P. Fritz says proudly. As Director of the International Press Institute (IPI), he has worked hard to nurture the development of personal networks among journalists that will be the foundation of an emerging profession in the region.

“If there is something happening in another SEE country, people now know someone who can get them the background information,” he says. It's a way of opening dialogue windows to the outside, a phenomenon visible in the recent increase of stories appearing in local media on events and issues in neighbouring countries.

“There are fewer blinders, less artificial demarcation now,” he says. “People used to be considered traitors when they tried to get another party's view. This has improved significantly in recent years.”

But there are still a lot of problems for media businesses, principally financial, as the economic situation in most of the SEE countries is fragile. One thing that Fritz finds particularly discouraging is that the media companies and journalists who fought for democracy during the nineties are often the ones who are in a very bad situation now. Western investors primarily purchase former state-owned broadcasting and press firms, as these have the most valuable assets and the strongest client lists, and leaves the other aside.

The purchase of SEE Media companies by Western investors is a mixed blessing for the region's media landscape as a whole, Fritz says. Firstly, it is positive because Western investors are only interested in cashing in, and have no interest in party politics or any special ideology. And secondly, foreign investments allow a business to build up the needed infrastructure.

But, and this is the other side of the coin, Western owners tend to ignore objective journalistic ethics or

the media company's principles and they mostly are not interested in an editorial role in decision making.

“The editors in chief need to have more courage, and fight harder to ensure their editorial independence, to resist manipulation from the outside.”

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) was founded in year 2000 as an affiliate to the International Press Institute and has played an important role in South East European media developments. Focusing on international seminars and workshops, SEEMO was one of the first organizations to bring media professionals of all the SEE countries together to discuss the standards of journalistic practise and to fight national and ethnic prejudice.

But there are national problems to solve as well, especially in those countries that are home to different ethnicities and ethnic minorities. The Macedonian “dialogue seminars”, brought together Slavic, Albanian and Macedonian journalists as well as those of the Turkish, Serbian and Roma minorities to discuss how to deal with problems of the Macedonian media, and to look for common solutions.

“The dialogue among media professionals”, Fritz says, “is also the first step to a dialogue in politics.”

But not everyone appreciates SEEMO's involvement, especially nationalist parties and media companies, who still do not accept the organisation's efforts to initiate dialogue among different groups.

Fritz feels confident, however, that “those nationalistic editors will gradually disappear, and newspapers that present a narrow, one-sided view, will not survive.”

# The Face in the Mirror

## *How Psychology Becomes Politics*

by Thomas A. Bauer

Each of the countries of South Eastern Europe feels a strong sense of identity. They work hard to distinguish themselves from one another, to be a picture with sharp edges, and to not let their neighbor's image bleed over the border into their own.

Nevertheless, together they share a regional identity, and recent history has shown that this double bind can cause hateful conflicts. At the same time, however, the recent systemic changes in society, politics and economics also support a culture of learning: Open horizons create new paradigms.

### A Face in the Mirror

Identity is both history and future. It is history in the sense that history is the narrative construction of identity as it has become. It is the future as the sustainable construction of the identity that will evolve. As history, we see our identity as in a mirror, our faces a map tracing the path of all that has gone before. But does it help to look into the mirror of history in order to get an idea of the future?

If you look into the mirror you think you see yourself. But you do not, not really. Not as others see you. In nature, the image in a mirror is reversed from the way we look to the outside world. Reflected back to us directly, side for side, the mechanics of perspective are oversimplified. The contribution of another mind, an outside observer, is missing. It is only you. You are considering yourself considering yourself.

In a mirror, there remains something you cannot see on your own, something for which you need the other to learn. The less you express yourself openly, or the more your revelations are burdened with self-justification, the less you will get feedback which you are ready to accept. What others offer you as an interpretation of yourself is not what you were thinking. You may find their picture false, perhaps even deliberately distorted; they clearly do not know anything about you.

But how could they, if you do not reveal anything? Openness may not come easily, but culturally, it is the first step toward becoming yourself. Identity is a construct of communication, not of self-mirroring, not of repeated depiction of one's own values as they have been, oversimplified. It becomes complete only through the intervening observation of others.

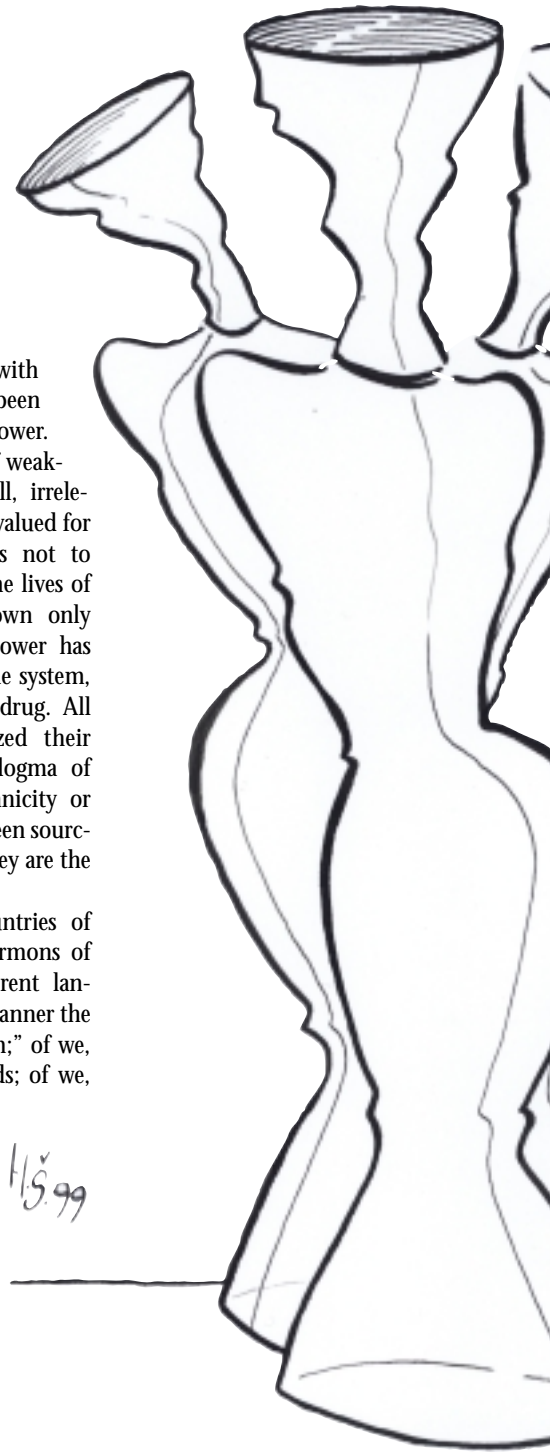
Avoiding openness creates blind spots: When you do not know what others really think about you, you can never know whether your position an outlook are sustainable for all the crises to come.

### The Myth of Independence

For as long as politics has had to do with the wielding of power, identity has been used, or misused, as a factor of that power. The underside of identity is the fear of weakness, of powerlessness, or worst of all, irrelevance. Not to be considered, not to be valued for oneself, not to be somebody, means not to count, or to be only an appendix to the lives of others. One gains a life of one's own only through independence. Whenever power has been in the hands of one person or one system, identity has been abused as political drug. All authoritarian systems have legitimized their totalitarian leadership by setting a dogma of identity. History, heroes, culture, ethnicity or religion – or all those together – have been sources of political manipulation, because they are the cultural archives of identity.

In the media throughout the countries of South Eastern Europe, the Sunday-sermons of the politicians are filled with belligerent language, serving up in a rather insolent manner the stereotypical dogmas of "us" and "them;" of we, the heroes, and the others, the cowards; of we, the peace-loving, the others, the traitors. This view of oneself by gaining distance from others follows a simple mechanism of the autosuggestion of independence: To be myself, I don't need anyone.

*"If you look into the mirror you think to see yourself. But you do not. You consider yourself considering yourself."*



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Illustration: Ivan Igor Sapic

*“There is a psychological circle of giving and taking, which is individually but also collectively representing the wisdom of life: Self-estimation is the healthiest base to estimate others.”*

Thus independence has a long history as the paradigm for national identity. As national independence has long been understood as a concept of power: Independent are they who do not need anyone's help to realize their own needs and wishes. The only way to achieve this is the symbolizing of domination by ritualizing the wording of own identity in terms of power and at the same time, concentrating on the weak points of others. Is self-defense all there is to self-awareness and self-realization?

### Power or Competence?

In the face of instinctive anxiety, it is easy to believe that power (over others) is the most effective means of living your own life. And of course, in a sense, that is how it works: To maintain yourself is a question of power. But maybe it is more than that; maybe it is also a question of competence. Competence is an intelligent concept of power. [Competence is power with intelligence.] It brings the capacity to modify the resources of the environment to the needs of one's life, as well as to help you adapt to the conditions of social and cultural world around you.

Human beings gain knowledge by using knowledge. The instinct to survive is altered by experience and may become culturally enriched by reflection on that experience. Culture is a framework for understanding biological contradictions as challenging paradoxes. Understanding paradoxes gives a position of sovereignty and differentiation.

Concerning the concept of identity, the paradox is a therapeutic tool of transpersonal psychology, which is still to be discovered by those who play a role in shaping public identity – i.e. politicians and the media. Caught up in defensive concepts of identity based on mistrust, they project hidden attitudes of self-negation, having internalized collective feelings of inferiority and weakness. This habit creates difficulties for everyone, for themselves and for the others. In this manner the closest neighbor becomes the biggest threat, each kind of competition turns to a drama of jealousy. In this state, it is difficult to be, or to become, accepted as a partner with an open face, as a challenging partner who knows what he wants.

### From Defensive to Interchanging Models

There is a psychological circle of give and take, that individually, but also collectively, represents the wisdom of life: Self-respect is the healthiest basis for respect for others. Disrespect for others always has been an aggressive attitude. Aggression is a lack of acceptance – a mechanism, which always starts with one's attitude toward oneself. This was one of the most important insights of the “logo therapy” of psychologist Viktor Frankl, and also one of the simplest, that self-acceptance is the first step toward a mean-

ingful life. It begins with the decision to accept others. Respecting others gives you respect in return and – that is the most important effect – gives you the maneuvering room to come even closer to yourself by creating and working out undeveloped potentials. Thus authenticity enables you to shape your identity by means of changing yourself according to the conditions of your life.

A healthy concept of identity works openly and offensively: By experiencing others, you experience yourself and you learn to express it in new ways.

Negotiating identity in the context of national and international institutions (public affairs), as well as in the context of national and international discourse (the media) is a question of performance and communication skills, the conscious, creative ability, preparedness and responsibility to attract another's attention in one's own interest, by developing an open mind toward the interests of others. This ability is, of course, an ethical effort (an effort of creating consciousness, and of critical reflection), which needs pro-active self-expression of and open communication on cultural fundamentals within the various nations or ethnic groups. The lack of internal communication (which means to discover and to accept internal difference or variety) indicates a lack of self-knowledge and self-confidence – which can sometimes best be healed through the attention and acceptance by others. Their empathy can help us accept ourselves.

### A new paradigm: Interdependency

Since political or public power is no longer in any one person's hands, having over the last century been given to the people in most countries, the construction of identity becomes an exercise in deliberation from the national, or other political leadership and can be turned into a lateral, cooperative work of interpretation, of collective self-realization. Together a government and a people can determine what gives a face to a nation or to a community in order to recognize and accept itself and its identity and to get recognized and accepted by others. Under the conditions of democracy, of plurality and of diversity, this process is accomplished by a multilevel public discourse, where media play a decisive role. Under the conditions of market-driven politics, of globalization, of transition, and of transformation of systems, the question of identity became a category of competition. And a question of to whom to belong.

For over two centuries, the paradigm of national identity was independence. In a multi-dimensional, connected world, however, identity has become a product of communication and cooperation, and independence becomes a feature of partner-relation. As a result, the new paradigm of identity in a multifaceted world is inter-dependency. Identity and iden-



tification are results of dialogue, and the self-realization of nations, minorities and communities becomes real through an open, unguarded interest in understanding the other. Nothing offers a greater opportunity – and also a greater challenge – to getting to know and accept oneself than to engage with and understand others.

### The Responsibility of Media

It has become a remarkable aspect of communications research that former reference points in shaping identity – borders of religion, culture, ethnicity, nationality, race, etc. – are going to be replaced by much more mobile, hybrid and virtual ones, by the discourse models of media communication. Media, as the agencies of public discourse, have to take over the task of critical reflection on the working society. They are the instruments of a cultural catharsis, when and where a society is in need of restoring or re-inventing itself. Media have the connective capacity to observe the public conversation (meta-communication), to enlarge it where information is too limited, and to enrich it where the discourse-content is too thin or too shallow, to intervene from the outside when conversation is too introverted, to steer from the inside when the discourse gets lost in translation. And while they may be under pressure to reduce the complexity of programs for financial reasons, it may also be their responsibility to return a reasonable complexity to their consideration of social and political life.

Meta-communication (how we interact) and communication exchange (what we give and mean to each other) both involve catharsis, involving personal communication with psychological weight. Why should this self-therapeutic potential of communication not work in societal context? The only requirement, as in a personal context, is what therapists call the “insight into and the acceptance of unequal status.”

Mobilizing this critical self-awareness is a question of competence in living and surviving under conditions of an ever-changing environment; it is a pragmatic view of ethics and an ethical use of practice. This pragmatic and ethical horizon of self-realization has to be brought into the public discourse; it is a kind of intelligent and therapeutic rule breaking that – in context of society – can only be done by the kind of collective power the media represent. As the media are agencies of topical social interaction, they represent the social competence of a society, for which critical self-observation is one of the key skills.

This of course demands a media culture that cares about the stakes of all participating individuals, peoples and institutions, where owners, editors, journalists and the public – all by their own capacities – share the responsibility of public consciousness. ■

*“Media, as they are agencies of public discourse, have to overtake the task of critical reflection of society. They are the instruments of a cultural catharsis, when and where a society is in need of recovering itself.”*

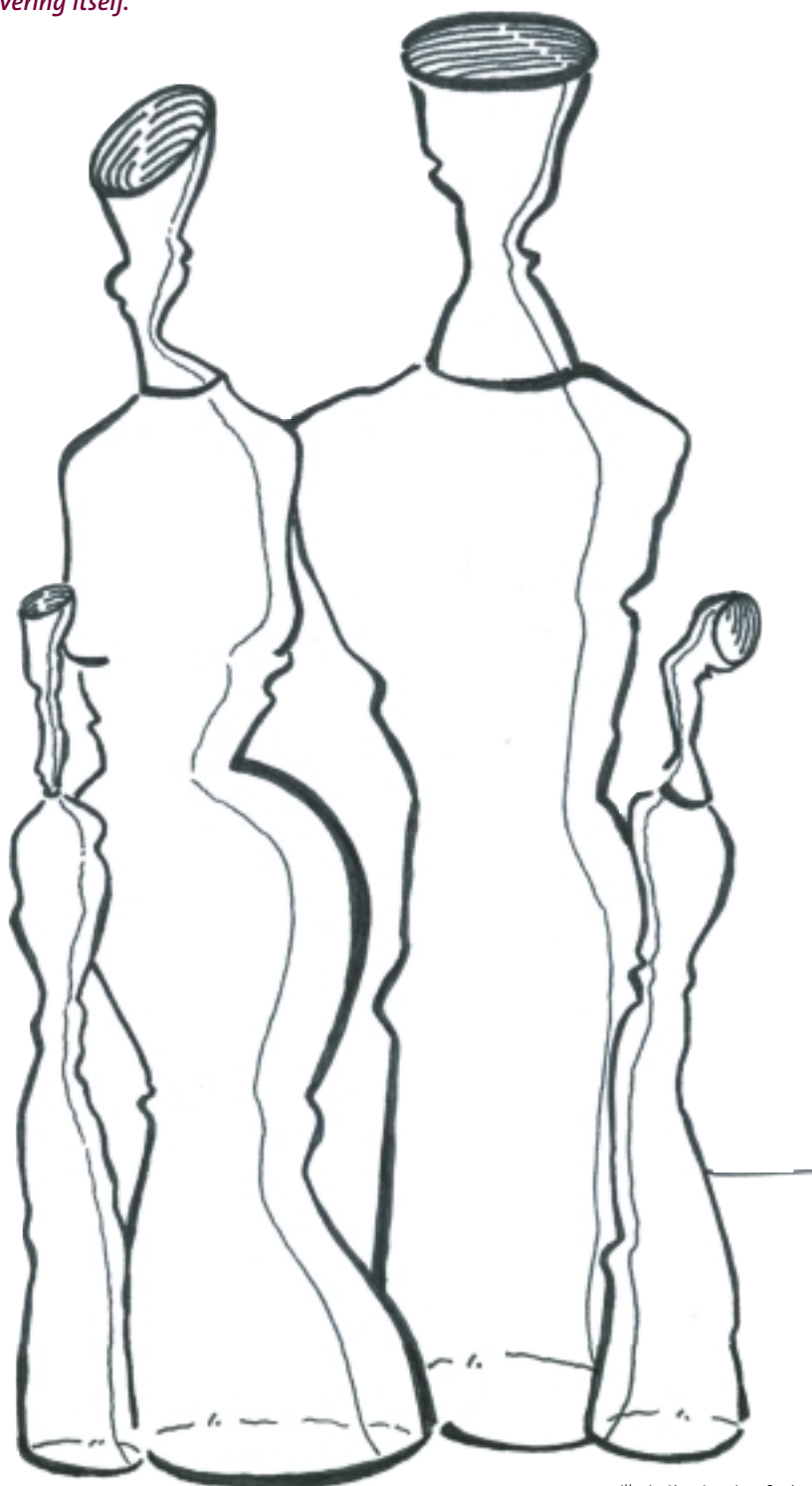


Illustration: Ivan Igor Sapic

# The Quest for Identity

*Where Exactly are the Balkans? (And Who is Willing to Admit it?)*

by Axel Maireder & Ana Znidar

*Chaotic, violent, backward – this is how the Balkan region is often identified from outside.*

Chaotic, violent, backward – this is how the Balkan region is often identified from outside. The term “Balkanization,” originally referring to the fragmentation of the region into a number of small states after the breakdown of the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empires in the early 20th century, has since been used to describe violent ethnic conflicts and unclear, morally shaky political situations. The Yugoslav war in the 1990’s, often referred to as the “war in the Balkans”, contributed to this view. No wonder that countries like Slovenia or Croatia prefer not to be called “Balkan” countries, thus contributing to the troubled Western picture of the Balkan region.

