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The WAZ Group actively accompanies the South East European countries on their fast track into the "European House".

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This is the way.
This is the aim.

Media Landscape
Turkey

www.descripto.info
published by the South East Europe Media Organisation - SEEMO
Dear Readers!

It took a long time for us appearing with the next issue of deScripto. The reason is very practical: for a magazine like this, done by volunteers and depending on sponsors, the conditions of surviving are not as stable as we would wish them to be. That means team changes but also it means the challenge to change the concept in order to meet the capacities of work and the interests of our addressees.

That was the reason to change the idea and the concept as it is described by the publisher Oliver Vujovic. We are starting this serial of deScripto on media landscapes of the SEE-countries with Turkey being cause of some plausible reasons: Turkey has within the European discourse a paradigmatic position. Coming closer to Europe, not only due to globalisation, but also due to the interests of the extension of the European Union also searching for models of good neighbourhood, the specific and different characters of identity surface more than ever before. The discourse on Turkey still is overloaded with lots of stereotypes and clichés due to lack of information.

Media structures and the culture in Turkey is of course a wide ranging topic and can not be covered as a whole. But there is a possibility to give an overview by selecting paradigmatic topics, which, I think, could be achieved. The result of the work of a group of teachers and students of the Faculty of Communication of the Istanbul University brings to the surface the dynamic and multiplex landscapes of media, media history and media culture in Turkey.

Thanks to the consequent management and leadership of Tonguç Ibrahim Sezen, who oversaw the work as the local managing editor for this country-related issue of deScripto, the students, mostly now working in the stages of diploma or doctoral theses in the area of media communication and journalism and for that trained in research and reporting, did reliable research and decided upon themes and reports that can give you a well argued insight to media and media development in Turkey.

We also have some changes in staff. Under the supervision of the Editor-in-Chief Thomas Bauer who has been, as you know, responsible for this publication from the beginning, the new Executive Editor is Selma Koric. That means, that the cooperation between SEEMO and the University of Vienna on this project continues. Zoran Spahic is now responsible for layout, with his team. Zoran is a person with whom SEEMO has had a great long-term cooperation with in producing different publications, and now he will cooperate with us also on the graphic design of deScripto. Responsible for organising the printing of the publication are Mirjana Zivanovic and Slobodan Polic.

deScripto hopes to continue to contribute to the media-related discussion in the SEEMO region and to help the development of media culture in South East and Central Europe. We will have also, as in the past, reviews of interesting new books and magazines, preview of events and also present what SEEMO is doing in its daily work. What is new is that we start with this edition to have also a presentation of a media company in the region, as also to publish an interview with a person active in the media field.

Olivier Vujovic, Secretary General
South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO)

With this number we start a new series of the deScripto magazine. The idea of the new concept is to work in greater cooperation with local universities, media centres and organisations, media groups and journalist schools in South East and Central Europe. This number was prepared in cooperation with the University of Istanbul.

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Letter from the Publisher

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deScripto
An introduction to the deScripto Turkey Special

By Tonguç Ibrahim Sezen

Turkey is a country with many faces. Located between continents and cultures it is the door to the east and to the west depending from where you are coming. It reflects both cultures. Turkish people share customs with both sides. Politically and ideologically Turkey is unique in many aspects: A democratic, secular country with a dominant Muslim population; a member of the global society and global economics. Yet Turkey is not free from problems. The EU, wars in neighbor countries, ethnic and religious freedom and threats of radicalism are some of many discussions Turkish people face every day. Political awareness has become a major attitude of Turkish people in the recent years. Although they may be against each other, almost every Turk has an opinion on almost every issue which is related to the country. Opinions require knowledge and the main source of knowledge for Turkish people is the Turkish media.

About 30 years ago a military coup affected everything in the country and the media. The changes were expected at the beginning: Limits to freedom of expression, depoliticizing of media. But with the end of 1980s something unexpected happened. The monopoly of the state on TV and radio broadcasting has been lifted. In the following years the economic structure of the media started to change. Cartelization was the new threat on the independence of the media. But with the introduction of the Internet, opposition gained an ally. Today some of the problems from 30 years ago still affect the Turkish media. Also some new problems emerged during these years. On the other hand newspapers, TV and Internet sites play a much more major role in the politics. Thousands gather in demonstrations promoted by a TV channel or a funeral of an assassinated journalist. A newspaper article on a serious crisis in a state in Turkey. Ethnic and minority media is in scope more than ever before. Ordinary people write and film their opinions and share them on the Internet. There is hope and growing energy for the future of the Turkish media.

In this issue you will find different aspects of the Turkish media ecology. The articles were written by students of Istanbul University Communication Faculty. Some of our reporters had long journalism experiences behind them, some on the other hand their first articles as reporters for this issue. All of them worked with passion and spent hours to refine their articles. An Interview with Omer Madra and Jak Kohen from Aks Radio by Miray Capan will give you an interesting view on Turkish independent media. You will learn about media education in Turkey in Ozlem Baskent’s and Basak Kalkan’s articles. They will give you a wider perspective from elementary school to higher education. Democracy in Turkey has always been a big discussion topic. Balzar Muratoglu in her article about Turkey’s own caricature crisis will share the story of a legal battle between caricaturists and the prime minister of Turkey. Didem Sezen on the other hand will explain the background of YouTube banning by Turkish courts. In an article on another media by Ipek Ozarmagan you will learn more about the most popular Turkish wiki. Asuana Karla writes about women’s media in Turkey. Sinem Tian looks into national newspapers and tries to find out what they say about Labor Day. Ayse Bihre Celik concentrates on television. She interviewed with Zalat Alman, the chairman of Turkish Radio Television Supreme Council. Another interview by Balzar Muratoglu tells the story of Agos Newspaper, the newspaper of the late Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink. While our Moldovan reporter Olga Umita shares her experiences in Turkey, Merry Yilmaz asks foreign correspondents about their experiences. Sedat Ozyol focuses on press in his hometown. In a round table discussion, Hakhan Silahsizoglu spoke with experts about European Union and Turkish Media. We also have guest writers in this issue. Academicians from Istanbul University Communication Faculty contributed to our Turkish special with their articles. You can read articles of Prof.Dr.Suat Grazin, the dean of the faculty, Assoc.Prof.Dr.Nes Kars the head of the Radio, Television, Film Department, Assoc.Prof.Dr.Ceyhan Kandemir and Assoc.Prof.Dr.Nufilc Temis in this issue.

If you are reading these lines, this can mean four things: First, you are a dedicated deScripto reader; I hope this issue can match the previous issues. Second, you are interested in Turkey and Turkish media; I hope you find our reporters’ articles on Turkish media satisfying and objective. Third, you are both; well, as experts you might points to add, please write to our mailbox. Fourth, you find this issue in a lobby or waiting room and have nothing better to do; don’t worry you are spending your time very effectively.

The Challenge of Transition and Globalisation

By Thomas A. Raiser

Analysis the impact of journalism on society always demands to consider conditions of journalism whether they be social, political, cultural, and or the symbolic environment. With regard to this mutually influential relationship, there has always been the temptation to describe or to analyse structural network in order to interpret the conditions of power - mostly through figures, dates and facts. These descriptions and analyses follow the idea that quantities assert and reveal connections, causalities and correlations. Maybe they do, but they do it under the condition of a culturally (meaningfully) hidden promise: any consideration is a cultural approximation to a phenomenon and is done in the interest of affirmation of cultural mandatory horizons. That’s the reason why the analytical description of any considerable correlation demands the declaration in the interest of enlightenment: so even the description of structural phenomena is a cultural narration on the basis of interpreting consideration.

General Remarks:

This initial deliberation, done in respect of the challenging conditions for journalism development in post-socialist countries such as Turkey, invites us to focus immediately on culture. This focus falls particularly on journalistic culture as a hybrid world, where political events, gestures, attitudes, patterns, and values meet public observation, and public observation across system structures and political conditions. Out of respect to that starting position it does not make much sense to reanalyze structures (e.g. organisational structures of media, programme output, organisational input, law, legislation, economic situation etc.) but much more insight and understanding (in the sense of applied social studies) would be gained by focusing on the cultural components of media culture in transition countries.

The reason is: The challenging conditions for media development in transition societies (including journalism education and training) is not the development or the establishment of all the structures that are indispensable for the organisation of democracy, but shape up to be problems of culture and mind. There are enough sources and resources within these societies: knowledge, experience, external support and possibilities. The main question is how the administration, organisations, institutions, media companies, and public opinion deal with all these structural conditions. The same interpretation counts for journalism education. The challenging conditions, since they are cultural ones, do not touch the possibilities of developing structures for educational systems in the country. It would not be a problem to overtake or to copy successful systems from all over the world, but it is the right and also the responsibility of a society to develop its own structures in order to represent its own authentic culture, especially within the media system.

It is the cultural rationality of communication that serves as the source (the “reservoir of diversity”) to manage conflicts and crises. That seems generally to be an important point of reference in handling transition and dealing with the multiple conflicts within and between the countries in South East Europe. Crises usually come up in processes, when it is not clear enough which criteria are the deciding lines to be followed, often when there are different interests to be realised or served. In that situation it is helpful to have a background-culture which is wider and its leading criteria more integrative than the actual interesting. There is no other legitimised direction for operation of communication potentials in case of conflict and crisis but cultural programmes, which keeps the archive of values of mutual understanding. But it works only if it is in general use. Culture, which if not in everyday use is not culture, it is just a decoration in a case of need. A decoration, taken to serve the case of need, does not represent enough depth, not enough credibility, not enough objectivity, in order to compensate for uncertainty.

Since Turkey is going through a transitional passage, crises are, as a matter of course, issues of communication. They depict, what communication is like: a re-construction of sense, negotiated by exchange of information and by sharing a decision. This is not a mechanism which just has to be helped along it is a subjective performance of competence in differentiation and decision, and of being able to pay attention to the other out of a clear (and transparent) starting position of one’s own. The panic, which often comes up in critical or decisive situations, often happens because of the fact, that the hidden interest or hidden agenda is not compatible to the cultural
Continued

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stood as a challenge of culture.

Shaping Journalism Culture:
Generally, spoken culture is a social prac-
tice in generating meaning and in referring
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It was not really expected that globalisa-

Journalism Culture is, in relation to the
general definition of culture, the every-
day usage of values of relations between
journalism and politics, audience, media
executives and leaders. Journalism culture is a culture of relations, it does not exist for
itself and by itself, but emerges out of the
communicative and medial use of the social
(political) environment. It always and everywhere reflects the social and the
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SEEMO has several international and national governmental organisations and institutions as project partners, like the Austrian Development Agency – Austrian Development Cooperation, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, and the Central European Initiative (CEI). SEEMO has an ongoing project cooperation with a number of foundations, universities, media schools and media companies. Over the past few years, SEEMO has coordinated several media monitoring projects in South East and Central Europe and has also organised several pieces of media research.

SEEMO started, together with the German WAZ Medien Gruppe and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), the South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMF). Since 2003, the South East Europe Media Handbook (well known to everyone as Europe Media Handbook) is published under the name “SEEMO – IPI Report”.

In May 2002, Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalist Željko Kordić was awarded the Dr. Erhard Busek award by SEEMO at the World Press Council in Vienna. The award was given to Željko Kordić, a journalist and the fighter for human rights and freedom, for his efforts on promoting peace and democracy in the Western Balkans. The jury based its decision on Željko Kordić’s contribution to the human rights struggle in the region. Željko Kordić was awarded for his work as a journalist, writer and human rights defender. SEEMO also nominated several leading journalists from the region for important international awards.