The Balkans, as portrayed by the media, were and still are to some extent seen as the “barbarian” counterpart of “civilized” Europe, a region lacking a tradition of liberal thinking and democratic values, that needs Western help to develop. Today, Western Europe still sees the Balkans as the underdog, the periphery of the continent of which they are the center. Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic, cautioned NATO to be open to everyone, yet saw among the former communist countries, only the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Hungary as part of the “Western hemisphere of Europe,” as the countries that have “common values and are inspired by the same traditions.” The boundaries of the Western hemisphere are Eurasia and the Balkans, which he considered “traditionally unsafe regions.”

*Is there something that can be called ‘Balkan’ values?*

But what are the values that the Balkan countries lack, those things they supposedly do not have in common with Western Europe? And is there something that can be called “Balkan” values?

The boundaries of the Balkans, or South Eastern Europe’s boundaries have never been completely clear. While Clemens Prinz von Metternich, the long-time Austrian chancellor in the mid-19th century, famously described the Balkans as beginning in Vienna’s Rennweg heading south from Schwarzenbergplatz in central Vienna, today’s geographers are still discussing which countries should be considered part of the Balkan peninsula. Some arguing the Sava-

Danube-line to be the northern boundary, excluding Hungary, Romania and Slovenia, while other, broader approaches include Moldavia to the east, and Turkey and Cyprus to the south.

While not even Geographers seem to have agreed as to what the Balkans are exactly, the search for a true Balkan identity is even harder. Focusing on ethnic, religious or linguistic similarities does not solve the problem, since there is no other region in Europe that is as fragmented. The Southern Slavic language family is quite spread out, yet not even 40 percent of South-Eastern Europe’s population speak a Slavic tongue. Both the Orthodox and the Catholic churches as well as the Islamic faith have a foot hold in the Balkans. And none of those can claim a clear majority of believers in the region.

Does history give a clue? There are large areas that were under Ottoman rule for centuries, and since the breakdown of the Empire, according to Western historians, there seems to have been a kind of “tradition of instability” in the region. In recent decades, large parts of the peninsula have suffered under communist regimes, and their traces are still visible in all of those countries. But can you call such a history a common identity?

Yet another possible approach, used by Cristina Bradatan in her essay on the cultural identity of the Balkans, is the attempt to prove the existence of a common cuisine and some typical facial features recognizable in people from Balkan countries encountered on the streets of foreign cities.

When asked what a Balkan identity means to them, people from the region will answer in very different ways. Their responses are undoubtedly connected to their diverse cultural backgrounds within the Balkans, but also vary depending on their political beliefs.

While a nationally-minded Slovene will place little value on a Balkan identity, a left-wing compatriot may happily consider himself an inhabitant of the Balkans.

To the fans of Kusturica-movies, the Balkans are connected with a nonchalant, chaotically unordered, but nevertheless well-lived life, with human originals,

with playing and singing, with mutton and home-made brandy. The nay-sayers today still see the Balkan identity as critically as the Balkans elites did in the 19th century, people who regarded themselves as economically, socially and politically backward. The region's wars were, in fact, the only thing that changed, while the labelling of this part of Europe as barbaric, reactionary, bloodthirsty, avengeful and aggressive remained.

In recent decades, people in many Western European countries encountered people from the 'East' mainly in the form of "Gastarbeiter" and political refugees. But in fact, the same is true for more developed countries of the East, where many do not want their country to be considered as Balkan, a term they hear too often used as an insult, and one implying an undisciplined, "southern" mentality. Assigning this undesirable "Balkan" character to one another, the Balkan countries themselves contribute to a negative construction of the term.

But, while it is not desirable to be associated with the many negative connotations and stereotypes ascribed to the people of the Balkans, there are signs that this image is slowly changing. Balkan culture being at heart a very self-confident one, many inhabitants of the Balkans are particularly proud of their roots and their world view, which for them means their national pride and sense of tradition. To observers from abroad, the need to express and celebrate their national identity may even appear, at times, overdone.

The other observable trend is a more recent one: Among the generation under twenty, the Balkans are becoming "hip." As in the U.S., where rappers from the ghettos are enjoying a cult status, in Europe the Balkan culture is becoming "in." It has just a touch of the criminal; people from the Balkans love to party, the kids explain. And the Balkans mean a little wildness, macho and hot temper.

But after concentrating on positive and negative aspects of a possible common identity, people from the various Balkan countries answer without exemption – and that is a conviction they share – that no such differences exist.

Maybe it is safest to conclude that national diversity on this scale in a region that was and still is strategically crucial, is what the countries from the Balkans share in the first place. In the same way as a Norwegian and a Swede will emphasize the differences between them, while Central Europeans tend to talk about the common characteristics of "Scandinavians," the people from the Balkans stress that a common Balkan identity can only be assumed by foreigners who do not understand the situation and vast differences among them. ■

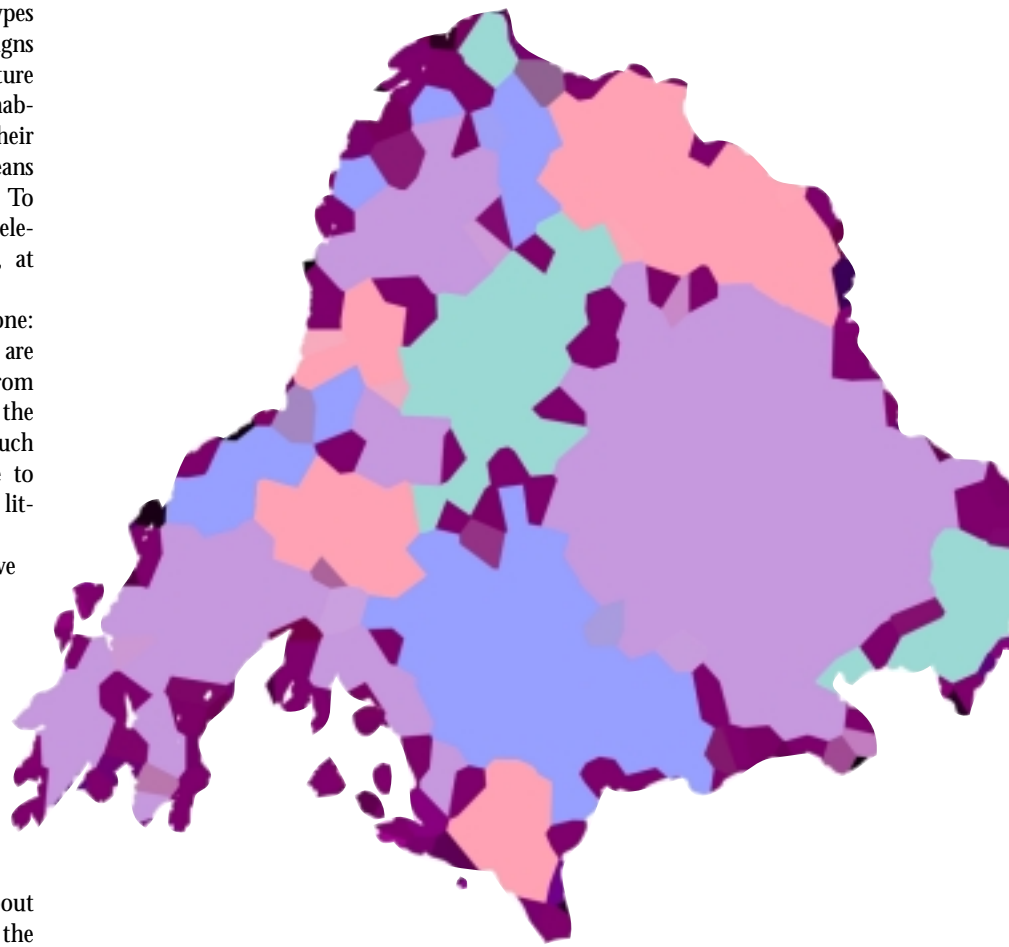
### Voices from the Balkans:

"Maybe the most prominent characteristic that many countries of the Balkans are sharing is the flair that remained in these countries from the only recently stripped Socialism. You can see how the Capitalism is only beginning, and many people still cannot decide in which way they want to think. In a local shop or a tavern they will be happy to charge you one or two less, if that is the sum you are short, which you just won't experience in the West. In Austria I have seen a cashier sending a small kid home, because he was short of 15 cent – that was when I was thinking this is the difference. This is why I love my country and our way of thinking." (Rok Z.)

"The people of the Balkans also lack the knowledge of a golden mean. In these countries you will face e.g. either an exaggerated friendliness and hospitality or naked hatred – there is seldom something in-between." (Rok Z.)

"There is a fact that in the Balkans there was always some fighting, always some 'shit' happening. There is even a saying used quite often ironically in Croatia, translated it says 'and peaceful Bosnia!', because Bosnia never was a peaceful place." (Margareta H.)

"If you hear somebody in Slovenia saying "You are from the Balkans!" you can be sure that this person is not addressing another Slovenian person. The situation is similar when you hear the same sentence in Croatia – a Croatian does not tell another Croatian that they are from the Balkans, but they do address this definition to any country that lies southern of Croatia, but the further south you go, the less people will object to being called 'Balkan.'" (Bojan W.)



# Knowing Who We Are

## Reassessing the Role of Culture in the Transition to a Free Society

### Stability Pact Coordinator Erhard Busek

by Dardis McNamee

ad personam



Photo: Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe

**Erhard Busek**, former Vice Chancellor of Austria, began his professional career as legal advisor to the association of parliamentarians of the Austrian People's Party. He then served in a number of administrative positions including Secretary-General of the Austrian Federation for Trade and Commerce, Secretary-General of the Austrian People's Party, Deputy-Mayor of Vienna, Minister of Science and Research, Minister of Education, and, most recently, Vice Chancellor. He is currently editor of a monthly newspaper *Wiener Journal*, chairman of the Institute for the Danube and Central Europe, member of the Committee on Education in the European Union, and coordinator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), a new project created to enhance stability in Southeastern Europe through the development of economic and environmental cooperation.

Busek is Visiting Professor of the Practice of Public Policy Studies at Duke University, and Co-Chair of the Commission on Radio and Television Policy: Central and Eastern Europe.

It is impossible to talk about the countries of South Eastern Europe today without including the voice of Erhard Busek. Former Vice Chancellor of Austria, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Austria's Representative for EU Expansion, and Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Busek has committed much of the last decade and a half to aiding the economic reconstruction and democracy building efforts of the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

And with 10 new-member countries having joined the EU on 1 May, and more to follow, he feels both pride and satisfaction at how much has been accomplished.

But Busek asks more. Unlike many of those actively involved in EU expansion, he has held firmly to the central role of culture and cultural identity as essential foundation stones of the successful transition to a free society. He is concerned with the larger changes since 1989, in relation to what we had, and what we have lost.

"There is more to the answer than the technical or economic dimension," Busek told the graduates of Webster University Vienna in May. It was to learn about that "more" – the "spiritual and intellectual capacities," the qualities of a people that add up to what we call "culture" – that I went to pay a call on Dr. Busek at the Institute offices in Vienna.

On a sweltering hot day in July, when every step along Vienna's Hahngasse was an effort and the one short flight to the Institute offices felt like a small mountain, Erhard Busek found a free hour to talk about Southeastern Europe, about developments in the media and the struggle for identity in a rapidly changing economic and political climate.

The offices are not air-conditioned, but the clean lines of the décor made it somehow 'cool' to the eye. Having doffed his suit jacket, Busek too seemed cool, relaxed and greeted his guest with an energy beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals in the oppressive heat. With the offer of a seat and a cool glass of water, he trotted off to replace his "Parkschein" (parking ticket) and his two assistants returned to sifting through a sheaf of papers, pulling reports off the shelf, typing, phoning. There is clearly a lot going on here.

The Stability Pact takes up much of Erhard Busek's time these days. Created at the EU's initiative

in 1999, the organization is intended „to foster peace, democracy, respect for human rights and economic prosperity in order to achieve stability in the whole region“. It grew out of the experiences and lessons of worldwide international crisis management and is considered "the first serious attempt by the international community to replace the previous, reactive crisis intervention policy in South Eastern Europe with a comprehensive, long-term conflict prevention strategy."

On the day we spoke, Busek was preparing for the annual meeting of the Prime Ministers of the countries of SEE, to take place in Salzburg on 27 and 28 July, where he planned to press for trade liberalization and a common energy policy, issues he sees as the "driving force" for eventual economic and political coordination with the EU.

"These issues need both urgent attention and serious political commitment," Busek says. And while some progress has been made, the SEE countries lack both a network of free trade agreements and a formal regional energy community – both of which he hopes to see in place by 2007.

However the agenda of the Stability Pact is long, with upcoming conferences in September on both trans-border crime and housing shortages jostling for Dr. Busek's attention, as well as education, democracy building, gender issues, and the media.

Continuing state control in some countries, dominance by foreign publishing conglomerates in others, poor training and lack of resources, and the absence of any tradition of a free press all hinder the emergence of independent media – one that can inform the citizens of nascent democracies and convey the authentic experience of societies and peoples going through extraordinary change.

All this is a recurring theme in Busek's writing and public remarks.

"An ideological political system has robbed the citizens of these countries of their biographies and their national identities," Busek told the graduates of Webster University in May.

More than anything, he sees it as a question of culture. The Bosnian War has shown "how vital culture is for the protection of human rights and mutual understanding," he said in remarks before the EU Commission. Culture lies at the base of all of our political and social institutions: "History and law are the basis for the development of constitutions,



human rights and international law – and are therefore imperative to the future of Europe.”

Busek sees the media as the voice of culture with the widest reach in contemporary life, and the most important vehicle for dialogue among citizens. Without an independent, multi-voiced media, this dialogue cannot take place. The media are the way societies tell their ongoing stories, and are thus the way they know who they are.

Withdrawing into the inner office, Busek settled himself at the round table piled with journals and reports and began to lay out the challenges he saw facing the media in South Eastern Europe. Half way into the first sentence, he was on his feet again, pacing back and forth as he talked. The issues are urgent; action is required.

To begin with, there is the problem of who owns what. In countries with struggling economies, financing independent media is a daunting proposition.

“They desperately need foreign investment, and some of that is good,” Busek explained. “But it also means loss of control locally.” Western media companies – including publisher Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) in Germany, Ringier in Switzerland, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in Germany, Le Monde in France – are buying up newspapers and broadcast stations throughout the region, bringing Western European managers and ideas with them.

“Important as this investment is, it brings with it real danger,” Busek warned, “that in the end, the messages will all sound the same – more the voices of their West European owners than the communities” they are serving. WAZ now, for example, owns some 50 newspapers in the Balkan region alone.

The result in much of the region, Busek said, is that “nothing much of significance” is happening.

“In publishing there are two tracks: the post-communist newspapers – often still state-owned – are essentially the same as before. The second group, the rainbow press, are doing nothing of any consequence politically. In television you have (the German channel) RTL and all those soap opera from the US, or you have state TV – so it’s pretty bleak.”

But all the blame for the poor quality of the SEE media cannot be placed at the feet of the owners. “The level of journalists has also been a serious problem,” Busek said. Without the traditions of a free press, well-intentioned owners find hiring in SEE media markets often extremely difficult. “Most of the journalists are very weak, with no experience in research or in questioning the government.

“Too often, they are just after the next scandal,” he said. “They will ask me, ‘Do you know about such and such a scandal,’ and when I say, ‘No, I don’t know,’ they write, ‘Busek is not denying the exist-

ence of this scandal.’” The situation is improving with the development of democracy. “But,” he said, “sometimes I think that to be patient is not enough.”

Busek disappeared briefly and returned with several green journal volumes: the reports from the annual conferences of the Commission on Radio and Television Policy: Central, East and Southeast Europe that the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe sponsors each October jointly with Duke University in the United States. Topics have included “Expanding Choices, Fragmenting Audiences: Dilemmas for Democracy,” and “Crisis and the Press, Balancing Civil Liberty, Press Freedom and Security.

However the defining challenge to the SEE Media is what Busek describes as a “crisis of culture,” that he sees facing all Western society. Repeatedly in speeches he has quoted Prof. Carlo Monjardini of La Sapienza University in Rome that “social life must be a balance between the market place and the temple.”

“The market place is democracy as it has developed since Athens and it’s Agora. It represents the stability of ideas, the high status of thought and creativity, the value and importance of culture. And it seems to me,” Busek says, “that in the west, despite all the freedoms we enjoy, the temple is empty.” The temple, he says, represents who we are as Europeans and simply as human beings – the life of ideas we must have if we are to be open to each other without fear.

“In the globalized world economy – of market forces, technology, media and telecommunications – cultural issues are excluded from the political agenda,” he says. “Questions of cultural identity, difference and heterogeneity remain underestimated and marginalized.” Unacknowledged, these issues become a time bomb, often poorly understood by those who themselves are struggling for identity.

But there need not be a “clash of civilizations,” Dr. Busek insists, “if we know who we are.”

With our time nearly up, I find myself wondering where all this passion comes from, why Erhard Busek cares so very deeply about the success of the countries of the former communist block. Is it a sense of kinship with the lands of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire?

“It’s deeper than that,” he said, and tells me about working with Catholic Youth when he was a student, and contacts he made with young people in Prague in 1967 in the days following the Warsaw Pact. He remembers asking them, what he could do: Did they need books? Food?

“Do not forget us!” the young Czechs had pleaded.

“I never thought I would see communism fall in my lifetime,” Dr. Busek told me. “Yet here we are. And as you get older, you find you want to do something substantial.