Since 2003, the South East Europe Media Handbook (SEREM), an annual publication covering media developments in SEE, which includes selected media contents, has also been published. From 2008, the book is published under the name “South East and Central Europe Media Handbook” (well known to everyone as the SEEMO Handbook for South East Europe in 2008). The Media Handbook includes media reports and detailed profiles of selected radio and TV stations, newspapers, magazines, media organisations, media schools, journalists’ organisations, and Internet service providers and other new media from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Bulgaria. SEEMO publishes this book yearly in cooperation with its partners, and since 2008 the partners are the Centre for Demokratia Foundation from Sofia.

Next to these publications, SEEMO has published several books in the English language, such as Media and Minorities in South East Europe or the Handbuch für Investigativer Reportagen in South East Europe. But SEEMO also publishes in local languages in the region, for example, the publication Istorijske novine novine i Biznes, the Definice – Istragovno Ucenje u JIJE, Mediaservis, Obiteljski Radio and NCL (Nacional Zrakalo). SEEMO is also co-publisher of different books covering media topics. On “Media and PE” and a book on Media. Marketing and Branding in South East Europe. Furthermore, publications on “Media in the Balkans” and “Mediaservis are in planning. SEEMO started also a regional research about Women, Men and Media.

SEEMO awards prizes for outstanding achievements in the field of media. The recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in 2002 was Croatian journalist Denis Latin, for his TV show `Lavina’ (HTV). The 2005 Award was given to Kemal Kasprlak, former Editor-in-Chief of the Bosnian daily Oslobodjenje. He and his team managed to publish during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Oslobodjenje every day in the besieged city of Sarajevo. In 2006 this was awarded to Branica Petkovic from the Ljubljana-based Peace Institute. In 2006 Danilo Peškic, international relations columnist, for the Croatian daily newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija from Split, received the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding. Peškic is also the author of several books analysing media, such as Information is Communication (1998), Towards the Civilisation of Mobile Text (1984) and The Practice of Ethical Journalism (2004). Peškic has also published a number of books on politics, the European Union and the Balkans amongst others. Soon his two new books, The Right to Self-Meaning and The Fortune of disharmony, will be published. The Fortune of disharmony, the first piece of work, was written in 2003-2005, as a journalist, editor and writer for human rights, radio and television in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second piece, in 2006, the Award for Promotion in South East Europe.

In 2007 SEEMO decided together with CEI to start an annual competition in Investigative Journalism with a prize of 1,000 EUR. This Award was given in 2007 to Dragi Hedl from Croatia. The jury based its decision on the integrity and personal courage demonstrated by Hedl in carrying out his work on war crimes committed against civilians in the eastern city of Osijek. In 1991, according to the jury, “writing about war crimes is not something that makes a journalist popular.” Since 2008 SEEMO has also awarded the prize for Best Photography in the Human Rights Field. The first winner of this award (2008) was Maja Zlatkovic (Dinamik, Skopje), for the photographs “Zlatina”, “War and the East,” a contribution to the human rights struggle in the region. A certificate of recognition of the SEEMO Award was delivered to Marko Djurica (Blic, Beograd). For his photos “Lutjaja” (Lutjaja).

SEEMO also nominated several leading journalists from the region for important international awards. In May 2002, Bosnian-Herzegovinian journalist Željko Kordić was awarded the Dr. Erhard Busek award by SEEMO at the World Press Council in Vienna. The award was given to Željko Kordić, a journalist and the fighter for human rights and freedom, for his efforts on promoting peace and democracy in the Western Balkans. The jury based its decision on Željko Kordić’s contribution to the human rights struggle in the region. Željko Kordić was awarded for his work as a journalist, writer and human rights defender. SEEMO also nominated several leading journalists from the region for important international awards.

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EU: To Be or Not To Be - Turkish Media and The European Union

Our reporter Hakan Silahsizoglu talked with the Cumhuriyet newspaper Editor-in-Chief Mehmet Sucu, European studies researcher Melih Ozturk, writer of the book “European Lie” Tamer Cerci and Zeynep Orhan from the Economic Development Foundation about the EU and Turkish media in a round table discussion.

Hakan Silahsizoglu (HS): For a start I would like ask you your opinions on the EU’s media politics on Turkey?

Mehmet Sucu (MS): European media, actually we should call it Western media, is the only source that we get news from. Because of that I sometimes have doubts about their authenticity. As far as I know there is no big difference between Turkish Media and European Media in terms of the structure of it. The only difference could be the number of newspapers that has opinion journalism. But I also believe that we are far ahead in terms of technology. We started to work with computers before they did. Actually I have known couple of my friends who work at different newspapers and they have been to England and Germany to train their colleagues about the technology we use today. We are always one step ahead on technology. I also would like to mention some other information about Turkish media. The very first newspaper in the world which was printed in two different locations at the same time was in Turkey. Again the very first offset printing in Europe happened in Turkey. The first newspaper which was published by computers was in Turkey and surprisingly that was a local newspaper. We have something in common though, we are all under the pressure of holding companies. On top of that in Turkey, we the journalists have more duty to do because we have different headlines stories everyday and it can change up to 4-5 times in a day. But for example Swedish journalists could go on a story for a month. We still live in the same apartments, pull and push each other and love each other. There is a structure like that and we also have a traumatic approach to the subject. Honestly I could tolerate because of the things we have been through. This country had 5 wars from 1911 to 1923; First and Second Balkan Wars, First World War, Dardanelles War, Independence War... They may seem already history but it affects the society. On top of that I have to say there is no difference between Turkish or Western Media. We are observing that as journalists and we also have a structure like that.