“Now, perhaps, we have a chance.” ■

*“The situation is improving with the development of democracy. But sometimes I think that to be patient is not enough.”*

# Where Myth and Reality Meet

*Milo Dor on Europe, National Identity and the Future*

Interview by Wolfgang Luef

**deScripto:** *One of your books is titled "Europe – Myth or Reality?" How would you approach this question today?*

**Dor:** Europe is a myth and reality simultaneously. It is a single cultural entity. People tend to speak much too much about the European economy and not enough about the culture. But in actual fact, culture is the most important link between us all. The European national cultures are only different variations of a single culture. For instance, our way of writing and our monotheistic religion come from the Middle East. That is part of our collective inheritance, just like the humanism of the Middle-Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment. That's what binds Europe together; and by this I mean all the countries from Spain to the Urals.

**deScripto:** *Many authors draw on experiences from their childhood in their writing. Is Belgrade important to you as a source of inspiration?*

**Dor:** At the beginning, certainly, but since I've lived in Austria for so long, that source of inspiration has diminished. My first novel takes place in Yugoslavia during World War II, depicting the senselessness and absurdity of war. I partly wrote it from memory, because there can be no better inspiration than experience. I've lived in Vienna for 60 years, so this is my homeland now. But I don't care about borders, I am a fundamental anti-nationalist. Nobody is entitled to think of himself as something better, just because of his nationality. For what reasons? There are intelligent and good people everywhere, just as there are idiots.

**deScripto:** *How would you judge the panorama of authors throughout the rest of Yugoslavia?*

**Dor:** I have translated many books by authors from the region into German and made some of them famous here. There is a whole array of very good authors in that region. Miroslav Krleža, for example, or Ivo Andrić. These two have grown up in regions that were a part of Austria back then, so there's a bit of the Austrian mind set in their books. This is what I mean, when I say that Europe is a single cultural entity.

It is interesting to note that even under socialism, a critical culture survived, to an extent that is really not comparable to any other communist country. To

a certain extent, even criticism of the government was allowed. In the 60s, there were books about the detention of dissidents. But more recently, many people have begun to rethink their own history; artists are beginning to wonder about our Central-European heritage and how we can make an impact in the future.

During the war, many Serbian and Croatian intellectuals came to visit me. I offered a place of refuge for many Balkan writers, and because I had translated so many of their works, I was also able to help them become known. I feel that there were and are a lot of important critical minds in Serbia. But most of all, I think of Belgrade now as a graveyard. Most of the people I have known well there have died.

**deScripto:** *What did the events of 1989 do to the way people thought?*

**Dor:** Slobodan Milosevic set in motion some horrible things. He rekindled terrible aggressions by the revocation of the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina. National antagonisms that had long been hidden were unleashed anew. Everyone wanted to settle ancient scores and waged those terrible wars. I was personally distressed about all the people trampling portraits of Tito under their feet. Before, they had praised him to the skies, and suddenly he had become the Public Enemy.

In some ways, there is still a very unhealthy atmosphere in Serbia. For example, a majority of people are against the extradition of war criminals to the Hague. Some people still regard them as heroes, because they fought for nationalist causes or because they simply carried out orders. What kind of excuses are these? This is a distorted picture of history that has no basis in fact. There are no national causes, because the concept of a nation is imaginary to begin with.

What happened during that war were heinous crimes, and that's how they should be treated. I sometimes have the feeling that mankind breeds murderers who are just waiting for an official excuse to commit their crimes.

In Egypt, there's an awful desert wind that drives people crazy every year. So they made a special law that crimes occurring during this time are judged as having been committed under extenuating circumstances. So people sharpen their knives all the year,

## ad personam



Photo: Milo Dor

### Milo Dor

**Born in Budapest,** Milo Dor moved to Belgrade to attend school in 1933. After the German invasion in Serbia, he joined a resistance-group for which he was jailed and tortured. He was released in 1943, under the condition that he would go to Vienna to work. Later, he studied Drama and Classics in Vienna. Over the last 60 years he has worked as a freelance author, translator and journalist and has won several prizes for his work. Milo Dor is now 82 and lives in Vienna.

extract

**Milo Dor "To My Son", 2003**  
 Try to withstand those around you, no matter how kind they appear, no matter what they profess to be doing, and no matter what kind of garbage they want to pass off as truth. If you give an inch, they will take a mile. Above all, do not believe any prophets who promise you eternal life; they are all lying. And besides that, they are all a bunch of imitators. The great non-conformists all ended up either on the cross, the gallows, at the stake, or in an asylum. Their followers are only trying to make money out of them. Therefore, be wary of all so called world views and those who propagate them. In this life - and I have my doubts there is another - deeds are the only thing that count, not words. One needs to prove here and now that one really means what one says. Be radical in your doubts and in your criticism. If you should fail, you can be comforted in the knowledge that your ancestors, both physical and spiritual, also failed in the end. You are the descendant in a whole line of failures, and you should be proud of it.

waiting for the desert wind to come, so they can kill their enemies and be granted "extenuating circumstances." It's exactly the same logic in wartime. Defending your home is not an adequate reason for heinous crimes.

*deScripto: Can there be peace in the future?*

**Dor:** There is no alternative to peace. People have to be able to rely on each other. They live in the same house. Ground floor against first floor against second floor - who wants a relationship like that in his own house? On many levels there have been positive relations between Serbia and Croatia.

Many authors, for example, have been visiting each other for years, exchanging ideas. Croatian and Serbian are officially two different languages. But if Serbian literature is not written in Cyrillic script, it can also be sold in Croatia, and vice versa.

Because it is one culture, peace is both necessary and possible. I can take the bus from Belgrade to Zagreb and only switch busses once, at the border. The conservative Croatian chancellor, for instance, welcomes the return of displaced Serbians to Croatia. All these signs are very positive and give me hope.

Of course the relationship is burdened with all the murders and cruelty that took place. But even during the war, Croatia and Serbia shared oil and electrical power. That shows how reliant the countries are on each other.

*deScripto: How did people's sense of identity change after the war?*

**Dor:** From the reactions I encounter, I know that many people are beginning to alter their thinking. More and more are questioning themselves about their own guilt. You can only set yourself free if you stop blaming other people for what has happened. When people can start to admit their own guilt and liability, that will be the start of a peaceful future. The European Union can help in this respect. For instance, Croatia is strongly supporting Serbia's application to the EU. They know that there is simply no other way.

Regrettably the people who understand this are still a minority. The fabricated national ideologies are still very strong. Many people have yet to understand their own history, and are befuddled.

But there are already some independent newspapers in the region, and with a EU-membership their number should only increase. Among other things, foreign countries guarantee press freedom. The German company WAZ has acquired a newspaper in Belgrade, that guarantees the paper an independent, centrist editorial slant. Also, there have been a number of newspapers with critical perspectives founded recently in Serbia and Croatia. I quite often give interviews to the media there, with whom I speak freely and honestly. And the interviews get printed. That gives me hope. ■

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# The Same... Only Different

*Taking a Closer Look at the Prospects for a Balkan Identity*

## ad personas

**Danko Plevnik**, Journalist,  
Slobodna Dalmacija, Croatia

**Iulia Mihail**, Romanian  
Ministry of Education

**Albena Vutsova**, Director for  
the Sciences, Bulgarian  
Ministry of Education

**Victor Stefov**, Macedonian  
Ministry of Education

by Stefan Apfl & Wolfgang Luef

Cross-cultural identity is nurtured by a sense of community and interdependence, yet in order to create a common identity for the countries of South Eastern Europe, it is also necessary for the separate cultures to be well established in this new constellation and to feel secure as individual cultures within a confederative whole.

So the critical question to be answered during this transition is: How can countries maintain an independent direction while still building and preserving cross-cultural ties? To find an answer, *deScripto* spoke with leading voices from several Balkan countries, and from these countries, a preliminary picture starts to emerge.

The issue of difference seems to dominate the thinking in several of the SEE countries.

"We are not like the Polish," says Albena Vutsova, Director for the Sciences at the Bulgarian Ministry of Education. "We don't have to prove each hour and each minute how proud we are of our identity and how strong our national feelings are."

Education Minister Iulia Mihail defines Romania's regional identity partly by a shared sense of community between the non-Slavic countries. "We are the only Latin country in South East Europe," she points out, "surrounded by Slavs. So if you come to Romania, it feels like Italy a bit, or Spain. And we are proud of that."

But while Bulgaria's Vutsova turns away from too much national pride, the identity gap may turn out to be as much as anything a result of political borders that are often arbitrary. Through a shared past and geographical proximity, Balkan cultures have developed similar attitudes and similar traditions through which they can be seen, at least to some extent, as parts of a common culture.

"South Eastern Europeans share the same geographical identity as North Eastern European people from Baltic area," says Danko Plevnik, a journalist for Slobodna Dalmacija in Croatia. "One could speak of a Balkan identity, but it has become an unpopular term, especially for Western Balkan nationals. "However it is certainly true that most of us speak similar languages, have similar attitudes and, of course, share a similar history."

This collective identity based on the shared past, language and geography might seem to rule out, or at least weaken, independent national identities in the Balkans. But this does not seem to be an issue in Macedonia.

"We have a very strong national identity," confirmed Victor Stefov, of the Macedonian Ministry of Education.

However, a secure sense of identity is less clear elsewhere in the Balkans, as in Croatia, where a too-sharply defined cultural identity may raise fears of a more aggressive nationalism.

"Croats belong to Central Europe, the Mediterranean region and the Balkans," Plevnik points out. "They speak three dialects, use three alphabets and have an extremely strong connection to their past.

"But like many nations, they hesitate to strengthen their national identity."

Plevnik believes that changes in national identity can occur very quickly in some circumstances, while very slowly in others.

"It can happen quickly because of war and transition," he said, "or slowly because of lack of awareness of modern human rights and lack of a sense of self in the age of globalisation."

In order for a country's identity to be strengthened, there needs to be a nation-wide sense of community.

Romania's Mihail suggests that there are ways of influencing the complex process of changing a nation's identity, through strong political institutions that give a sense of security, fairness and predictability to the life of a society.

"Changing the legislation is one way," she says. "We need to model our national legal system after the European Union. We have had too much freedom for too long. From now on, we will have to go a stricter way."

She is not the only one who feels this way.

"We want to be part of the European Union," says Victor Stefov. "Not only geographically, but also politically and socially."

Does that include the adaptation of a shared identity? A more defined, clearer legal code could bring a nation closer together.

On the other hand, the nationals of various countries could resent the outside influence and become more distanced from one another. Iulia Mihail believes that conforming to European Union policies will strengthen Romania's national self-respect. But could internationalisation pose a threat to the sense of knowing who they are?

"No," she insists unequivocally. "We won't ever give up our national identity." ■



# Country Focus Bulgaria

by Anna Magerova & Petya Sabinova

## Bulgarian Media Review 2004

Bulgarian media focus primarily on local issues, although with a new intensity now that the country is preparing for EU membership, which could come as early as 2007. Bulgaria is also a full-fledged member of NATO as of April 2004. Nearly all media outlets and publications are in Bulgarian.

Bulgaria was one of the last East European countries to pass a broadcasting law, made official in July 1996. This delay had an adverse effect on the development and expansion of both commercial and public broadcasting and because of it, there was only one TV channel with the rights to broadcast nationwide – Bulgarian National Television (BNT) – and several cable stations. The situation changed in 1999, when the Balkan News Corporation – a newly created branch of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation – launched Bulgaria's first national commercial channel, BTV. Since July 2003, Nova Televizia (NTV), owned by Antenna Bulgaria, a subsidiary of the Greek media giant Antenna Group, became the second commercial national television station in Bulgaria. Today, there are more than 450 privately owned cable TV stations.

Currently Bulgarian television offers a wide variety of programming, both local and syndicated, and although the larger channels try to differentiate themselves, some elements are present in all of them. All carry evening news shows, and more recently, weekday morning "belt," or sequence, like that first developed by NTV.

BNT is a state-owned public TV channel, and contains more local and culturally oriented programs than the rest of the channels. BNT also owns Bulgaria TV, a satellite channel that airs local programming only, including old movies, and up to about a year ago, was the only Bulgarian satellite channel, provided mainly for the Bulgarians who live abroad. Since mid-nineties BNT also has one news programme in Turkish, a practise that raised a lot of questions, since Turkish is not an official language in the country.

BTV has broadcast for over 5 years now and has proved itself to be a leading channel in Bulgaria with over 40 % share of the TV audience. It has a 24-hour schedule with a rich variety of programs including news, sports, weather forecast, public

affairs, talk shows, children programs, entertainment etc. Most of its prime-time programming is syndicated, mainly from Fox and during the weaker hour belts the channel relies on locally produced TV games, talk shows and a series called "She and He." It's leading position on the TV advertising market in the country is aided by the fact that now it airs via satellite as well, and has become the main interest of Bulgarians abroad.

NTV is struggling for a larger share from the Bulgarian audience by relying on big budgets and novelties. Apart from the morning belt, NTV has developed Bulgarian versions of the popular game show "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" and the reality show "Big Brother." In fact, the interest shown by the public for "Big Brother" has been very strong, and over 7,000 people have signed up for the first edition of the game, to be aired this fall.

Interestingly, the channels carry few Bulgarian movies. Usually, the prime-time movies are foreign, subtitled or dubbed, depending on the channel, and Bulgarian films rarely get prime time slots on any

## Bulgaria Briefly



### Official Name:

Republic of Bulgaria

### Capital:

Sofia

**Population:** Total 7,97 Mio. (2001); Working population (20-69) 5,36 Mio.; Proportion of urban population is 69 percent.

**Ethnicity:** Bulgarians 84%, Turks 9%, Roma 5%

**Religion:** Christians 6,68 Mio.; Muslims 966.087; Other: 17.030; Non-Defined: 312.337

**Language:** Bulgarian (official). Also spoken: English, German, French, Russian, Turkish

**Script:** Cyrillic - Introduced in 886 AD. Bulgaria is considered to be the cradle of the Cyrillic script.

### Independence:

22<sup>nd</sup> September 1908 (from Ottoman Empire)

### Government Type:

Parliamentary Democracy

### Constitution:

adopted July 12<sup>th</sup> 1991

**Executive Branch:** Chief of state is President Georgi Parvanov, Vice President Gen. Angel Marin (both elected November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001); Head of government is Simeon Saxe-Coburgotski (since June 2001). He is Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister).

**GDP per Capita:** 3,714 Leva (= 1,898 Euro)

**Average Monthly Wage:** 265 Leva (= 135 Euro)

SOURCE: Raycheva, Lilia: Mass Media in Bulgaria, Working Papers in International Journalism, projekt verlag, Bochum/Germany 2004



Photo: Maria Ivanova

## in Short

**Decline in Bulgaria's Freedom of the Press Status**

Bulgaria's ranking declined from "Free" to "Partly Free," according to the most recent study by the NGO Freedom House, reflecting increased government influence over the public media and greater use of libel suits against journalists and publishers as a means of defacto censorship. State-financed broadcasters are controlled both by the government and by criminal organizations, according to the survey, chiefly through a politicised process of allocating licenses and through the manipulation of the advertising revenues. Out of fear, many journalists practice self-censorship and reports on corruption and organized crime are rare, the study said.

**Bulgarian National Television (BNT) – a Controversial Deal**

The Russian-backed media group Video International (VI) signed an advertising contract with the Bulgarian public broadcaster, BNT early in 2004. BNT, founded by an adviser to Russian President Vladimir Putin, is entitled to sell advertising, according to the contract, but must get VI's approval on each deal. The TV station is also barred from selling time at any price below that agreed upon with Alexander Carпов, director of VI projects, confirmed in an interview that the agreement prohibits BNT from working with other agencies.

channel except BNT. This is partly because of the state of the industry. However, the presence of international movie companies filming in Sofia's Movie Centre "Boyana," suggest a change for the better.

Cable TV offers access to four Bulgarian music channels (MMTV 1 & 2, Planeta and SK Folk) as well as to CNN, BBC World, German television (RTL, Pro7), Rai Uno, TV5, Euronews and Eurosport. Hallmark, TNT and HBO movie channels are also available with Bulgarian subtitles. Discovery, Animal Planet, MTV and Cartoon Network are widely available on cable and some offer them in Russian, still spoken by many Bulgarians, who were required to study it in High school under the communist regime, in some districts as late as 1994.

The radio stations in Bulgaria are usually local, with only two nation-wide, state owned stations of the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) – Horizont and Hristo Botev and one private national station – Darik licensed as a national station since October 2000. In total, there are 105 local radio stations in Bulgaria, out of them 30 located in Sofia.

The vast choice of commercial radio stations offers an extensive range of musical tastes, as well as local programming. There are also three international stations available in Sofia: BBC World Service, Deutsche Welle, and Radio France International. For Bulgarians abroad, the BNR airs daily programs to stations around the world and, along with other stations, offers its programming online around the clock.

In spite of the vast number of newspapers and magazines, the Bulgarian media landscape is dominated by a small number of owners. Out of nine national dailies, two belong to the German publisher Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) along with several other print media. Moreover, the two WAZ dailies have the highest circulation in the country. Many papers are linked to a political party, or interests such as trade unions or a government ministry.

The majority of readers show more interest in the tabloids, i.e. sensational journals. Photography tends to be very explicit, in ways that can be offensive to the victims' families and distressing to some readers. As hybrids between informative papers and yellow press, their content is graphic, and often poorly written. Even some respected dailies use tabloid formats in layout and content, where by-lines are generally left out. The national papers leave out by-lines in the smaller articles.

The number of magazines is increasing too and there are now many international monthlies, like Playboy and Cosmopolitan, that now come out in Bulgarian.

The Sofia Echo is Bulgaria's only English-language newspaper, which comes out every Friday and contains in-depth analysis of news and business developments and has a large leisure and entertainment section. *Bulgarisches Wirtschaftsblatt* is an Austrian monthly in German giving a summary of news and profiles of local companies. As the Bulgarian media becomes more multilingual, the non-Bulgarian speakers, who work or spend their holiday in the country are gradually starting to feel less isolated.

The Internet in Bulgaria is relatively undeveloped and as of yet to be properly regulated. Interestingly enough, two of the largest circulation newspapers (the ones owned by WAZ) do not offer an online version, while almost all of the others do. There are also numerous on-line news portals, like *media-pool.bg*, and *dir.bg*. The lack of regulations over the web makes it easier for people to publish online, so many small local papers, radio stations and single TV shows have their own websites.