Tamer Cerçi (TC): I would like to add something to that. On the one hand the European media made their process all the way in the history, especially after WW2, the UN’s active role and then the EU’s constitution. On the other hand, we are going ahead of Europe in technology. Even opinion journalism has made a great move in Turkey. If we look at the past, what we have been talking for the last five years we could surely see that Turkish Press has made a great improvement on different opinions and voices. I would like to tell you about some of the matters that keep suspense to EU. The first is the opposition of West and East, and the opinions about orientation that came in the 18th Century and commonly spread to European intellectuals and colleagues. Second of all, nobody is innocent, neither the Turkish Media nor the European Media. There are certain things that we say, which otherwise we don’t want to judge without any reason. Most of the countries are passing through that process so financial capital and globalization are drawing the route for press now. We will come to that later on but the European Press has no clue on some certain issues.

We could count “new poverty” on that which is brought about by Western culture. Our sociologists carried out some research on that subject too. However we can not see any news about new poverty in Turkish Media or the Western Media. When those people are on the news? When they burn Paris streets or when three Germans have a connection with EI – Kaide... Because our only source is the Western Media therefore that goes to “we” and “them”, orientalism, othering, some people’s heathen mentality... Societies carry genetic codes, we have that too, and it could be traced back to the Crusades. It is always the same. That’s why there is no information flow between EU citizens and EU candidate countries’ citizens. No doubt that helps politicians in Turkey and abroad and gives them an open cheque. I was born in Berlin. I assure you that you can not see the style of today’s foreign news on any newspaper of the 1970’s and 1980’s. There is extreme chauvinism. We are observing that as journalists. In every 6 months we are trapped by the European Summits as it was organised for the first and last time. I have come across that since 1989 from Istanbul, via the Economic Development Foundation (IKV), we have followed it together, it’s not the end of the world. Even if there is good news it’s not like we won our independence in the war. We still live in the same apartments, pull and push each other and love each other. There is a structure like that and we also have a traumatic approach to the subject. Honestly I could tolerate because of the things we have been through. This country had 5 wars from 1911 to 1923; First and Second Balkan Wars, First World War, Dardanelles War, Independence War... They may seem already history but it affects the society. On top of that I have to say there is no difference between Turks or Western Media. I would like to stop therefore now for this question.

MS: I think all the newspapers are supporting the EU in Turkey, from Cumhuriyet Newspaper to Zaman newspaper, all are sup-
I think about Turkish Media on that matter as well as European sentiment. In 2001, when we had the economic crisis, media’s support to Turkey is playing a critical role on the matter. It is the closest to the public. On the same survey the EU asked to the middle aged people about what they think about Turkey’s EU journey. The journalism in your country is so easy. You have got a matter and you come here to teach us media ethics. That is the biggest problem in Turkey. Turkish media is giving up on the matter. Therefore however good the process you have done for one side only there wouldn’t be any other voices in media.

Zeynep Ozler (ZO): I would like to add something to that. If we ask EU citizens about their future and what they think about it there wouldn’t be an answer. In 1960-70’s there was a perfect social education idea. Now, there is none and everything is left to the markets. That is brought to us by globalisation. That is the future.

MS: Social government understanding is used in the EU constituencies almost 20 times. However, financial politics words are used for 300 or 400 times.

TC: If I take you to Kronberg, Germany; and ask unemployed or middle aged people about what they think about Turkey’s EU journey you can not get over prejudgement about Turkey or the Middle East. Before there were unions and political parties from different sights. They were balancing the society somehow. It is tried to be done like there is no problem in Europe now but actually there are some social problems in the EU too. Therefore if you ask a black immigrant in Warsaw what Turkey means for EU what he could say, the EU is also having a trauma and worse than what everybody thinks.

MS: There are also others there.

MO: Let’s suppose Turkey has done everything on the way to EU membership and get prepared very well on technical issues too. In the end, one morning we will see EU citizens going to vote YES or NO for Turkey. Therefore however good the process you have done is you still have to make every individual EU citizen happy too. I don’t mean the press should be the only actor but definitely we have to have a communication strategy to introduce Turkey better. The all sides, NGOs, press, universities, the public, and private sector must work hard. Obviously the press is the one which is closest to the public. On the other hand the EU is the closest to the public in Austria that is what is most trusted foundation and answer to that is The Press with 62%. Just notice that with 54% but let’s remind ourselves that support for Turkey is only 8%. It’s not only about numbers but it always stays on a macro level. There are 35 subjects for the negotiations but only 3 or 4 of them brought to the society to discuss so far.

MS: I think on some matters the EU is not fair. Istanbul is the capital of culture for Europe in 2010. I wish you had seen what the press agency sent to their countries to introduce Turkey. You would be shocked. Including Reuters, Associated Press used unbecolorable pictures, showing head scarfed women, dirty sea and valleys. Is that the only Istanbul? I believe that was done on purpose.

MO: I think that is kind of learning and teaching process. We have to tell Turkish citizens about what they will benefit from and what they have to stop doing when they join the EU. Because of that as IVK we have started to work with kids, and what they think about the EU. We never worked one sided, just wanted to make sure they are aware of things.

HS: I would like to move on to a very special question. Since the EU start- ed as the European Coal and Steel Community and moved onto European Economic Community (EEC), or ‘Common Market’ and with its latest structure as European Union, do you think that Turkish media was able to give the process by step by step and un- dertand and tell Turkish citizen what was going on?

TC: Actually when an ordinary Turkish citizen has the right to vote for EU, we will then have less problems and everything will get easier. I think Mr. Suatu is talking about that. I always say that today’s complacency is not a cheap price to be paid by the politicians only. We have to be very careful. There was a good expression which IVK announced for Customs Union: “EU is a community project”. It’s not only about two ministers going back and forth or the meetings between the Commission. So we have to leave that to society. We must make our own internal political processes or even 50 years later, we could. It may be so important for persons individually to join EU as early as we could but time is not that important for so- ciety if you think about its future. Why are we acting like we are in a hurry, why should we go so slow? Let’s argue about the matters within the society including globalization and imperialism. There is also something missing. Turkey is making some progress on eco- nomic performance, maybe not practically but at least on the doc- ument, where is my free travel right within EU? There are many European companies and citizens coming and living in Turkey, why should I not have a right to travel freely as a journalist? Also on the Cyprus matter, people who voted in 1974 are now in their 70’s. If the EU keeps trying to bring Cyprus to the table for Turkey what they would think when Cyprus War Veterans are still around us?

ZO: I would like to add something to Mr. Cetin’s words. We as IVK always said that EU is a community project. What is more from the Administrations, since Ataturk, we think that the EU is the gov- ernment’s goal to reach. Turkey has always looked towards the West, so far from all the political correctness it is indeed a government goal. When we talk about society’s transformation, that should come down to micro level, which means the ordinary citizen on the street should be aware what the EU will bring to her/him. At least there should be an image in their heads but it always stays on a macro level. There are 35 subjects for the negotiations but only 3 or 4 of them brought to the society to discuss so far.
Roads that were once closed are now open for business. For instance, we put two books of Orhan Pamuk. We could even say that they like this idea so much they may even only come for the books.

HS: How do you find the EU’s presentation in Turkey in terms of TV programmes and other activities?

TC: There are some programmes on TV about the EU. On the one hand, there is an advantage to talk about projects etc. On the other hand, we have to be careful. For instance agriculture is an important subject which has been open to manipulation in recent years. So we should tell the consumers what the new regulations will bring them. Fishing, environment, iron and steel are so important for us. If we are planning to discuss something about economic and social life we should definitely bring together the economic and social council. There are 35 subjects which will be opened and discussed. That is good. However there are some dangers too. We must be aware of that. I don’t mean we have to refuse all the changes the EU asks for. If we know what we are doing and strong then we could give them a hard time also. This is how diplomacy works. If you think about the manipulations which have been made on agriculture it’s creepy.

MS: Can I ask something? You say there has been a good process on the press but how about the quality and truthness of the news?

MS: Columnists become reporters nowadays. I think it’s not perfect anywhere else in Europe either. There is always a manipulation from Istanbul. We have a good media programme we don’t get any benefit because of some political changes. A lot of newspapers have all these offices there but the thing is we don’t have coordination from European or Brussels. There are participants from the EU Commission. At the end of each one we are giving away a set of books which have been written by historians about Turkey as well as novels. We have a huge demand for these. Sometimes we run out of books even.

MS: For instance we put two books of Orhan Pamuk. We could even say that they like this idea so much they may even only come for the books.

MS: We do need to promote Turkey. They still think that we are all wearing shadowers. We need to show our cultural and scientific sides also.

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ZK: As IK we have published some documents on five different sectors. What the people demand in Turkey or what rules will change, etc.

TC: I think what we need to do is we should leave that trauma situation. We should be ready with a good preparation and it could change at negotiations.

MS: We don’t have to be fully ready before we get the full membership but because Turkish companies export goods to the EU and they have to keep being in the competition.

HS: Do you think there are different views in the media for the EU? Is the subject of the EU system fair-minded?

MS: I believe there is no such thing. Some writers may have a different opinion on the matter. As I said before, all the newspapers are supporting Turkey’s EU journey. Also people themselves outside of Europe, remember any football match with European teams. People shout as “Europe Europe hear us”. That’s also a kind of protest here too.

HS: What happens if Turkey becomes a member of the EU? What kind of changes, negative or positive may happen?

MS: I don’t think there would be any change.

ZK: I believe some rules would change. Diversity, European values are important.

HS: When do you think Turkey is going to join the EU? How much time would it take for Turkey to join the club? 

MS: We can present ourselves better with better coordination. On top of that we should not expect a Belgian citizen to read a book about Turkey. That would be a luxury but if we are presentable there and show what we look like then it could be different.

ZK: We are organising some seminars in Brussels as I know they are called Windows to Turkey. There are participants from the EU Commission. At the end of each one we are giving away a set of books which have been written by historians about Turkey as well as novels. We have a huge demand for these. Sometimes we run out of books even.

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HS: When do you think Turkey is going to join the EU? How much time would it take for Turkey to join the club?
I don’t have any family bounds with Turkey. I’ve never visited Turkey before. I started to work here by chance. I was curious. I wanted to work in the Middle-East. There was an opportunity to work here. Before I moved here I came here for six months and I fell in love with Istanbul. Then I went back to France and I met with professors, artists and writers who had good knowledge about Turkey. It’s been three and a half years since I’ve started working here.

I write about everything. I write about football, politics, archaeology, etc. I write about all of the sections in a newspaper. They don’t have the same journalism culture in Turkey. There are big media groups. Newspapers are very polarised and they make political campaigns. They are very subjective. In France even though there is a big difference between Le Monde and Le Figaro, you can’t differ them on foreign political subjects; especially on Turkey.

Even though there is a progress, there are still lots of problems about freedom of press in Turkey. It is as simple as that. I find freedom of press in Turkey better than few years ago. I know some of journalists who have been assassinated. I am aware of organised crime’s pressure on journalists in Turkey. Article 301 is an obstacle for freedom of press. Of course, there has to be a limit between criticism and insult. Government uses the official ideology as a pressure device. The other danger beside that is monopolisation of media in Turkey. Some of them are against the government, some of them are pro-government. It is as simple as that.