As far as news agencies are concerned, probably the biggest one in Bulgaria is BTA – the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency – created in 1898 by Prince Ferdinand, and regulated as an autonomous national news organisation in 1994. Focus news is the first Bulgarian private online news agency, quickly followed by BGNes. Sofia Press is a NGO, created in 1967 by the Union of Bulgarian Artists, the Union of Bulgarian Writers and the Union of Bulgarian Journalists. Apart from providing news, the agency also organizes exhibitions and helps Bulgarian writers and artists.

Currently, the sources of media info are very scarce. There is only one monthly trade magazine on the market: *Media World*, published by private groups. The weekly *Capital* has a media section discussing and analysing the phenomena and tendencies in media developments. The Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC) is another source of information about the media and the professional discussions on media legislation. An interesting web site is the Bulgarian Anticorruption Portal that prepares regular reports, following the media's behaviour on the topic of anticorruption.

In conclusion, the Bulgarian media today is still in a period of transition, constantly changing, quite young and unseasoned.

**Info Sources:**

- <http://www.newscorp.com/index2.html> - News Corporation
- <http://www.btv.bg>
- "Sofia – Inside and out" Magazine, Summer issue, 2004
- [http://www.distrpress.ch/files/CountryReports/2004/Bulgaria\\_2004.pdf](http://www.distrpress.ch/files/CountryReports/2004/Bulgaria_2004.pdf)
- [www.bmc.bulmedia.bg](http://www.bmc.bulmedia.bg)
- [www.radio.bg](http://www.radio.bg)

# Bulgaria: New Code of Ethics

by Petya Sabinova

A new code of journalistic ethics dominated discussions at the annual meeting of the Bulgarian Media Coalition (BMC) in July. Observers welcomed the discussion, as the old code of ethics had been signed ten years ago and still carried vestiges of communist thinking. The new code of ethics was approved during the meeting and will most likely be signed sometime this fall, according to Dimitar Sotirov, executive director of BMC.

Although ranked relatively high (34th out of 166 countries) on the Worldwide Press Freedom Index of October 2003 ([www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)), Bulgaria currently has no press council and bureau of appeal, and until recently, the 1994 "Rules of Journalistic Ethics" of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists (UBJ) were the only broad-based code of ethics in force in Bulgaria.

The differences between the old code and the new one are numerous, starting with length. The new code is much more detailed and deals with cases omitted in the first one. Some of the more important articles deal with manipulated texts, images and sounds, treatment of children, materials from foreign press organizations, etc. Overall, the new code covers most important areas of journalistic ethics and has been prepared with thought and experience.

Once the new code of ethics has been officially accepted, the creation of a press council or other self-regulatory body is needed.

"The question is how to convince our colleagues to respect the code," points out Venelina Gocheva, Editor in Chief of the daily 24 Hours and Chairman of the Publishers' Union. "There is a parallel market of print media in Bulgaria that leaves unclear the question of who the publisher is, and where materials come from."

Georgi Lozanov, chairman of BMC attracted further interest for a 10-point code of the Media Ethics of Terrorism which won the support of most participants and are expected to be included in the journalistic ethical code at a later point.

Nevertheless the code contains some controversial points, including especially that, "the media will always take the side of the victim; objectivity in this case is not a professional standard." However humane its intention, observers are troubled by the possibility of abuse, and the ease with which all objectivity could be disregarded. Even from the standpoint of Michael Kunzick's somewhat utopian ideas of the role of journalism, the standard of objectivity has always been maintained as standard. And bearing in mind that "terrorism" itself is a highly

subjective term – one man's terrorist being another man's freedom fighter – telling journalists to be sympathetic could invite an unnecessarily large reporting bias.

Given the commitment of the Bulgarian media to keeping the society alert for possible terrorist actions, this excessive limitation of the ethical code might somewhat be excused as a response to a temporary panic situation. But thus, it still falls short of the fundamental standards of journalistic ethics and the BMC and the journalists who choose to accept it, might find themselves objects of deserved ridicule.

## Media Ethics of Terrorism, Ethical Standards

- The medium places in a leading position in its agenda terrorist acts in which human lives have been threatened, until the threat has passed.
- The medium will always take the side of the victim; objectivity in this case is not a professional standard.
- The medium informs about the terrorist's messages, but in favor of, and in defense of, the victims.
- The medium shows the suffering of the victims and their families only as long as it does not increase it in that way.
- The medium shows cruelty and violence only as long as they contain new information or presuppose a new commentary.
- The medium places the protection of human life before that of national, political and other ideas and does not cooperate in making use of the victims and their families for the imposing of these ideas.
- The medium informs about the position and actions of the institutions, requires from them an answer to all questions important to the society and comments their behavior while serving their crucial function.
- The medium informs about tragic outcomes only after the relatives of the victims have been notified officially, unless the institutions are protracting without reason.
- The medium conducts journalistic investigations of the responsibilities and unused opportunities after tragic outcomes.
- The medium maintains terrorism and the debates around it as a stable topic in its informational policy. ■

Translated by Petya Sabinova - Official translation may vary.

## in Short

### BBC Sued in Bulgaria

A BBC television crew secretly filmed the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Ivan Slavkov in Sofia, discussing how votes could be bought in the campaign to host the 2012 Summer Games. Slavkov threatened legal action following airing of the controversial film on BBC, BBC World and Beograd based B-92.

The BBC's vulnerability is based on Bulgarian law banning secret filming, and Slavkov will present his case to the Olympic Ethics Commission on 29 September. Slavkov was suspended from the IOC and temporarily stepped down as president of Bulgaria's National Olympic Committee and Football Union in the wake of the bidding scandal.

### Fired TV Executive to Sue CEM

Kiril Gocev, ex-Executive Director of the Bulgarian National Television (BNT) is to sue the Council of Electronic Media (CEM) over the canceling of his contract. CEM broke the contract with Gocev because of alleged "systematical and severe" violations of the Broadcasting Law of Radio and Television, according to BTV, "I am the first executive director to be replaced not because of politics, but because of financial interest." Gocev was quoted in the Bulgarian newspaper *Kultura*, on 26 March.



# Press Freedom in Bulgaria: “Improved, but far from perfect”

by Petya Sabinova

*The rise of democracy could have brought a lot more changes than it actually has.*

The situation for Bulgarian media has improved dramatically compared to communist times. But it is far from perfect and many observers feel that the rise of democracy could have brought a lot more changes than it actually has.

In some ways, press freedom in Bulgaria has actually declined recently. (See Bulgaria in Short – page 18). There are many reasons for this, but among the most important ones are self-censorship and state pressure through libel laws and broadcasting licences.

Bulgarian newspapers rarely attempt any investigative reporting and even if they do so, the major topics - corruption, mafia, etc. - are avoided. This does not mean that these topics are not present in the media. In fact, these are among the most discussed. However, the journalists prefer to quote authorities, intellectuals and foreigners, and thus reduce the risk to themselves.

According to [anticorruption.bg](http://anticorruption.bg), a media portal that monitors the media on the subject of corruption, the number of articles on the topic per month has been steadily declining since February this year (from 961 in February to 723 in June.)

In May, only nine investigative reports dealt with corruption, and in three of them the link was really remote. Generally, it is a trend that when corruption is discussed in the media, it is mainly presented in a purely informative way (439 instances, as opposed to the nine investigative pieces,) and it seems as if the journalists are just too afraid to deal with the “hot” topics extensively.

One of the most discussed issues lately has been the case of Svetlana Jordanova, a journalist for Trud, who was sued for libel, for quoting an official report of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in an article about corruption. Jordanova and the Editor in Chief of the newspaper, Tosho Toshev, were both prosecuted by the Sofia Court of Appeal and fined. This was considered a serious breach of press freedom condemned on 8 September, by the Union of Bulgarian Publishers (UBP). “One reporter, one Editor in Chief, and a whole newspaper have been faulted for announcing official information concerning an arrest, for writing the truth,” the UBP said. From the article it was clear that the journalists reported “word-for-word” from a document from the national telegraph agency, which was not named as a party to the suit.

Observers are watching the case closely. “If this case is won,” said a source close to the investigation, “it could be a dangerous precedent.”

Additional fears concern the cases of journalists being assaulted by angry people eager for revenge. In several cases Bulgarian journalists have been heavily beaten and have had acid thrown in their face. The most famous case is that of Trud crime reporter Ana Zarkova, who lost the vision in one eye after an incident of this kind in 1998.

There is still a lot of progress to be made in the media, laws and society in Bulgaria with regards to press freedom, but observers are hopeful that the new ethical code and regular protests like that of the UBP will manage to change the status to a much better one.



Photo: Petya Sabinova

## Selected Bulgarian Media (plus websites)

### Daily Newspapers :

Dnevik Daily	<a href="http://www.dnevik.bg">www.dnevik.bg</a>
Duma Daily	<a href="http://www.duma.bg">www.duma.bg</a>
Monitor Daily	<a href="http://www.monitor.bg">www.monitor.bg</a>
Novinar Daily	<a href="http://www.novinar.org">www.novinar.org</a>
Pari Daily	<a href="http://news.pari.bg">news.pari.bg</a>
Sega Daily	<a href="http://www.segabg.com">www.segabg.com</a>
Standart Daily	<a href="http://www.standardnews.com">www.standardnews.com</a>
Trud Daily	<a href="http://www.trud.bg">www.trud.bg</a>

### TV Stations:

Bulgarian National TV	<a href="http://www.tvbulgaria.net">www.tvbulgaria.net</a>
Balkan Bulgarian TV (BBT)	<a href="http://www.bbt.tv">www.bbt.tv</a>
bTV	<a href="http://www.btv.bg">www.btv.bg</a>
MSat TV	<a href="http://www.m-sat.bg">www.m-sat.bg</a>
Nova TV	<a href="http://www.ntv.bg">www.ntv.bg</a>
TV Evropa	<a href="http://www.tvevropa.com">www.tvevropa.com</a>

### Internet Media:

Bulgaria online	<a href="http://www.online.bg">www.online.bg</a>
Dnes+	<a href="http://www.dnesplus.com">www.dnesplus.com</a>
Focus news	<a href="http://www.focus-news.net">www.focus-news.net</a>
Mediapool	<a href="http://www.mediapool.bg">www.mediapool.bg</a>
Netinfo BG	<a href="http://www.netinfo.bg">www.netinfo.bg</a>
News.bg	<a href="http://www.news.bg">www.news.bg</a>
Novinite.com	<a href="http://www.novinite.com">www.novinite.com</a>
Novoto Vreme	<a href="http://www.novotovreme.bg">www.novotovreme.bg</a>
Oshte.info	<a href="http://www.oshte.info">www.oshte.info</a>
Vsekiden	<a href="http://www.vsekiden.com">www.vsekiden.com</a>

### News Agencies:

Bulgarian News Agency (BTA)	<a href="http://www.bta.bg">www.bta.bg</a>
BGNes	<a href="http://www.bgn.es.com">www.bgn.es.com</a>
Focus Information Agency	<a href="http://www.focus-news.net">www.focus-news.net</a>
Sofia Press	<a href="http://www.sofiapress.bg">www.sofiapress.bg</a>

### Radio Stations:

Bulgarian National Radio	<a href="http://www.nationalradio.bg">www.nationalradio.bg</a>
FM+	<a href="http://www.fmplus.net">www.fmplus.net</a>
Darik	<a href="http://www.darik.net">www.darik.net</a>
Express	<a href="http://www.radioexpress.bg">www.radioexpress.bg</a>
Inforadio	<a href="http://www.inforadio.bg">www.inforadio.bg</a>
Radio NET	<a href="http://www.radionetbg.com">www.radionetbg.com</a>
Radio1	<a href="http://www.radio1.bg">www.radio1.bg</a>

### Romani Media in Bulgaria

(in Romani language):

Roma TV*
Roma Radio*
De Facto Weekly*
Akana Roma Monthly*
Andral Magazine*

\*unfortunately no online-appearances





## Media Report: Albania

# The Unmet Potential of a Free Media

Thirteen years after the fall of communism and a long struggle for democracy and consolidation, the Albanian media have found themselves in a situation where there is freedom of the media, but no free media. Since the early nineties, the media, like the rest of Albanian society, have been faced with a freedom never experienced before. But at the same time, few have sorted out how to best use that freedom. The media industry itself is very unclear, and there is little media legislation and few regulations, especially in regard to print media. As best explained by Albanian journalist Mero Baze, "(...)the Albanian press will start to enjoy its freedom when the first paper that is not read, and the first television that is not watched, but only paid to exist, go out of business."

### Self-Regulation of the Print Media

Currently, the print media is regulated by the 1997 Press Law. This law includes just two key statements, "The press is free. Freedom of the press is protected by law," and is considered by most Albanian journalists and media researchers to be overly vague.

The first attempt to draft a new law governing the press goes back to 2001. Prepared by the Media Commission of the Albanian Parliament, the draft was strongly opposed by the media, who felt it would result in an over-regulation and strong state control. The Albanian media organization supported some form of self regulation over the statutory control, which in the end prevailed. The process of drafting a new press law is ongoing.

### Broadcast Media Regulation

Regulation of the broadcast media is more detailed than that governing print, dating back to a 1998 Law on Public and Private Radio and Television, under the jurisdiction of the National Council of Radio and Television (NCRT). In the past four years, NCRT has been widely attacked by some Television and Radio Networks as well as by the opposition Democratic Party. The main controversies concern its independent status. Supporters of the law claim that NCRT should operate according to rules and regulations approved by the Albanian Legislative branch, while critics of the law argue that such a body can not be independent if its members are appointed by the Parliament, where the Government obviously holds the majority.

One of the most contested actions of NCRT was the first wave of licensing in Autumn 2000, when

many broadcast stations and the opposition accused the NCRT of bias in national licensing decisions to broadcasters close to the ruling Socialist Party.

At present, the NCRT seems to have gained some experience and has achieved some successes especially in regard to the fight against pirate broadcasts.

### Albanian Media Landscape

Without laws to protect editors and journalists and safeguard free expression, the ownership structure becomes a crucial factor in determining editorial policy. Since most journalists, as well as many editors, do not have permanent employment contracts, it is almost unthinkable for journalists to oppose the editorial policy of the media outlet. And even when someone has a contract, the law is very general, stating only that "editorial independence is guaranteed by law".

According to a 2003 study conducted by the Albanian Media Institute, 98 newspapers and 70 magazines are published in Albania, along with broadcasts by 54 radio and 79 TV stations.

Because of cost factors, the first media outlets that emerged in the early 90's were newspapers. It was only after 1995 that the broadcast media started to blossom. Although the number of daily newspapers has increased rapidly in less than 15 years, their daily circulation is not believed to have changed. The overall circulation of all daily newspapers is believed to be around 60,000 copies, almost exactly the circulation of the few dailies in the early 90's.

### Media Ownership

Currently there are three main media ownership groups in the country. The most prominent one is Spekter JSC, which owns the dailies Shekulli (considered the biggest in the country), Sporti Shqiptar and Biznes (two other dailies covering sports and business), as well as the weekly magazine Spekter, which is considered the second biggest in the market. This company also owns TV Balkan and has 40 percent of shares of +2 Radio.

Another important media company, Klan Group, owns the national television station Klan, 51 percent of Korrieri (one of the top selling newspapers), and the weekly Klan Magazine that is considered to have the largest circulation in its genre.

The Koha Group owns the daily Koha Jone, the first independent newspaper and the sports daily Sport Ekspres as well as 40 percent of shares of Radio Koha. The only foreign ownership in the Albanian media sector is the Edisu JSC, an all-Italian media ownership that owns Gazeta Shqiptare (a very reputable daily newspaper), Radio Rash, TV News 24 (holding a near monopoly in news broadcasting), as well as Balkanweb, an online news agency.

► *continued on page 23*

## in Short

### Albanian Democratic Party Boycotts News 24 TV Station

The leading Albanian opposition party has accused one of the most prominent News Stations in Albania, News 24, of being biased and having taken Government's side in some recent political controversies. According to the DP spokesman, News 24 will face a boycott by the opposition party and will not be allowed to attend any indoor activities organized by DP. News 24 has denied all charges and has claimed that the Democratic Party is endangering press freedom and censoring an independent media outlet.

### DigitAlb: The Newest Albanian Media Outlet

Supported by Top Channel and Top Albania Radio, DigitAlb combines the newest terrestrial digital technology with prices suitable for middle-class consumers. It offers a huge number of channels, ranging from movies, sports, documentaries, cartoons and music. Although the owners of DigitAlb claim that the new technology will reshape the Albanian media community, competing TV networks suggest that the technology falls beyond the scope of current legislation.

According to some executives from Klan TV, DigitAlb is only the latest pirate TV channel, pointing out that the company has signed no contracts for broadcasting most of its digital programs.



by Ana Simundza

## in Short

### Police Chief Apologised to Journalist

The police chief of Republika Srpska apologised to journalists in Banja Luka on 2 September, following accusations 4 days before, that they were involved with a group seeking his ouster. Suggesting that 'some journalists should be sent to a mental asylum or prison,' Chief Njegos had accused the journalists of 'Nezavisne Novine' and RTV RS of membership in a group plotting to have him removed from office. The Office of the High Representative in BiH (OHR) issued a warning to the Police Chief, saying it was not appropriate for him to apply political pressure to the journalists and thus endanger the freedom of the media. Njegos expressed regret to an auditorium full of journalists, saying his words were taken out of context and promising future cooperation with the media and access to information.

### Hate Speech Persists

Hate speech still persists in the BiH media, according to Ozren Kebo, one of the country's most distinguished journalists, speaking in an interview to the SAFAX Agency at the end of July. "It is not hard to understand why that is so," Kebo said. "The war was so horrifying, so poignant and distressing, it has left many terrible awful traumas behind. It seems that we cannot resist the call of hatred and power, uttered by the media. We all sometimes sit at the computer as though we were sitting at a machine gun, as if it gave us the opportunity to wipe out everything across the valley." "It is difficult to employ self-discipline and resist that temptation," Kebo continued. "We are all frustrated and traumatized, the levels of frustration can precisely be read in our intonation." He added that the hate speech has lately increased especially along professional, economic and party lines.

### Croatians Request

## Media Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina

# The Struggle to Find a Voice

Weighed down by the shattered economy and the country's complex political structure, the media in Bosnia-Herzegovina have been slow to recover following the war. Under pressure from ruling political elites, they struggle to overcome a long tradition of propaganda journalism, a lack of financial resources in the underdeveloped media market, and barriers to the free flow of information over the country's ethnic divide. Restraints on press freedom persist, and media institutions suffer from inappropriate pressure, censorship, intimidations and libelous attacks. And while the attacks are less severe than just a few years ago, journalists still live with the danger of physical harassment and sometimes threats to their lives.

The media feel the burden of transition acutely, a process that started in December 1995 when the Dayton Peace Accord ended four years of civil war between three dominant ethnic groups: Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian. The Dayton Peace

Herzegovina has thus been guided by the international community and organizations like the Southeast European Stability Pact, The Council of Europe, the OSCE, the Irex ProMedia and the Open Society Foundation. The Dayton Peace Accord established an Office of the High Representative for BiH (OHR) with the power to impose laws and intervene for the implementation of the peace agreement, including on behalf of the media as well.

### Broadcast Media

There are 183 licensed broadcasters operating in the country along with the Public Broadcasting System for BiH, composed of three additional state-wide public broadcasters: The Public Broadcasting Service of BiH (PBS BiH), Radio and Television of the Federation BiH (RTV FBiH) and Radio and Television of the Republic of Srpska (RTRS). Out of these 183 broadcasters, 141 are radio stations and 42 TV stations; 78 public and 105 private broadcasting media.

The most important factors in the broadcasting media are public broadcasters on an entity level: Radio and Television of the Federation BiH (RTV FBiH) and Radio and Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS).

State-wide Public Broadcasting System for Bosnia-Herzegovina (PBSBiH) has yet to show its full potential. It started broadcasting BH Radio 1 on its own frequency two years ago and has started a statewide television channel BHTV1 a month ago.

The Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) has the power to regulate the broadcast media, drafting and implementing regulations and issuing permanent broadcasting licences. Its efforts to stabilize and improve the broadcasting sector have been among the greatest advancements in BiH media scene. Nevertheless, there are many improvements that still have to be made in this field. Critics say that the public service concept (one state broadcaster, two entity broadcasters) is too complex and costly. Public broadcasters also cannot cope with the requirement of 40 percent public service programming.

There are frequent misunderstandings between the local stations and the international community, especially when the imposed reforms harm the position of the employees. Also, local stations often feel forced into unsuitable projects by the threat of withholding financial support.

### Print Media

Print media are still constrained by the strong ethnic and ideological divisions in the population. This is especially apparent since the election campaign two years ago, when nationalist parties made strong gains. Print media are not subject to CRA sanctions



Photo: Ana Simundza

The bridge over the River Neretva, Mostar

Agreement and the subsequent decisions of the Peace Implementation Council triggered a complex process of reconstruction of the media, making them independent of government and nationalist forces. Although the Dayton Constitution placed media jurisdiction in the hands of two entities (Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska), the U.N. High Representative added nationwide guidelines to ease the passing of a new set of regulations governing the industry.

Further development of the media in Bosnia-



governing the broadcast media, but are largely self-regulated, which has proved far less effective. The Press Council and journalists associations are still not powerful enough to exert significant influence to deal with these problems.

The public has also been disappointed by obvious bias in the print media, which often indulges in smear tactics to discredit their political opposition. Relations between newspapers and journalists are often fraught with conflict, and media wars along party and ethnic lines seem to be a perpetual feature of BiH press media, although the propaganda common during the war has been silenced under the careful eye of regulatory agency.

Due to the ethnic divisions, the print media each target their own ethnic group. Most newspaper do not even try to publish in the area not dominated by their ethnic market.

The devastated economy and limited advertising revenues make the prospects for the print media dreary. Only about six percent of advertising investment is devoted to print media. Also, as they have been unable to attract either local and foreign capital, the majority of new media projects do not survive.

There are around 600 public print media on the Bosnian market, including six daily newspapers. Four of these are published in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Dnevni Avaz, Jutarnje Novine and Oslobodjenje in Sarajevo, and Dnevni List in Mostar. Nezavisne Novine and Glas Srpski are published in Banja Luka, in the Republic of Srpska.

Slobodna Bosna, Dani Nedeljne, Nezavisne Novine Reporter (10,000) and Ljiljan are the most important weekly-newspapers. According to a study done by the Prism Agency from Sarajevo, the most read newspaper in the Federation are Dnevni Avaz (33.5 percent) and Vecernje Novosti from Serbia in Republika Srpska (27.2 percent).

### New Media

Although many of the important media have their own websites, this has very little impact on the media reality in BiH. Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the least developed European countries in this area and only about 4% of the population has access to the Internet. Only the wealthiest and most educated have this privilege while the rest are victims of low purchasing power and lack of the information technology development.

Along with the specialized media portal Media Online, the most important electronic outlets are the dailies Dnevni Avaz, Oslobodjenje, Nezavisne Novine and weeklies Slobodna Bosna and Dani.

Along with the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), the Press Code, adopted by journalist organizations in 1999, has laid down fundamental ethical guidelines emphasising objectivity, responsibility to the public, and a right to fair comment. Journalists are also enjoined from knowing discrimination, intolerance and hatred. Journalists' organisations created the Press Council in 2000 to review and help resolve citizens' complaints against the media. ■

## in Short

### Their Own Channel in Public RTV

The leading Croatian party in the BiH Parliament has formally requested the division of the country's public RTV network into three channels, one in each of the country's three languages.

In a parliamentary session of 27 July, representatives of HDZ requested that the three channels in the Bosnian, Serb and Croat languages be changed from RTV's current three-station division – that of the Republika Srpska, the Federation's and one channel for BiH as a whole.

The Croatians are dissatisfied with this division, claiming that Croatian interests are underrepresented among, what they say is, one Bosnian, one Serbian and one Serbo-Bosnian channels. As the three languages are very similar and understandable to all, such a request is thought to be more political than substantive.

The Croatian proposal was declined and the delegates embraced the governmental proposal, created with cooperation of international community.

### ► Media Report: Albania, *continued from page 21*

Other interesting media outlets that have rapidly emerged during the last years include Top Albania Radio, the national radio broadcaster that has the largest number of listeners in the country, Top Channel, recently a very popular TV station and Top Records, one of the top three music production and distribution companies in Albania. Although there is no ostensible legal connection within these outlets, it is widely believed that they are all owned and controlled by a small group of people, who as almost all other media owners are successful businessmen.

At present, Albanian media owners are not ready to disclose their funding sources. Media experts claim that in most of the cases there is either a close relation between the media people and the politicians or that the media outlets are funded by some gray external sources that make their survival in the market possible. ■

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by Karla Bovoljak and  
Izvor Moralic

## in Short

### European Media Training

Seminar on teaching of journalists and media professionals will be held in Italy and Croatia from December 2004 till April 2005. As the official language of the program will be English, it will try to offer complete knowledge about relevant media contents and praxis. The program will also cover special issues as: communicational techniques, marketing, communicational management, implementation of newest technology, and European media legislature.

### Journalists Conviction Worries SEEMO

SEEMO (South East Europe Media Organisation) expressed its worries about the conviction of Ljubica Letnic, journalist of Croatian Radio Television, conditionally convicted to jail imprisonment. On the basis of slandering local businessman in the show "Latinica," (broadcasted in March 2002), Split court adjudicated Letnic for two month imprisonment. SEEMO expressed strong concerns saying that slandering should be subject to private lawsuit, and not criminal case. Therefore the organization urged Croatian court to dismiss the verdict.

### Fortyfive Years of Vecernji List

The first issue of daily newspapers with biggest circulation in Croatia was published on 1 July 1959. In February 2004 it came out in new format, completely in color. Better structure of rubrics, editorial reorganization, and new advertising structures brought to improvement of its quality. On its 45th birthday it reached total of 14, 000 issues.

## Media Report: Croatia

# Journalists Seek Support From International Organizations

The atmosphere was tense at the meeting of the Croatian Coalition of Independent Journalists on 16 September. The Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA) had proposed a series of tax changes to allow journalists to work independently; and each one has been rejected by the government.

"Journalism requires a high degree of professional autonomy," the journalists fumed, "and for that you need financial independence." Croatian law contradicts this, and defines journalistic work as a dependent activity.

The government argues that this is necessary to prevent journalists from working off the books. But the net effect is that the independent journalist is obliged to pay double what his/her employer pays, and double the self-employed of other professions.

However, some significant but often controversial changes that affect the media are being made in preparation for Croatia's admittance to the European Union, possible in 2007, according to Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF).

A July 2003 proposal to punish defamation of public officials through the media with fines or up to three years in prison set off huge protests. Strong national and international reaction forced the government to drop the measure. A second measure was stripped of the "good faith" defence, leaving only the truth or falsehood, making it much harder to defend journalists in court.

Another press law passed in October 2003, guaranteed press freedom and journalists' rights, but further restricted access to public data and reduced the protection of journalistic sources, according to RSF. The composition of the board of the state-run radio and TV (HRT) was broadened to include candidates proposed by trade unions, churches, NGOs and cultural organisations, with the final selection by political negotiation.

An electronic media law was passed in July, setting up a council of seven members, appointed by parliament and proposed by the government, to assign broadcasting frequencies and also funding to promote diversity.

Croatian journalists and media executives continue to be harassed. Ninoslav Pavic, co-owner of Europa Press Holding (EPH), was targeted by a bomb that went off under his car as it was parked outside his Zagreb home on 28 February 2003,

causing extensive damage. Two of EPH's publications, the daily Jutarnji list and the weekly Globus, regularly report on organised crime.

In another incident, Ivo Pukanic, editor of the weekly Nacional, was questioned by police on 3 October about a published interview with general Ante Gotovina, sought by the International Criminal Court (ICC). Pukanic refused to say where the interview had taken place other than that it had not been in Croatia. The ICC chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte did not believe him and flew to Zagreb three days later to urge the government to make every effort to find and extradite Gotovina.

## Journalist Convicted of Slander

Journalist Ljubica Letnic was sentenced to two months in prison by a Croatian court, following a broadcast on the show Latinica on Croatian national Television (HRT) aired in March 2002. In the show, Letnic accused Dalmatian businessman Josip Parcina of corruption. He sued her for defamation and the case has been referred to the Court of Appeals in Split.

The sentence has caused great concern among press freedom organizations, who say that the conviction is in direct conflict with the principles of the UN and the OSCE, which hold that such charges against journalists and punishment by imprisonment are unacceptable.

The French organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF) claims that the conviction of the Croatian journalist is a result of the newly established media laws in the country – which, amongst other controversial statutes, feature the law against slander and libel. RSF emphasizes that this law deviated from the norm of European media law standards and, according to World Press Freedom Committee, is a setback for Croatia's EU candidacy.





## Media Report: Greece

# Strong Structures - Weak Cultures?

**Media in Greece seem structurally well developed and well equipped, but may miss the future in regional civil networking because of an insular mind set.**

To find the public identity of a nation, you have to take a look at the media. Nowhere else are the defining boundaries of a country so characteristic of a nation – of a population, of a society and its main cultural expressions – as those made by common language, authentic arts, common history, common fate, all the things that add up somehow to a common orientation in social interaction.

Greece is like this – even its political orientation, so strongly directed toward the European Union, is a factor in its identity.

The media in Greece reflect that situation, even if there is huge internal diversity in its political and civic culture. Looking at the Greek media landscape, especially at the print media, you will find strong public agents of cultural, civic, even national, identity. They are taken – produced, read, heard, seen – as instances of a generally domestic orientation, since anyone can impute the interests of anyone else through media. As long as the media also serve as a frame of culture, it is not possible in every country for the media to have this influential position in shaping cultural identity.

So far, the media in Greece are, generally speaking, a factor in shaping the country's identity. But with a lot of questions remaining.

According to the South East Europe Media Handbook, published by SEEMO in 2004 – a reputable source of knowledge on media landscape in South East Europe – the public discourse in Greece is strongly inner-focused, at the same time still without the sensitivity for minorities inside the country, and still failing to take a pro-active stance toward their neighbours.

The numbers that describe the Greek media landscape are comparatively impressive, but do not really reveal the problems of civic culture. Greece does have strong and creative media companies in both the print and broadcasting sectors. But the power is less from their strong position in public discourse than by their strong commercial orientation. Public broadcasting is represented by Hellenic Radio and Television (ERT), which owns two national TV channels and one regional for the northern part of the country. The public radio system has four national stations and 19 regional ones. There is also a huge number of regional or municipal broadcasters. Around 145 private TV channels and 1.200 private radio stations deliver a full spectrum of divers programming. But the commercialization of information – sensational and boulevard-esque formats

cheap series bought from the globalized market, lots of talk-shows and copies of reality-TV or event-TV formats – disqualify the TV stations in Greece in particular from any claim to public service.

There is a similar situation in the print sector. There are more than 250 local, regional and national newspapers. The biggest 17 nationally circulated dailies are located in Athens. There is also a strong Sunday press. The leading newspapers are Eleftherotypia, Kathimerini (also with an English edition), Ta nea, and Ethnos. Most of the dailies have online editions as well. There are also more than 500 different magazines on the market, and a full complement of active media trade associations.

Nevertheless, the structural preconditions for a strong public media environment are not sufficiently present for a true open culture of media communication. According to the SEEMO Media Handbook, “no progress has been made on the issue of diversity of reporting in mainstream media. The minority position is still taboo in much of the media.” Even if some media have taken steps to improve coverage of the Roma, for example, by reporting on their problems and way of life, still, strong stereotypes remain against both the Roma and the Turkish-speaking minority (still called “Muslim minority”). Not to mention Macedonians.

So much for Greece's internal affairs. Externally, attention toward their neighbours is another problem that affects the sense of public identity in Greece. As with minorities inside a country, neighbours are always a point of reference for the shaping of our identity. So the way we treat each other reveals the power or the weakness of our self-esteem.

Greece has somehow, at least in public discourse, overcome the legacy of military government that retreated from power a generation ago. It has been part of the European Union for quite a long time and a member of NATO, and it looks back at a history that almost seems to have been as much the history of the country as a political unit as it has been the history of a specific and unique culture. All these characteristics make you believe that Greece was a country with best and most stabile conditions for an integrated media communications environment, and suggests that the media would be strongly involved in the construction of a national culture of identity. All these factors should count as strong preconditions for a public posture of openness toward their neighbouring countries, countries which are in a similar situation to the one Greece was in years ago. Again – compared to other Balkan and/or SEE countries, whose media industries sometimes seem to become overrun by foreign companies, Greece is one place that – at least regarding the media – stands on its own feet.

Looking at the communications landscape in Greece from that perspective, and setting the precondition that Europe faces opportunities for shared development within the framework of regions (e.g. Balkan), the media

► *continued on page 30*

## in Short

### Olympia – Increased Income for Media Companies

Almost all media companies report raise of their revenue, operational and net profit for the first half of 2004. The principal reason is the higher advertising income due to the Athens Olympics.

### Protests Highlight Working Conditions

After strong protests by the Athens' Union of Journalists (ESIEA) and a 24-hour strike at all LPG publications, the company agrees to hire back the journalists of “Financial Courier.” Strikes have continued through the summer at many Greek newspapers, TV and radio all over the country, after serious disputes over salaries and working conditions between the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Journalists (POESY) and the Union of Media Owners. ESIEA protested against specific media for laying off journalists and not fulfilling the previous month's agreements.

### Station Shut Down for Broadcasting Without a License

The radio station “Macedonian Sound” in Naoussa/Negush, Northern Greece, went off the air on 4 June and its owner Aris Vottaris was arrested for not having a broadcasting license. It appeared that authorities had singled out this station, despite the fact that other radio stations in northern Greece operate under similar conditions. SEEMO urged the Greek government to speed up the distribution of regional broadcasting licenses. The incident also led to intervention from both the Greek and the Macedonian Ombudsmen.



by Julia Assl and  
Dardis McNamee

## in Short

### Ringier to Open a Hungarian Plant

Ringier Kiadó printers, a subsidiary Swiss Ringier, will open a plant in Nagytétény, this fall as scheduled.

According to director László Bertalan, the plant will especially be equipped to print daily papers, such as the national tabloid daily *Blikk*, the traditional daily sports newspaper *Nemzeti Sport* and the Sunday newspaper *Vasárnapi Blikk*. Besides Hungary, Ringier currently publishes and prints newspapers and magazines in Romania, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

### Magyar TV Leads with Olympics

Olympic broadcasts have put State Hungarian Television, Magyar Televízió Rt. (MTV) in the top of the ratings for the past two weeks in August, ahead of the leading national commercial channels, according to a statement by a MTV spokesperson in September.

### Tenders Out for New MagyarTV Headquarters

Tenders were put out in September for the construction of a new headquarters for the public Hungarian Television, MTV in Óbuda. The television station will pay a lease fee of 3 Billion Forint (about 11.5 Million Euro) yearly for the next 20 years to the company that wins the bid, which will cover both the investment and maintenance of the building. According to the Hungarian daily *Népszava*, the new MTV Centre should be finished by December 2005.

## Media Report: Hungary

### Freedoms on Paper Still Under Pressure

While the media in Hungary generally enjoy the right to freedom of speech and expression, with fair media laws and a constitution that allows its citizens and journalists to criticize the government, media observers saw another troubling shift on 24 January 2004, when a journalist was given a jail sentence for a press offence for the first time since fall of communism in 1990.

Andras Bencsik, Editor in Chief of the weekly *Magyar Demokrata* was sentenced on 21 January to ten months in prison for libeling Liberal Democrat deputy Imre Mecs.

Another journalist from the same newspaper, Laszlo Attila Bertok, was sentenced to an eight months suspended prison sentence. Both journalists are planning to appeal against their sentences within the next few days.

The press freedom organization Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF) immediately protested the action. "Prison terms should never be imposed for press offences, even if the sentences are suspended," RSF said in a letter to the Hungarian Justice Minister.