I find Milliyet better than before. I read Radikal, sometimes Vatan and Hurriyat as well. I glance over Taraf and Birgin. I speak Turkish so it is easy for me to follow Turkish press. But for the other foreign correspondents there are not enough sources to follow Turkish press in any other language. Turkish Daily News is late. Sometimes I read Today’s Zaman but I find it problematic. They don’t write about the subjects that Turkey should discuss. There should be more Turkish press in other languages or correspondents should learn Turkish!

Working in Turkey is comfortable for me, but it is still hard to work in the South-East of Turkey. I know that. A few years ago, I stayed in a police station for a day. It wasn’t a probation. I was there for a report. Other than that I didn’t face any major problems.
I compare Turkish media with British media. I find the Turkish press is very aggressive, and Turkish press is relatively free. I observed two distinct camps. There are secularist newspapers and there are religious newspapers. Media in Turkey is polarized because of sectarian discussions. Ideology is still strong in Turkey. However, ideology is broken down in England. Australian-American global media mogul Rupert Murdoch has a big power in England. I observed the same strategies with Dogan Media Group in Turkey.

I can’t read Turkish Press so I try to follow news in English by Turkish Media. But I know Taraf newspaper is a courageous journalist example. I read Turkish Daily News, Today’s Zaman. I had gone through really hard times in Iran, so now I’m relieved in Turkey.

Turkey is easy to work in. The English language is easy to use and you have access to English language press everywhere. Turkey has a relatively open society. So that is enabling my job. I’ve been here only for seven weeks but Istanbul is easy to live in.

Delphine NERBOLLIER (LE SOIR, LE CROIX, LES TEMPS – BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND)
Taksim Kafkis Cafe, ISTANBUL

I started to work in Turkey a little by chance. Actualité Européenne had offered me to work in Turkey about four years ago. That was the time when European Union negotiations had started. I worked here for one month then two... Now it has been four years since I started to work in Istanbul. I have no bounds with Turkey. There are a lot of francophone activities in Turkey that I can write.

In general, I write about internal politics. I write about the Kurdish issue, because there is a lot of Kurdish people in Belgium and in Switzerland. Also in Europe, people are really interested about Turkish people’s opinions towards the European Union. I write for France as well. Since there are a lot of Armenian people in France, I write about Armenian issues in Turkey. AKE DTI role of the army in Turkey; these are my main subjects. Besides, I work for Radio Union Paris. It’s based in Lebanon. There, I discuss Turkey’s role in the Middle-East. There are not many things to write about wars and culture. They don’t pay that much attention to subjects which is related to arts and culture. Sometimes I write about economics.

I’m a French citizen. I work for Swiss and Belgium media as well. I follow French media with French media of course, there are major differences. In Turkey, there are a lot of national newspapers. I set them as newspapers of opinions. You can reach every kind of opinion. But they all have the exact information. But in France there are fewer newspapers but you learn different information. I appreciate visual media in Turkey. You reach information from the source live by channels like NTN and CNN TURK. I find Radikal and Milliyet moderately balanced. But there is no equivalent of Le Monde in Turkey. Basically you can write about everything in Turkey. However, there are limits in political and economical subjects. Journalists feel the pressure. There are taboos. In France or in Belgium the army isn’t a big part of the country. In Turkey, even a casual tourist might be accused. National service is a very sensitive issue in Turkey. As everybody knows, there is a big difference on freedom of press between Turkey and Europe. A country should protect their institutions, but in Turkey I find them over-protected by the government.

I read Milliyet, Radikal, Taraf, Zaman and sometimes Cumhuriyet. I don’t buy newspapers everyday so I follow them via the internet. Freedom of the press in Turkey relies on big media groups and they see press as it is commerce. It is hard to be independent as a journalist.

I had no problems in Turkey while I was working. It was easy to have work permit. Also, I had nice relationships with the Turkish people that I meet. They like to talk to me. I always work alone. Last year, I went to Sennik and I had smooth conversations with the local people. I’ve visited Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Ceyhan, Samsun and Trabzon for different reasons. They were really nice experiences for me. It takes a lot of time to have a permit to talk with administrative organisations in France. However, Turkish deputies are easy to talk to if you don’t have a language problem. Journalists are more accessible to make interviews according to people who work for television. Therefore, I find myself lucky. Besides, I can speak Turkish so it’s an advantage for me when talking with local people. I have a friend who works in Moscow and my friend says that it’s hard to communicate with the people there because they are really reclusive. I’m planning to continue my work in Turkey.

Names you should know in Turkish media

By decripto

I think you should know about the following Turkish newspapers in English.

**Anadolu Agency (Anadolu Ajansı)**

It was founded in 1920, the biggest news agency of Turkey. Has 28 regional offices in Turkey and 22 bureaux in foreign countries. Publishes news, video, photo, economic news, special reports and magazines. It is the largest news agency in the Middle East.

**Arkaplak**

The oldest newspaper in Turkey. A daily newspaper with a conservative and Kemalist orientation.

**Cumhuriyet**

The biggest newspaper in Turkey. It has the largest circulation in Turkey. It is a leading political newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Duvar**

An alternative newspaper in Turkey. It was founded by journalist Mustafa Demirci in 2013.

**Hürriyat**

A newspaper in Turkey. It was founded in 1998 by journalist Bahçeşevler. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Kürtçe Gazeteler**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Milliyet**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Radikal**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Today’s Zaman**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Vakit**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Yeni Asya**

A newspaper in Turkey. It is one of the leading newspapers in Turkey. It is a leading newspaper in Turkey and one of the leading newspapers in the world. It is published every day in English and Turkish.

**Yeni Safak**

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Language Policy in the Turkish Media

By Nâsil Tıraş
Associate Prof.Dr. Istanbul University Communications Faculty

In the constitution of collective identities, the role of means of communication is as significant as formal education. Benedict Anderson, when he said “nation is an imagined community,” certainly had in mind the idea of communication such as the printing press, as one of the prime factors in the creation of a national consciousness. According to him, what makes new types of community-imaginable closely related with the common meta-language and the state of commonness built around the narrative of that meta-language. Newspapers have created communities who have no chance to come together but feel moving in the same direction and lead parallel lives. In this respect, the perception that makes up the collective of “we” is not intrinsic to the group but to the narrative of the group. We can say that our sense of identity does not originate from us defining ourselves through a particular group but from the way in which we perceive the definition of group, public and private lives as a dynamic one under the influence of peoples’ experiences through time and space.

In the history of Turkish modernisation broadcasting institutions have contributed significantly to the construction of a national culture. In this context, TRT, Turkish Radio and Television organisation, is not only the original actor but also the key to the identification and definition of national culture. It can be argued that TRT is the cement of the mosaic which is frequently referred to as the main metaphor describing the way in which Turkish national identity integrate the differences. In fact, TRT has functioned as a kind of latent category integrating the differences. In one of the Turkish sociologist’s talk, TRT has also shouldered the ideological function to disseminate the official ideology of the state besides its overt role of modernisation and development. Setting aside the changing political stance depending on the current government’s status and consequent changes in the content of programming, TRT has always sided with the dominant ideology prevailing in society and thus structured its broadcasting policies. The dominant ideology can be identified with the Turkish state’s motto “one state, one nation, one homeland,” and TRT’s expected function is shaped as that of socially responsible public broadcasting. Such a policy does not only aim at educating and furthering the culture of its audience, but also aims to turn them into good (loyal) citizens. In this picture it would be reasonable to imagine the state as the symbolic totality of a giant community designed and constituted from top to down. Citizen, on the other hand, is understood as the special type of subject of the state who, as a public and private lives, detaches himself from the traditions, oldness, Easternness, etc. and adopts the definition of secular, modern, Western individual. This same subject is also considered to have left racial and ethnic differences, and differences originating from social classes completely behind. TRT addressing this imaginary and mostly utopian subject defines itself as a meta-states embracer which is not ethnic and linguistic differences, or religious, language, religious sect, gender, etc. citing “Atatürk’s principles” in its entire legal documents, i.e., laws, by-laws as well as in its programmes as subtitles. It is true that in the construction of national identity TRT has taken on a significant role, yet this role precisely due to it being “meta” cannot be considered today as natural—neither correct nor incorrect.

Process of Privatisation

Turkey’s integration to the globalised world has brought to the agenda the meeting of cultural differences among many cultures since the 1980s. One might call this situation a traumatic state of realisation of the fact that Turkey is not composed of a single identity as the motto of “one nation” stated. It would be absurd to think that the field of broadcasting would remain immune to this situation. In this field major structural changes have taken place. The trauma had many faces such as decentralisation, free-market economy, freedom of expressions and it had found its counterpart in the field of jurisdiction since Turkey’s passage to private broadcasting has been a traumatic experience as well.

The first private channel aired its programmes in 1990 illegally and the law makers had to adjust country’s legal (constitutional) structure after the event in 1993. As if this was not enough, the owner of the private television channel was the son of the then Prime Minister, Turgut Özal. It was only after a year following the constitutional change that took place in 1993 that the parliament was able to pass a law regulating the establishment and broadcasting of radio and television institutions (Law no. 3984). This legal arrangement instituted the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) which was given the role to take over by-laws and regulations of control of broadcasting content and the distribution of frequencies. The new legislation has abolished TRT’s broadcasting monopoly and privatised the broadcasting sector. Now the media market is a profitable field open to investors.

It is possible to read privatisation as a pluralising decision leading to the emergence of broadcast institutions with different ideological positions. In fact, following privatisation act, there emerged numerous broadcasting companies who identify themselves with various political positions. Among these one can count liberal, conservative, nationalist, and leftist. As well as institution of Turkish National Programme channels which attract particular attention. The presence of a pluralistic communication structure has proven very important for the audiences. This change meant leaving behind the notion of a monolithic audience who were, as it is widely referred, “enframed” so to TRT. The new audience of pluralist broadcasting structure is thoroughly fragmented on the basis of the political and cultural preferences of the audiences themselves.

Besides the national channels and stations a great number of local and regional broadcasting institutions constitute an important parameter toward understanding the transformation experienced in Turkey’s communication history. Because their emergence has brought to the agenda the meeting of cultural differences among many cultures, Turkish on the other hand is still privileged by being the official language and mother tongue.

The situation of the minorities and minority languages deserves special attention within the context. There are two types of minorities in Turkey. Firstly, there are the minorities whose status is officially recognised under the Lausanne Treaty. Greek (Rum), Armenian, and Jewish people fall in this category and their rights to receive education and broadcast programmes in their mother tongue as well as fulful religious duties are guaranteed by the Lausanne Treaty. Second, there are these groups for whom there are no guarantees for the recognition of their rights, cultural or otherwise, which have been curiously absent in the dominant culture. Such demands led to the liberation of the limits of negotiation for all the actors involved in the power reorganisation of the field of culture. For instance, religious, ethnic, and sectarian identities caused the existing regulatory structure of the field of communication to be questioned and chal- lenged very strangely. On top of all these, the process of accession to the European Union has become another force field with regard to the recognition of the local identities in Turkey. As the colloquial jargon constantly reiterates, the “conditions” of TRT’s expected function as that of “promoting cultural diversity” is forcing the governments in the areas of rights of education and broadcasting in one’s mother tongue. Such internal dynamics and external forces can be seen as factors contributing to the policy making process involving the recognition of local identities in Turkey.