The law suit derived from the publication of a 2001 article in which the two *Magyar Demokrata* journalists claimed that Mecs, who had played an active role in the 1956 revolution against the communist regime, had denounced to the authorities four revolutionaries who were later sentenced to death and hanged on his evidence. Mecs was sentenced to death himself in 1957 for plotting against the state but received amnesty in 1963. The court said that the journalists had seriously damaged the politician's reputation. The government did not dispute the accuracy of the story.

A pattern of pressure and interference continues to slow the development of an independent press in Hungary. Ironically, the Hungarian Press Law, viewed as one of the most comprehensive in East Central Europe, gradually became a tool for authorities to tighten control over the media. By March 2000 parliament had approved the control boards composed entirely of governing party members. The decision to create pro-government boards sparked protests both in and outside the country. While this did not prevent Hungary's entry to the European Union in May, non-governmental organizations, trade unionists and opposition party members have repeatedly protested these actions.

Concerns about the government's intentions grew after a new law was adopted in March 2000. Under the law, libel must be treated as criminal rather than civil offense, leading to a tendency of self-censorship,

according to the Hungarian Journalists Association.

The pattern continued in 2001, when the Hungarian government refused to allow journalists of *Magyar Hirlap*, one of Hungary's oldest and most respected newspapers to enter a conference held by FIDESz, the current ruling party in Hungary.

According to Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), FIDESz press spokesman, Attila Farkas, turned the journalist away, stating that "No reporter from the *Magyar Hirlap* would be authorized to attend any event or demonstration" held by the FIDESz. "The journalists of *Magyar Hirlap* only have to read the press releases from the official Hungarian press agency (MTI) to write their articles."

Conditions deteriorated further when Prime Minister Victor Orban's majority party actively excluded opposition parties for the boards of directors of national radio and television, provoking a stern response from president of the European Commission Romano Prodi. In April 2002, however, Orban's conservative government finally allowed advertising from government agencies and state-owned companies to be placed in liberal and progressive newspapers.

Some observers feel that the inability of the conservatives to establish their own segment of the media is in itself a problem. With the exception of the conservative daily *Magyar Nemzet*, all the political broadsheets have left-liberal leanings, as, they say, do the two broadcast TV stations - which has provoked constant complaints from conservative political forces and audiences, according to the European Journalism Center in the Netherlands.

However, most observers are optimistic that the country's entry into the European Union encourages greater tolerance for openness from the government, in line with EU standards, and herald a new phase in the evolution of independent media in Hungary.

## VIVA Hungary!

### Pop Culture and the World of Teens

Today, Music Television (MTV) and music videos top the popularity charts among hip teenagers around the world. In Hungary, teenagers can zap to either MTV Europe or VIVA, and with its local programming, VIVA Hungary has quickly become the market leader. According to marketing manager Szabolcs Baranyai, the station soon attracted a viewership 10 times that of its only local competitor, Z+ Broadcasting Corp.

"Music videos have such an impact on the everyday life of youth, that they are even taking on the socializing functions," write social psychologists Paul Loehr and Michael Schmidbauer.

What has made VIVA different is its commitment

► continued on page 32



## Media Report: Kosovo\*

# Writing on the Wall: Crime or Free Expression?

### Unrest in Kosovo in March 2004 Shows How Democracy Can Be Seen But Not Heard

Recent events in the Kosovo region have tested the European ideals of press freedom. In March 2004, violence broke out as Albanians and Serbians in Kosovo fought against the UN administrators and each other. Over 15 people were killed and over one million Euros worth of damage occurred in the three days of rioting. International and local media covered the events live.

Once calm had returned to Kosovo, the UN accused members of the local media of bias and unfair reporting that they said contributed to the escalation of violence. The media claim that they were simply exercising their rights of freedom of speech as an information provider. The case has recently gone to court.

Freedom of expression, speech, media and press has been fundamental to democratic thought and the way of life of a free society since it was first enshrined in the Magna Charta, later the US Constitution's Bill of Rights and found its way into the United Nations Charter and the Constitutions of most countries.

But is this freedom absolute? And if not, to what extent can it be restricted, under what circumstances and by whom? And how does this apply to Kosovo?

Four months after the NATO humanitarian intervention and the establishment of the UN Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), the Secretary General authorized a Temporary Media Commission (TMC) for Kosovo under the control of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The TMC is primarily staffed by international civil servants, and acts as the regulatory agency for broadcast media, and a temporary licensing regime. The role of the TMC includes "upholding the principles of freedom of opinion and expression," but also disciplinary authority "to ensure broadcasters meet their licensing obligations".

In addition, the TMC regulates the content of the media, can suspend licenses and prohibit broadcasts. Decisions of the TMC can be appealed to a board consisting of international civil servants. The decision of this board is final. Therefore, the international community acts as both judge and jury regarding violations of international standards by the media in Kosovo. An uniquely undemocratic practice.

This should come as no surprise, as the concept of freedom of speech, expression and media regulation differs greatly among the 53 member states of the OSCE. The international community ran the risk that policies regarding freedom of expression i.a. the

right to publish and broadcast would be exposed to the specific expectations of certain OSCE member states at the expense of the concepts that are at the root of democratic society, namely freedom of expression and the right to self determination.

Since the TMC concept was unknown in any of the member states and not in sync with either interpretation mentioned above, how did the international community come up with the idea of regulating media with the TMC? Did the international community know something that the other nations did not know? Would it have made more sense to adopt a model already in practice in one of the member states? What are the problems of this new, unknown and untested concept? Is it in fact wise to test out such a new concept in an unstable, recently post-conflict environment? Are the UN claims of media bias on the part of the local press during the March 2004 violence fair? Can the blame be shared by those who created the media industry in Kosovo?

These questions mean that the concept of the TMC in Kosovo requires a second look and begs further questions. Did the designers of the TMC come from the media industry in their own country? If so, what part of the industry (reporting, editing, management, regulation, censorship, etc.)? Were their experiences more absolutist or restrictive regarding press freedom?

Those responsible for media policy and the creation of the TMC came from varied backgrounds. Very few came from the press industry in their own state but were rather new or career international civil servants with limited public information experience. They all did have something in common, namely that no one served or worked in a system that was managed, regulated or governed by a temporary or other media commissioner.

The concept of the TMC came about as a result of interpretation of events in the former Yugoslavia from 1989. It was believed that ethnic differences and the resulting conflicts created an environment where local media and information providers could not be trusted with the responsibility of un-bias or inflammatory reporting. The TMC concept was therefore an attempt to gradually ease these societies of the former Yugoslavia towards democratic thinking and freedom of expression and the press.

Rather than draw on hundreds of years of experience with absolutist and restrictive freedom models, the designers chose instead to create a new approach to media establishment and regulation. Instead of linking establishment and regulation to either a mar-

\* 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.

## in Short

### Photojournalist attacked by KFOR

On 30 August Jahja Tmava, a photojournalist for KosovaPress news agency, was assaulted by the police while covering a protest in Pristina led by the Association of Kidnapped Persons' Families. As protesters were being arrested, members of a Swedish KFOR unit seized Tmava's camera and deleted his pictures on the grounds that he was photographing members of KFOR. KosovaPress maintains that he was photographing police as the arrests were being made.

### Kosovo Media: 'Reckless and Sensationalist'

On 7 August Andrei Denisov, Russia's newly appointed ambassador to the United Nations, "condemned the inflammatory material" in Kosovo's provincial media during Security Council debate on the disputed province on 5 August. Denisov was referring to press reports in the ethnic Albanian media that allegedly incited violence when last March's civil disturbances brought havoc and 19 deaths to the province. The international agencies helping – or as some see it, hindering – the province's drive toward "final status" have also found fault and bias in the way the March disturbances were covered. An OSCE report concluded that "Without the reckless and sensationalist reporting on 16/17 March, the events could have taken a different turn. They would not have reached intensity and the level of brutality we all witnessed or would not have taken place at all." Agim Zatriqi, General Director of RTK, Kosovo's only public television channel, strongly objected to the accusation. By attacking the press, Zatriqi told United Press International, the international community is trying to pass the blame. His network was singled out for its handling of the crisis.





ket oriented or government regulation model, they opted to create a Commissioner beholden not to domestic actors but to international ones. Therefore, there was no “handbook” for the design of the media commissioner and, even more dangerous, there were no lessons or practical examples of how to handle problems that resulted from the creation and implementation of such an office.

The result has been a freedom of expression and press “third way”. This new approach has been charged by all sides as being a less democratic approach to media and content management. Accusations on the part of the local media in Kosovo include charges that the TMC alienates and disempowers the local media to report as they see fit. This includes requests by the local media to regulate themselves or have a government body regulate the media as an industry as is the practice in the member states of those who created the TMC in the first place.

All other problems stem from the points raised above. Is there a way out or is the media in Kosovo trapped in this cycle until the international community decides to adopt a workable model? An explanation to the unrest in March 2004 can be partially found in this question. Of course the way forward is more complex but very much possible.

A solution might be found in a re-evaluation of the media and media relations in Europe and the United States. Media in Europe is generally characterized by a number of public owned and public programmed sources of information (TV, cable, radio, online, etc). Media in the United States is characterized by few state run or supported sources of information but a large number of private market oriented information outlets (TV, cable, radio, online, etc).

Since regulation of these industries in both Europe and United States generally falls to a government agency that rates and periodically assesses content and commissions made up of members of the media (management who provide a similar function), it is only logical that the planners responsible for the development of the media in Kosovo find a solution found in either of these markets.

If the belief is that the unique situation of the media in Kosovo after 1999, among other things a media vacuum created by the removal of state run media structures and the general bias on the part of local media, that a new solution had to be found.

A more responsible international community planning this new response would have to seek a solution that was either tested and proven to be reliable, or would wait and properly plan, rather than submit to hastily constructed benchmarks.

Linking the solution (TMC) to the OSCE, an organization without depth and practical media man-

aging experience, has only added to the growing list of problems facing the international community, as experienced this past March.

Therefore, the OSCE should take advantage of the opportunity to bring senior management expertise from existing media companies and government regulation agencies to manage the process.

This would have a number of advantages. First of all, it takes the burden of regulation away from the OSCE. This is beneficial to all parties, as the direction of OSCE and OSCE funded and administered bodies comes from OSCE Headquarters in Vienna. Policies in Vienna are determined based on consensus between the 53 member states.

As we mentioned, policies being implemented therefore are not necessarily developed or designed by the local community and are often times implemented above the protests of the local community. This current arrangement should strike the reader as both odd and undermining the natural role of any domestic regulatory agency, sending the signal that the local community is simply not quite ready to take on such responsibility.

Secondly, by reducing the initial role of the international community regarding registration and regulation, you open a potential and truly independent role for the international community on the Media Appeals Board, if so desired.

The international community would work together with the local government and industry on this independent body in order to uphold, modify or rescind decisions of the TMC.

There are plenty of solutions on the table and it is not clear what, if anything, will be done to correct the problem. What is clear is that the events of March 2004 have sent a clear signal that the current situation is untenable.

Research has shown that three years had passed between the date of the last regulatory decision taken by the TMC on 21 February 2001 and the latest TMC action calling into question the right of media in Kosovo to publish and broadcast in Kosovo, in April 2004.

It can be assumed that either the media in Kosovo had perfectly lived up to the standard set by the TMC or that the TMC routinely ignored violations of their policies.

Hopefully, reform will come before further unrest shows that the international community has not learned its lessons, nor seen the writing on the wall. And are the broad freedoms of the Anglo-American model, self regulated and limited largely through the courts, or the more restricted model of continental Europe and elsewhere, with its state control and highly regulated market access the only possibilities?





## Media Report: Macedonia (Republic of Macedonia, FYRoM)

# People Want Change, not an Unbiased Press

Macedonia, which was largely spared the ethnic conflicts in the early 1990's, adopted a new constitution in late 2001, that acknowledged the rights of minorities and guaranteed freedom of speech to its citizens and its ethnic Albanian minority. Nevertheless, there is a lot of work to be done for free speech in Macedonia, as most major media outlets have some sort of partisan affiliation.

The last few years have seen a steady rise in the number of privately owned media networks in Macedonia, in addition to the already existing state owned ones. Nevertheless, both the ruling party and the opposition maintain some form of influence over the major individual media outlets, which are consequently often subject to "economical and 'soft' censorship" according to a report published by the Media Working Group in Macedonia (MWGM) in November 2003.

State owned public broadcaster Makedonska RadioTelevizija (MRT) broadcasts on three television (MTV1, MTV2, MTV3) and three radio channels, and is under relative control of the government as MRT's general manager is elected by the parliament, and tends to be replaced after each election, according to the International Press Institute's (IPI) 2003 World Press Freedom Review.

"MTV is always controlled by the ruling party," says Branko Jovanovski, a Macedonian media expert. "It presents the views people should accept. But only people that are hardcore followers of the ruling party watch it and believe it."

MTV3 is devoted to broadcasting in Macedonia's minority languages, including 9 hours of Albanian programming per day, as well as Turkish, Romanian, Serbian, Vlachian and Bosnian language programs.

The programming on MTV3 has been deemed to be of a "low professional standard" by IPI, which Jovanovski supports. "It is mostly dancing, and some news in Albanian and Serbian" he says.

In addition to Macedonia's state-owned media, there are also several privately owned media outlets, including daily newspapers and newspapers that publish in Albanian. The three largest national daily newspapers are owned by Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung corporation.

A1 and Sitel TV are the leading private television stations, however there are 54 other private television stations with local broadcast permits in Macedonia. There is also one national private radio station in Macedonia, and several local ones, however most of these stations are having financial difficulties and

consequently "have no funds to invest in professional journalism, good programs, and quality service to the local communities," according to IPI.

According to Jovanovski, the private TV networks "are not totally independent... but partly present the real picture." Sitel TV, he says, is owned by the leader of the Macedonian Socialist Party.

"When you compare the news from national TV (MTV) to the 3 or 4 other channels, you can see a difference. The facts will be the same, but the presentation differs," explains Jovanovski. "The problem is, out in the rural areas people have nothing to watch except MTV, because they can't afford satellite television."

The BBC has stated that "the broadcast media in Macedonia are loosely regulated with many pirate radio and TV stations operating in the country." This has, on one particular occasion, allowed for impassioned publishing from major journalists, when there were clashes between Macedonia's government and Albanian militants who, according to BBC "used what Radio Free Europe described as less-than-responsible language and words of outright hate."

In addition, there have been several infringements on the free speech of journalists over the last few years. According to A1 television, "Pressures, threats, lawsuits, beating, detention," are measures which are "often applied on Macedonian journalists in order to keep them silent." A key example of this was journalist Zoran Bozinovski, who was illegally detained in a police station for 7 days in April 2004. While the press may be free, "journalists in Macedonia are not," an A1 TV report said.

"It's possible that journalists are scared of the ruling party, because they are powerful... the police can beat them," claims Jovanovski.

Furthermore, the Macedonian Information and Liaison Service (MILS) reported in May 2004 that "Criminal Law has been amended... a prison sentence of 3 months to 3 years is anticipated for slander and insult." This has, as expected, led to media self-censorship, a development which has been criticized by organizations such as the US Department for International Development and the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM) Macedonia's largest media watchdog.

Macedonia's media associations are, in comparison to its media outlets, very well structured. According to the MWGM report, "this part of the media landscape evolved into a relatively healthy and structured area." This includes the AJM, which is part of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). The AJM "has a massive membership, and has almost become an official voice of journalists in the country"

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## in Short

### Radio Journalist Imprisoned

Radio Station Chief Journalist Zoran Bozinovski was imprisoned on 6 April 2004 and held for a week without trial. He was released 13 April, as the legal conditions of his arrest were not fulfilled. Mr. Bozinovski had been the victim of an assault two years prior, when police had entered the radio station where he worked, disguised with hoods and jackets, and beaten him on the face and body with metal bars. According to Reporters Without Borders, Bozinovski "had been investigating corruption involving the head of the Macedonian customs service."

### Charges of Slander Common

Over 150 criminal charges have been pressed against journalists over the last three years for slandering public figures, according to an announcement by Robert Popovski, president of AJM on 3 March. Macedonian Journalists have repeatedly expressed their discontent through protests; on several occasions, journalists have refused to cover stories of importance to the government, and on one occasion marched to the Macedonian parliament wearing T-shirts reading "beat us."

### 'Media First Aid Kit'

The Association for Private Electronic Media in Macedonia (APEMM) has created what they call a "Media First Aid Kit." They have acquired 30,000 Dollars worth of equipment including TV and Radio transmitters and mixing boards, donated by IREX and the German Embassy in Macedonia. This equipment can be loaned to its members (media outlets) free of charge, should their programs be interrupted by natural disasters or acts of vandalism.



## in Short

### Live News Roundtable Censored

TeleRadio Moldova's new pro-communist head, Artur Efremov, appointed by the station's regulatory board in July, censored a live discussion he said violated the station's rules about not giving an unchallenged platform to the opposition. Dozens of journalists staged protests in the capital, Chisinau, against the lack of press freedom.

### Media Groups Protest Attack on Journalist

Several media organisations in Moldova have protested the assault and intimidation of cameraman Valeriu Timus, who was attacked while on duty for PRO TV Chisinau. They condemned the incident in which two men in civilian clothes claiming to be police officers tried to hold the Pro TV Chisinau cameraman at the Sunday protest meeting organised by the Christian Democratic parliamentary opposition. One covered the camera lenses with his palm and pushed Timus into a car for questioning, until a group of protesters came to the journalist's aid, while uniformed police stood by. A Russian television team captured the incident on video and it was broadcast on PRO-TV Chisinau news.

### TeleRadio Moldova Journalist Arrested

On 6 September, Dinu Mija, cameraman for Teleradio Moldova was beaten up by paramilitary forces close to Tiraspol regime when he tried to do a report on the situation at the railway switchpoint in Bender. He was released on 13 September after a week in prison.

## Media Report: **Moldova** **Free Press Still a Long Way Off**

The media situation in Moldova reflects the turmoil that had paralyzed the country since it became independent in 1991. A former Soviet republic, Moldova has been shackled by a crumbling infrastructure and an economy crippled by inadequate resources and legal institutions unable to support an effective market economy. The Transdnestr region on the Russian border tried to secede, and in 1992, a bloody civil war left political unity but cultural division.

With all this instability, new independent media outlets have been slow to emerge. A legal code protecting press freedom – particularly a law on access to information – will be necessary to improve the media situation in Moldova. There are also few independent printing houses outside government control, and those there are charge high prices for bad quality. And with a weak economy, becoming self-supporting is a problem for free media, especially in Transdnestr. The advertising market is small, and companies are reluctant to advertise products that cannot be afforded by the average person.

In November 2003, parliament amended the law to turn the state-run TeleRadio Moldova into a public service. However this did not guarantee independence from the ruling Communist Party. Along with the other state-run media, the station openly campaigns for the Communist Party and fiercely attacked opposition candidates during the 25 May local election campaign. The central elections board and the broadcasting coordination council did nothing to stop these electoral law violations.

A new criminal code, providing up to five years imprisonment for defamation, came into effect on 12 June 2003, along with a law punishing incitement to vaguely-defined "extremist" activities and strict new rules about handling environmental news pushed journalists further towards self-censorship. Currently, there is also no limit on damage claims under the Civil Code, which, according to journalists, has allowed certain claims in amounts designed to put media outlets out of business.

In response to pressure from media organizations, President Vladimir Voronin promised in March of this year to propose an amendment decriminalizing libel, along with a limit to damage claims for defamation. Security Council Secretary Ion Morei has told the press these provisions would be submitted to Parliament "soon."

Like the country as a whole, the independent media in Moldova too are in a developing phase. Most of the journalists have only recently graduated

from university and thus are very inexperienced with no older generation to serve as mentors. Senior journalists and editors are still stuck in the communist-era traditions of propaganda journalism, accustomed to convincing readers, listeners and viewers rather than informing them. This situation inevitably leads to internal tensions within the media institutions in both print and broadcast over the contents of news reports.

Thus a free press in Moldova is still a long way off, and the international community sometimes seems to forget this small country between Romania and Ukraine exists at all. Research is needed in order to find solutions to printing problems, while direct training is essential to produce more professional journalists and reporters. In addition, it will probably take significant foreign investment to get an independent media strong enough to play its essential role in Moldova's emerging democracy.

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in Greece is, compared to other countries in South East Europe, less fractionalized, in fact strongly "hellenized," yet still not regionalized enough.

In many Balkan countries, still in a difficult process of political, cultural and societal transition, trying to peel off or simply to forget the history of authoritarian systems, you feel the difficulty and sometimes even a kind of ineptitude in the cultivation of identity between undifferentiated pride, on the one hand, and the readiness to get lost in imported modernity on the other. Greece has proven, both traditionally and in media, to have good and sensitive relations with Serbia, but very weak and guilt-laden ones to the other Balkan countries. In analysing media content, according to experts from Athens University, there is no getting away from the impression that the Balkan discourse in the Greek media is rather unilateral, if there is one at all.

Greece, although geographically situated within the Balkans, is, in terms of media communications, a separate island, keen to closely follow its internal agenda. On that point, Greece is in a challenging situation. On the one hand, it can not fail to be affected by the neighbouring Balkan countries, struggling through transition, reaching for new values, new horizons, new priorities, and new public behaviour, for downsized dreams of democracy and illusions of interactivity – all-in-all new world views.

On the other hand, when you ask it's neighbours, you get the impression that Greece is not really focused on the Balkan countries. It is oriented instead to its other European neighbours. Is Greece, or rather, are the Greek media missing out on the challenge of the future, that lies right next door?



## Media Report: Montenegro\*

# Divided Alligences Shape Media Politics

During the last 15 years, Montenegrin society has passed through a process of immense social and political transformation, which continues to this day. Throughout the prolonged campaign against the Belgrade regime of Slobodan Milosevic, the West invested substantially in Montenegro's state-owned and private media sector. At that time, media outlets were viewed as a potent weapon in the fight against Milosevic and his allies in Montenegro and Belgrade.

However, since the insurrection in Serbia unseated Milosevic in October 2000, Montenegro has witnessed a change in Western attitudes towards its media sector, with new investment, and cooperation from international organizations. After Milosevic's fall, Montenegrans themselves expected a new openness, and things seemed indeed to move ahead – until the assassination of Serbia's first post-Milosevic Prime Minister, Zoran Djindic, in March 2003, while he was stepping out of his car in front of a government building in the capital, Belgrade.

Parliament Speaker Natasa Micić became acting head of the government the same day and immediately imposed a state of emergency authorizing the Culture and Public Information Ministry to restrict media reporting on the situation.

Oversight of the media became increasingly politicized in March, when the Serbian government reappointed former Djindic propagandist Vladimir „Beba“ Popovic to head its Communications Bureau. Popovic relied on threats and politicized lawsuits to intimidate and silence journalists who criticized government policies.

### Current Situation of the Montenegrin Media

Today, both electronic and print media can be categorized by political orientation, while at the same time they also demonstrate a largely professional approach to their own media policies and news coverage.

Their political orientation reveals itself in the treatment of questions like whether or not Montenegro should remain united with Serbia; discussions of identity, within the framework of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations,' cultural identities show the way in which cultural identities seek their own way toward an independent identity or as a sovereign state. In the end, a reader or viewer finds the so-called media diversity at some distance, through the binoculars of "us versus them."

However, understanding the "other" usually helps

us to understand a part of ourselves. And while helping define identities – or 'civilizations' – through national and international discourse could be said to be the number one communicative competence of the media, most of the media in Montenegro do not play this role in any meaningful way.

### Print Media

The print media is represented by three daily "home-grown" newspapers, which cover the country's small market of 620.000 inhabitants:

The oldest newspaper is the 50-year old *Pobjeda*, a government-funded, post-communist "dinosaur," supporting the Montenegrin independence movement.

*Vijesti* is the country's first independent daily, financially self-supporting, offering the most objective coverage one can expect in the local political circumstances and within such a small media market. Established in 1997 with the first round of private investment, it became over the next six years number one in the market and attracted the interest of the German WAZ media group, which bought a majority interest.

*Dan*, a former pro-Serbian opposition newspaper, was founded six years ago and became nationally famous for its sensational, yellow-press reporting on political scandals. Its founder and Editor in Chief, Dusko Jovanovic, was killed earlier this year, late at night while leaving his office, in what was the first planned assassination of a professional journalist in Montenegro and so far the biggest threat to media freedom in the country's history. Although an intensive police investigation produced a couple of arrests, the people behind this tragic and shocking event have still not been identified.

There are also quite a few weekly magazines and newspapers in Montenegro, among which *Monitor*, founded in 1990, was the first independent weekly to survive financially and politically throughout the dark 90's while still holding to its own journalistic principles.

### Electronic Media

The electronic media sector can be divided in three segments: radio, TV, and online media. Probably the most influential broadcasting agent, RTVCG (the Montenegrin national TV and Radio Station), is going through a complex transition from a state-owned broadcasting station to an open system oriented toward public service.

Other nation-wide TV-stations include In TV,

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

## in Short

### MBC Gains in TV Ratings

April marked a ratings increase for the MBC TV news program *Naslovna strana*. According to the latest Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute (SMMRI) survey conducted in late March, *Naslovna Strana* showed a strong increase in audience share. The nightly news program began with approximately 6,000 viewers, then jumped to over 30,000 viewers in October 2003, and now has increased to an average of 45,300 viewers.

### Opposition Editor Murdered

Dusko Jovanovic, the controversial publisher and Editor in Chief of the opposition daily *Dan*, was killed in a drive-by shooting in the early morning of 27 May, as he was leaving his office in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica, according to local and international news reports. Unidentified assailants used an automatic rifle to shoot Jovanovic in the head and chest just after midnight, as he was getting into his car. Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro, Ambassador Maurizio Massari, strongly condemned the incident and called on the Montenegrin authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice. „There can be no free society without a free media. And there is no free media if journalists have to work in an atmosphere of violence and fear," he said. Jovanovic had faced numerous lawsuits for criticizing Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic. The prime minister had sued him for articles linking him to a human trafficking scandal.





Elmag, Montena, Sky Sat and TV Pink, which along with some other local TV-Stations (TV Budva, TV Niksic etc.) represent the Montenegrin electronic media market, again defined by political orientation, and are often supported by their own radio stations.

There are also a couple of online-news agencies, dating from the late 90's, including MNNews, the first, and so far the only, Montenegrin news and information agency, established in 1999, and online since March 2002 over its online affiliate Mina (<http://www.mina.cg.yu/>), divided into a general

and a business news service. In fact, "independent" media in this circle are hard to find.

A second on line agency, NGO Pronen, a "group of enthusiasts, who are trying to cope with the modern information society" through their first big project - PCNEN (<http://www.pcnen.cg.yu/>) - "Prve Crnogorske Nezavisne Elektronske Novine" - First Montenegrin Independent Online Newspaper).

Both online agents follow the highest professional and ethical journalist standards in Montenegro today.

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to "going local." VIVA hosts speak exclusively in Hungarian, and although a great portion of national and international rock and pop music and infotainment content is in English, German or other languages, this suites VIVA junkies just fine; it simply fulfils the regional youth's musical tastes.

Not surprisingly, Hungarian VIVA was recently dubbed "the coolest, most trendy media," by Hungarian youth, particularly because of their 24-hour programme of mainstream music plus its local flavour focusing on the Hungarian youth culture.

"We play the latest, most fresh and newest music, before the radio stations do," says Baranyai. As the company defined their aesthetic goal of "being a supporter of the local, Hungarian youth," their repertoire consists of a mixture of half Hungarian and half international, European and US music clips.

VIVA Hungary is the beneficiary of the country's Media Act on Radio and Television, that came into effect in February 1996. This abolished the monopoly of state broadcasting, and institutionalised a basically dualistic broadcasting system consisting of

commercial and other broadcasters. Z+ Broadcasting Corp. was Hungary's first big success, going on the air in 1997 under its founder, and now manager, Levente B. Malnay, with financing from Time Warner. VIVA Hungary took the station over in 2001, and Z+ is now programming under the VIVA brand.

Hungary has - with around 50% - a comparative high level of cable penetration among television households, VIVA is currently operating with a staff of 60 people with all the company's departments - sales & business, creative, marketing and programming and its headquarters are located in a humble office in the city of Budapest. In addition to its Hungarian subsidiary, VIVA Media AG has profitable subsidiaries in the Netherlands and Poland.

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the MWGM report said.

Macedonia's media landscape is one of development and optimism. On one hand, media outlets are largely unprofessional and government influenced. Journalists often face attacks, both verbal and physical for the execution of their jobs. On the other hand, media watchdog organizations such as AJM are thriving in Macedonia.

Some are not so optimistic about it though. "The situation may be getting better, if you look back ten years and compare it to today, but the change is not happening that fast," says Jovanovski, quickly adding that "free media is not a priority like in Europe or in the US. We were a communist country for 50

years, so we are used to state-owned media. People do not care about this; they want changes in their life, not an unbiased press," he claims, hinting at Macedonia's high poverty rate.





## Media Report: Romania

# Vigilante Justice Against Journalists

More than most countries of the former East Block, Romania survives in a world of appearances. Journalists find themselves caught between their proprietors' private interests and public roles, and become victims of censorship and harassment.

While Romania is hoping to join the EU in 2007, it finds itself regularly under the microscope for patterns of corruption that reach the highest level of government. Three ministers sacked by Prime Minister Adrian Nastase in October 2003 were accused of corruption and „barons“ of the ruling Social Democratic Party (PSD) who hold political and economic sway in the provinces are regularly exposed as corrupt.

However they are not disposed to allow criticism, as they wish to be seen as fighting a brave fight against corruption, both by the EU and by the voters in the run-up to 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections.

But the harassment is real. Four journalists were badly beaten after investigating corruption by PSD officials and businessmen. The enquiry appears to be stall indefinitely.

At national level, a lack of diversity in new programming on TV and radio continues to stand in the way of any meaningful press freedom. And defamation laws push journalists to self-censorship.

In May, the government proposed a „decriminalisation of insults,“ making these offences punishable only by fines. With a ceiling of 3,000 Euros for journalists whose average monthly salary is 200 Euros, this remains an effective form of censorship. And news that harm the „honour of the country“ would be punishable by one to five years of prison. Current law already provides up to four years for „insults“ and defamation of public figures.

Even more terrifying is the high risk of individual threats on Romanian journalists on the job. In addition to the over 400 law suits against journalists for libel and slander in 2002 alone, the high rate of vigilante justice against journalists has reached critical proportions, practised by not only private individuals, but also by members of the gendarmerie and city mayors. These threats include physical aggression and threats to life, and are listed in detail in the annual reports of the International Press Institute.

Aggression against photographers remains high in Romania, a culture in which unsolicited photography was illegal as recently as last February when the law forbidding the taking of photographs of dignitaries without their consent was repealed.

In spite of all this, independent media continues

to grow in an increasingly competitive market. Several hundred daily and weekly newspapers are published. Several private television stations broadcast nationwide, and there are numerous other private local television and radio stations. Approximately 4 million households have cable television, giving significant portions of the population access to private and foreign broadcasts.

State Television (RTV), Radio Romania, and the Europa FM radio network remain the only national broadcasters able to reach the majority of the rural population. Other stations continue to enlarge their coverage by over-the-air, cable, and satellite transmissions.

Television is the preferred source of news of almost 80 percent of the population, and a recent survey by the National Audiovisual Council (CNA) reported that over 85 percent of households have at least one television set.

Print and electronic media coverage generally reflects the political views of owners and covers a wide range of the political spectrum, particularly in the small cities and rural areas. Private television avoids direct criticism of the Government and ruling party, particularly on corruption or other controversial issues, justifying the fears of self censorship raised by the media watch dogs, a reluctance due to owners' fears that the Government would retaliate by seeking back taxes or auditing stations.

Media NGOs such as the Media Monitoring Agency and the Center for Independent Journalism reported that the prime time newscasts of the four largest television networks (RTV, ProTV, Antena 1, and Prima TV) were generally biased in the Government's favor.

## in Short

### Press Freedom and Safety of Journalists: RSF Visits Romania

Complaints of growing harassment, censorship and legal persecution persuaded a delegation from Reporters Without Borders to visit Romania in late March. In the past few months there have been several brutal attacks on journalists investigating corruption implicating local authorities, and police had failed to identify those behind the attacks. The timing was particularly urgent because of the fall elections, seen as crucial to the process of its becoming a member of the European Union.

In a report entitled „Caught between Old Habits and Democratic Strides: Romanian Press at a Crossroads,“ the organization described an alarming situation in the provinces, where the media's independence is routinely obstructed by the conflicts of interest of their owners, and the few remaining investigative journalists are in constant danger. In 2003, four journalists who were investigating corruption cases involving local politicians and businessmen, were brutally assaulted.



by Valery Crab

### in Short

#### 300 Journalists and Editors Charged in Three Years

There were some 300 charges raised against journalists and editors in Serbia between 2001 and 2004, according to a study by the Independent Journalism Association of Serbia, about 200 of which have ended up in court. The suits have been filed mainly by the former functionaries of defeated political parties (SPS, JUL, SRS) as retribution for articles detailing cases of malfeasance.

#### One Year Since Attack on Media Owner

6 July 2004 marked the anniversary of the car bomb attack on Kurir and Glas Javnosti owner Radisav Rodic. According to Belgrade Police Spokesperson Biljana Kajganic, the case still remains open, but police have no significant leads.

#### Campaign Coverage More Professional

Radio and Television Serbia showed the most professional approach in the coverage of the June 2004 presidential campaigns, according to a report by the Broadcasting Agency on the media behavior. BK Television was singled out by contrast, as an example of poor reporting. However the report also warned that BK's coverage had been less professional than during previous campaigns.

#### New Hungarian Weekly

A new Hungarian weekly, *Heti Uszag*, has been launched in Novi Sad. According to Antal Bozsoki, the owner, the paper is a response to the recent move by the Vojvodinian Parliament to transfer founding rights over papers in minority languages to the minorities' National Councils.

### Media Report: Serbia

## Development Linked to Independent Media

At the Regional World Press Freedom Day on 3 May in Belgrade, President of Serbia and Montenegro Svetozar Marovic took a firm stand on the importance of press freedom to Serbia's future.

"Economic development is linked to the freedom of the media," Marovic said, "and therefore political institutions should create legal frameworks that will ensure the enduring freedom of the media."

Ambassador Maurizio Massari of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro reiterated his support. "The priority for the OSCE is the adoption and implementation of key legislation – like the Broadcasting Act, the Telecommunications Act, the Law on Free Access to Information – necessary to establish the right environment for the development of pluralistic and free media, in accordance with international and European standards.

For Serbia, these are not just empty words. Several media had been shut down or fined during the seven-week state of emergency that lasted from the assassination of prime minister Zoran Djindjic on 12 March 2003. Journalists had been forbidden to file any reports on the killing that were not confirmed by the authorities or to criticize the state of emergency itself. Two journalists were imprisoned as part of the murder enquiry.

Amid unstable political and institutional conditions, the media reform eagerly awaited after the fall of the Slobodan Milosevic was suspended. A July 2002 Media Law, to turn the state radio and TV (RTS) into a publicly-run body, was not implemented and without authorization for outside funding, it remained totally dependent on the government.

The April election of the Broadcasting Council was marred by irregularities and several international institutions, including The European Reconstruction Agency, the European Commission and the OSCE suspended their aid in protest.

Parliament did recognise the right of journalists to protect sources except in cases of „serious crime“ and guaranteed access to public data, a promise it did not keep. Spreading “war propaganda” was banned as was news likely to have “serious or irreversible consequences.”

Lawsuits against journalists increased, and Communications Chief Vladimir “Beba” Popovic was forced to resign in July because of his harassment of the media.

### Freedom of Information

Finally, on 8 September, the Serbian government submitted a draft legislation on freedom of access to information – covering anything of “public importance” during the past 20 years. The law creates an Office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Interest, and applies to journalists and the general public, with proven discrimination punishable by high fines. However, the Independent Journalist Association of Serbia (NUNS) warned that the law might prove burdensome, and that legitimate exceptions need to be provided for.

The Broadcast Agency Council, intended as an independent regulatory authority of the broadcast media, has encountered legal barriers in the appointment of its members.

According to Ambassador Massari, “transparency and independence from any political or economic interests must prevail in the ongoing operation of the Broadcast Council.”

On 24 August, the Serbian Parliament passed the Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Broadcasting Law with broad-based support, stipulating time frames for the appointment of the Broadcasting Council's members, and forcing term limits that worry some media organizations.

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## Media Report: Slovenia

## Slovenia Sets Media Standards for SEE

Slovenia at number 14 ranks highest of all the SEE countries in the Press Freedom Index of Reporters Sans Frontiers, and ahead of most Western European countries with the exception of the Scandinavia, Germany and France. Thus they, in many ways, set the media standards for the SEE region.

As elsewhere, the Slovenian constitution provides freedom of speech and of the press, and a 2003 law provides free public access to "information of public character" controlled by state or local institutions and their agents.

But while the government generally respects these rights in practice, indirect political and economic pressures continue to influence the media, resulting in occasional self-censorship acts. In addition, as in the United States, advertisers pressure media outlets to present various issues in certain ways, resulting in little separation of marketing and editorial decision-making.

For example, in spite of promises to the contrary, Styria, the 2003 Austrian buyer of the Slovenian publishing company Dnevnik, soon began to suggest fundamental changes to editorial practice – in this case eliminating the requirement for journalists' consent to the appointment of editors in chief. The decision, heavily criticised by the Society of Journalists of Slovenia, is considered significant because of the wide spread respect for the company's publications, Dnevnik, the third biggest Slovenian daily, and the weekly Nedeljski dnevnik.

In June 2004 the Journalists Union proposed changes to the ten year-old Slovenian collective contract, defining the status of free-lancers. Already 30 percent of all Slovene journalists, the free-lancers are often resented as unfair competition with no allegiance to the paper. On the other hand, the free-lancers themselves need legal protection against exploitation. Management rejected the proposed changes, suggesting tough battle ahead, and the journalists' unions have begun preparations for a fall strike.

There are six national television channels in Slovenia, three part of the government-subsidized RTV Slovenia network, and three independent, private stations. Foreign broadcasts are accessible via satellite and cable and all major towns have radio stations and cable television.

Minority language television and radio broadcasts are also available, and there is a newspaper for the ethnic Italian minority living on the Adriatic coast. Bosnian refugees and the Albanian community also have newsletters in their own languages, and foreign newspapers, magazines, and journals are widely available.

The most serious human rights abuse on the Slovenian media scene was the 2001 assault and beating of journalist Miro Petek, of the Maribor daily Vecer. An investigation by the Maribor Prosecutor's Office in Slovenj Gradec has now brought 5 indictments against suspects in the attempted murder of the respected journalist, who had published a series of articles on fraud and corruption by the police, public officials and business leaders. Miro Petek disappointed his colleagues in August of this year, when he announced his decision to stand for parliament.

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## in Short

## Closing of Radio Trieste Protested

The Slovene Ministry of Foreign Affairs has publicly protested the planned closing of Radio Trieste, a program of the Italian state channel RTV RAI. The Slovene-language program, serving the Slovene minority in Italy, is provided for by statute as part of the Law for the Protection of the Slovene Minority in the Furlanija-Julijaska Krajina.

## Disclosure of the Salaries of Leading Staff at RTS

The forced disclosure of executive salaries has offended the management of RTS (Radio Television Slovenia), a move it had resisted since the end of 2003. Many thought the salaries unsuitably high, according to the Slovene news service SAFAX. The RTS management plans to sue the official responsible for release of the information, judged as "of public significance" under the terms of the new Public Information Law.

## Primorske Novice to Publish Daily

The community weekly newspaper of the Slovene littoral zone, Primorske novice, began appearing as a daily on 27 September, joining Delo, Vecer, Dnevnik, Slovenske novice, Ekipa and Finance as the country's seventh daily paper.



# SEEMO Activity Report



## S·E·E the Dialogue

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) is a non-governmental, non-profit network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, internet, new media and news agencies in South East Europe. With its committees in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey, SEEMO aims to create a bridge between the international media activities and the media developments in the region.

In 2003 SEEMO gathered over 500 editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe in different meetings. In the same year, SEEMO reacted in 57 cases of press freedom violations. SEEMO has over 400 individual members from all countries of South East Europe.

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Oliver Vujovic

**SEEMO Board:**  
President: Radomir Licina (Danas, Belgrade)  
Members: Remzi Lani (Albanian Media Institute, Tirana), Samra Luckin (Boram Network, Sarajevo), Stjepan Malovic (ICEJ, Opatija), Risto Popovski (Makfax, Skopje), Ognian Zlatev (Media Development Center, Sofia)

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## Media as Tolerance Promoters International Workshop

South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), in co-operation with German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ), organised an international workshop titled "Media as Tolerance Promoters" in Opatija, from 3-5 June 2004. "Österreichisches Kuratorium für Presseausweise" and "Verband der Österreichischen Zeitungen" gave financial support. Leading journalists, editors, media experts and public servants from former Yugoslav republics, as well as representatives of journalists' unions and media organisations, took part in the workshop.

During the workshop, participants pointed out existing problems in the countries of former Yugoslavia and between them. The participants exchanged their experiences, discussed and tried to give some answers to dilemmas they confront daily while doing their job. The participants did agree in one thing – that they will personally promote tolerance in the area they come from.

## SEEMO Dialogue Meeting between Editors-in-Chief, Media Executives and Leading Journalists of Aromanian / Vlachian / Vlasi Media from Central and South Eastern Europe

Representatives of the Vlach media from South East Europe met in Sofia on 25-26 May 2004 at a meeting organised by the South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), in co-operation with the International Press Institute and Media Development Center from Sofia, and with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

The Vlachs in the Balkans are comprised of several different communities: Romanian Vlachs (living

in an enclave in the Timok region in Bulgaria and Serbia); Aromanian Vlachs, who live in towns and mainly highland population centers in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Croatia (Istro-Romanians); and the groups of the Megleno-Romanians (Greece and Turkey). As a result of specific processes of migration as well as an extensive network of institutions, the community is trans-national in character.

The debates, conclusions and questions raised at the meeting demonstrated the extensive prospects of Vlach media in the context of European priorities regarding the promotion of identity, cultural specificity, as well as opportunities for realisation of ethnic communities on the Balkans. The meeting contributed both to the search for answers and to the creation of new, more favourable conditions for the development, proliferation and popularisation of the specific culture of the Vlachs in South East Europe.

## SEEMO Dialogue Meeting

between Editors-in-Chief, Media Executives and  
Leading Journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), in co-operation with Media Plan Institute from Sarajevo and with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), organised a meeting of editors-in-chief and directors of media from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) in Neum on 25-27 June 2004.

Two topics were examined in the framework of discussions on the media situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

1. Challenges and dilemmas: Attractiveness, Ethics, Market
2. Journalists in court: Initial Experiences in the Application of the Defamation Law

The participants stressed that the media situation ▶



Photo: SEEMO Archive

SEEMO Dialogue Meeting in Neum, Bosnia & Herzegovina



Photo: Slobodan Polić

SEEMO Dialogue Meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria



# Organizations behind deScripto Project

## University of Vienna, Department of Media and Communication Science

An Overcrowded Institution:  
Communications at the University of Vienna

Founded in 1942, the Institute of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Vienna developed from its original focus on newspaper analysis (including history, public opinion, journalism) to add a social and cultural studies unit, where research and teaching now focus on a broad critical analysis of societal communication.

The program incorporates not only the professional studies of journalism and public relations, but also a broader field of sociological, psychological or educational analysis of media communication, critically observing the mutual relationship between media communication and society. So you find lectures along professional lines, in the theory and practice of journalism, media management, advertising, media economy, media psychology, media education, media research; other programs follow the media themselves, scientifically analyzing newspaper, radio, television, and internet, and the political or conversational media seen in the historical or contemporary contexts of politics, economy, culture and civil society.

Research current includes media history, media and xenophobia, environmental media, intercultural communication, and many other.

The institute is one of the largest in the world, with about 6.500 currently enrolled students – future journalists, public relations professionals, organizational communicators, or as new entrepreneurs at the online field. University television and radio stations are small but fine workshops for media experiments. Now the magazine *deScripto* adds another work in progress – this time expanding into the world of international media.

-> <http://www.univie.ac.at/Publizistik>

## Webster University Vienna

Webster University Vienna is one of the five European campuses of Webster World Wide, offering an American university education to students around the globe. Founded in St. Louis Missouri, U.S.A., in 1915, Webster University serves over 20,000 students worldwide of over 100 different nationalities, emphasizing academic excellence, critical thinking, inter-cultural understanding and contribution to the community.

The Vienna campus was established in 1981 at the invitation of the local government, and is accredited both in the US and Austria. With 450 students of over 60 nationalities, Webster Vienna offers small classes and personal attention in a climate of academic rigor. The Media Communications major at Webster offers a Newspaper Production Workshop that puts out respected paper of news and opinion called the *Jugendstil*, distributed throughout Vienna's international community, and in coffee houses and hotels throughout the central city.

-> <http://www.webster.ac.at>

## College for Journalism - FHW Vienna

The FHW - Journalism is a recent addition to a program of the nine courses of study of the University of Applied Sciences for Communication and Business Management (FHW Fachhochschule der Wiener Wirtschaft) in Vienna.

Launched in the autumn of 2003, FHW-Journalism is an independently-funded and practically-based education at the highest academic standard. Over the 8-semester course, FHW-Journalism provides students with professional, practical and highly relevant training that follows advances in technology, changes within the media and the advent of the online market. Meeting the demand for professionally competitive and well-trained people to face the new challenges in the industry.

-> <http://www.fhw.ac.at>

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► in the country is still unstable and that the consequences of propagandistic journalism imminent to the previous system, transformed during the war into warmongering and inflammatory journalism, have still not disappeared. However, hate speech on ethnic ground has lately mutated into a specific form of conflict within the media community and certain media outlets and prominent political figures.

The second topic, application of the Defamation Law, also provoked a lot of interest. Defamation was dropped from the Penal Code. In 2003, 196 lawsuits

for defamation in the media were filed in the BiH Federation and 60 in the Republika Srpska. Most of the plaintiffs and defendants are journalists, media outlets and public figures. These cases mostly regarded what was written in the press.

The conclusion of the meeting was that intensive education of journalists should continue and that journalists and media associations should take an extensive look at the situation in the area of protection of media freedoms and the conditions in which the media market functions.

# Review

## CONFERENCE

### Scientific Cooperation in South Eastern Europe – Programs, Projects, Initiatives An Special Event in Alpbach on 27 August

The co-operation with South Eastern Europe in science and research is embedded in the Frame Program 6, reaffirmed in June 2004 by the European Council. Austria has developed various programs to meet actual demands of the scientific community in the region. On 27 August, at the Alpbach Technology Forum 2004, well-known Austrian scientists and agents from South Eastern Europe discussed a couple of Austrian initiatives in a working group.

For instance, the FP6 project ERA WestBalkan focuses on bi-lateral and multi-lateral networks to re-integrate scientists from Ex-Yugoslavia into the European research area. "A lot of laboratories were destroyed in the war, and many scientists emigrated", states Manfred Horvat, director of the Austrian Bureau for International Research and Technology Cooperation. "So there are two things to focus on: rebuilding the infrastructure to give South European scientists more opportunities and enhancing the Universities to enable a new generation of young experts."

Agents from Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Macedonia took part in the discussion and explained their individual needs and problems. In the end, all participants agreed that although there had been many successes in the past, there is still much work to be done. It is not only up to Western Europe to develop initiatives, progress always has to start in the regions concerned as well.

by Wolfgang Luef

## BOOK

### Die sterbenden Europäer

by Karl-Markus Gauß

In his book 'Die sterbenden Europäer – The Dying Europeans' – Austrian author Karl Markus Gauß walks on the tracks of nearly forgotten nationalities, rediscovering their past. Five travel reports provide interesting anecdotes as well as solid historic background information about the Sephards of Sarajevo; the Gottschee living in Slovenia; the Arbëreshe living in southern Italy; the Sorbes of eastern Germany and the Aromunes of Macedonia. With this book Gauß gives people, whose cultural and ethnic background is almost forgotten, a voice to be heard in Europe – before it is too late.

Published in German by the Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (dtv) Munich, 2002

by Matthias Huter

## BOOK

### Balkan Ghosts

by Robert Kaplan

While the Balkan countries have come a long way since 1991, this extraordinary political travelogue is still one of the best portraits of the region available in any language. From the assassination of the Arch Duke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo that set off World War I to the ethnic warfare that has swept through Bosnia, Croatia and now Kosovo, the Balkans have been the crucible of the 20th century—the place where terrorism and genocide were first practiced as tools of policy. This book was the work of a decade of travel and research, and one of the still few books in English to portray the threads of history, culture and religion that have shaped the Balkans

Published in English by St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993.

Published in German as *Die Geister des Balkan*, Kabel Verlag, 1993

by Dardis McNamee

## BOOK

### Black Lamb and Grey Falcon

by Rebecca West

Part travelogue, part history, part love letter, Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* is a masterpiece that goes beyond any definition of genre. Elegantly written and as passionate as it is, rich in the details of history, culture and observation, it is the portrait of the Balkan peoples in the building tensions of the years immediately preceding World War II. West visited Yugoslavia for the first time in 1936, and again in 1938. As she chronicles her travels, she meanders through countless historical digressions; through winding narratives of battles, slavery, and assassinations, through literature and art into the heart of human frailty. Shadowed by the coming war, West searches for universals among the complex particulars of Balkan history. The title refers to Western society's double infatuation with sacrifice, that those who hate are all too ready to martyr the innocent for their own advantage, and the innocent to offer themselves up for sacrifice. To West, in 1941, "the whole world is a vast Kosovo, an abominable blood-logged plain." Unfortunately, says literary critic Mary Parks, little has happened since then to prove her wrong.

Published in English by Penguin 20th Century Classics, London, 1993

by Dardis McNamee

# Preview

## WORKSHOP

### Risk Communication

A Challenge in an Enlarged Europe

Place European Journalism Centre, Netherlands

Time 16 – 21 October 2004

Info <http://www.ejc.nl> or [lemmens@ejc.nl](mailto:lemmens@ejc.nl)

The workshop is aiming at advanced journalism students and young media professionals from any of the current (old and new) EU Member States. The six day-programme has been designed in order to help participants to understand and report about “risk” in a European context.

## MASTER'S PROGRAMME

### Intercultural Competencies

Place Danube University Krems, Austria

Time November 2004

Info [www.donau-uni.ac.at/kultur](http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/kultur)

Students from Eastern Europe are invited to apply for partial study grants. Main intention of the Master's program is to train participants to become experts in handling international and intercultural challenges. The Master's Program is designed for professionals with academic degree or relevant working experience in areas such as: business, conference management, politics, NGOs, cultural management or media.

## PROJECT

### Online Journalism Resource Center for South East Europe

Place Sarajevo, Belgrade, Zagreb

Time November 2004

Info [www.netnovinar.org](http://www.netnovinar.org)

The project is launched by Mediacentar Sarajevo, in cooperation with Media Centar Belgrade and Investigative Journalism Center Zagreb. Online Journalism Resource Center will be an educational-informative portal with numerous practically applicable materials covering all areas of journalism. All journalists, media trainers, professionals and experts interested in cooperation are invited to join the project.

## CONFERENCE

### European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy

Place Kyiv, Ukraine

Time 10 - 11 March 2005

Info <http://www.coe.int>

## AWARD

### SEEMO Award for Human Rights

Time 10 December 2004

Info [info@seemo.org](mailto:info@seemo.org)

## COURSE

### Reporting the New European Neighbourhoods Policy

Place European Journalism Centre, Netherlands

Time November 2004 - January 2005

Info <http://www.ejc.nl> or [lemmens@ejc.nl](mailto:lemmens@ejc.nl)

The organised seminars intend to give journalists from different EU Member States more information about the EU's neighbours. Key issues of discussions will be addressed - for instance: immigration, environment and trade. The seminars will give journalists the opportunity to discuss the policy using concrete examples and issues.

## ROUNDTABLES

### Transparency in the Media Sector & Access to Information

Place Tirana & Gjirokaster, Albania

Time October 2004

Info <http://www.coe.int>

“Transparency in the Media Sector” (Tirana): The round table -concerned with this special focus on the media field - organised by the Council of Europe and the Albanian Media Institute. Media owners, editors, journalists, NGOs and government representatives are invited.

“Access to Information” (Gjirokaster): The round table will take place in cooperation with the Swedish Helsinki Committee. Invited participants are: local journalists from print and electronic media, local government, media experts etc.

## MEETING

### Vlachian Media Meeting

Place Tirana, Albania

Time 19 - 20 November 2004

Info [info@seemo.org](mailto:info@seemo.org)

SEEMO Board Meeting and SEEMO Meeting of Editors in Chief and Leading Journalists from Vlachian media in South East Europe.

## MEETING

### Editors of Vojvodina, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia

Place Palic, Serbia

Time 28 - 31 October 2004

Info [info@seemo.org](mailto:info@seemo.org)

Meeting of Editors in Chief and Leading Journalists from Vojvodina (Serbia), Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

## CONFERENCE

### Transport Conference

Place Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Time 8 December 2004

Info [info@seemo.org](mailto:info@seemo.org)

In cooperation with Bohmann Verlag, Vienna.

The next issue of *deScripto* will be published in January 2005

Dossier:  
Ownership and Independence

Country Focus:  
Croatia

Media Reports on all SEE Countries

*deScripto* welcomes letters and comments from its readers by post or e-mail [descripto@seemo.org](mailto:descripto@seemo.org)

Announcements of upcoming events important to the media in the SEE region will be included as space allows. Please send any suggestions to the Editor





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On November 1st 1928 aired the first program produced by the Radio-Telephone Broadcasting Corporation, as the public radio service was named in the official setting up papers, published at the end of 1927. From the very beginning, the public radio station addressed to all Romanian citizens, contributing to their education, to forming civic conscience and strengthening communitarian cohesion necessary for the democratic development of the Romanian society. Its mission is given by components such as: informing, educating, promoting culture, entertainment, promoting Romania's image and economical-social-communitarian unity.

[www.srr.ro](http://www.srr.ro)

Romanian Radio Broadcasting Corporation



Societatea Română de Radiodifuziune