Changing Language Policy in Broadcasting

The language policy of Republic of Turkey relies on the recognition of Turkish as the official language. There is no doubt that the domination of Turkish over the public sphere has a lot to do with the definition of nation involving language as one of the prime criteria. While on the one hand the notion of nation is taken as the totally dominating eth- nic and linguistic differences, Turkish on the other hand is still privileged by being the official language and mother tongue.

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To disregard a language, deny its very existence, and apply limitations on its free usage is certainly matters of political resistance for at least three important reasons. First and foremost, such policies mean establishing hierarchies between the groups of ethnic and linguistic communities in a country. But such a decision should not be extended to the domains of education and culture. The contrary policy based on recognition and facilitation of educational and cultural rights on the part of ethnic and linguistic groups would strengthen such groups’ commitments to their country’s citizenship. Secondly, obsessions about the use of a language would mean a serious offence against human rights. It is very well known, free access and use of a language is a fundamental human right since language is not a value at one’s will nor is it a commodity to be owned. Lastly, languages are considered as the common cultural heritage of a nation. Protection of this heritage is sanctioned by the international community, in various documents issued by the UN and the EU. For these reasons protecting languages and ethnic groups who speak these languages is perceived in terms of “national identity”, “national sovereignty”, and, most importantly, “national security” issue. Obviously, parties joining in the discussion are offering arguments in lieu with their general ideological positions.

Therefore, the placement of Kurdish within the field of broadcasting institutionally is a right that every person shall be able to exercise. As it is known, free access and use of a language is a fundamental human right since language is not a value at one’s will nor is it a commodity to be owned. Lastly, languages are considered as the common cultural heritage of a nation. Protection of this heritage is sanctioned by the international community, in various documents issued by the UN and EU. For these reasons protecting languages and ethnic groups who speak these languages is perceived in terms of “national identity”, “national sovereignty”, and, most importantly, “national security” issue. Furthermore, parties joining in the discussion are offering arguments in lieu with their general ideological positions.

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TRT, as mentioned above, seems to be caught up between the binary opposition due to the heavy task put on its agenda. On the one hand, there is Turkey’s ages old “Kurdish problem” and on the other, there is the new understanding of liberal language (and cultural) policies. Here, TRT is being criticized heavily for handling the task of broadcasting in languages other than Turkish with a second agenda in its mind, namely, controlling the process of liberalisation. It is, without doubt, true that as a state organ, TRT cannot be expected to act like a private channel. The problem is, however, that there is not a large enough number of private channels with a satisfying technical capacity to lose the task on national level. So, TRT has to carry it along by itself at least for the time being. The good thing is that broadcasting in languages other than Turkish is a cultural act and therefore it is out in the open for anyone to see and criticize. What this means is that no matter how satisfactory TRT’s broadcasting policies have been, by the very fact that they are in effect, they can be modified toward a more functional state. In other words, it is better to have TRT to carry out this task rather than not! What can be taken as an optimistic side in all these conflicting situations involving ethnic violence is that language is not an ordinary political issue. It cannot be generated or destroyed at will. Currently we observe a negative tendency shaping TRT policies. Policy makers seem to think they are allowing broadcasting in, say, Kurdish, they will have a high hand in controlling the ethnic situation in the country. By Olga Untila

Journalism ’à la Turca’

I t is not just about the fact that journalists in Turkey face an increasing of numbers of journalists obtaining the yellow press pass. After all this, if you are still confused about the question, what it means to be a journalist in Turkey, there is a simple answer which every journalist answers alike: To have a yellow press pass! This card is issued by the state and gives some privileges to its owner. However, the number of potential readers. Press cards are not uncommon around the world. But the fact that the state has the authority to define whom to call a journalist or not can breed discontent and can be understood as a control measure over journalists. Yet the policy is widely accepted here and there is an increasing of numbers of journalists obtaining the yellow press pass.

My dear readers, without going deeply in to the reports, statistics and numbers I tried to draw a picture of media in Turkey, a country which is constantly criticized from outside and discusses issues like freedom of speech and independence of press on the inside. Yet, Turkey manages to grow its media ecology and its importance. And that is to work you don’t write, other news you cannot write” he says. (Kocabay, 2008) Journalist Ragip Duran complains that journalism in the media, (Taskin, 2008) At the same time, journalist Alper Turgut talks about the death of the news agent, “some news you don’t write, other news you cannot write” he says. (Kocabay, 2008) Journalist Rajo Duran complains that journalism has become a job. He says what today’s journalists are doing is only a simple quotation, copying, sometimes exaggerating, but often misleading and hiding of facts. (Durak, 2002) In addition to those native critiques, EU pressure on Turkey about full guarantee of freedom of expression and freedom of press is also a well-known fact among Turkish people. However this pressure changes constantly depending on new law reforms in Turkey. Other critiques I encountered are the claims about close relations between the current government and the media and on the opposite site claims about the relations between a state-within-a-state and the media. As I said before, like the architecture, the claims are also extremely colourful here in Turkey!
I

In the 1980s, as it was the world over, privatisation in Turkey started to grow, thus competition between companies grew. Advertising became important. Both capitalism has become stronger and the effects of media have been understood. The other important event which occurred was changes of media owners. Until that date, media owners were journalists who also owned their newspapers but since then many businessmen from other sectors bought those media companies and media started changing and getting away from its traditional content and structure.

Aafter the military coup in 1980, Turkish media suffered a period of oppression and became largely depoliticised. Many media companies choose a lighter tone and competition for limited advertisement sources supported this decision. In 1983, the Radio Television Council was founded to protect and preserve media ethics in Turkish Radio and Television, which meant that at this time only a few state controlled public broadcasters. In the early 1990s, private radio and television channels were founded. First illegally broadcast from foreign countries, these channels forced laws for private media institutions in Turkey. To regulate broadcast frequencies and protect media ethics, the Radio Television Council was rearranged in 1994, the council took the name of “Radio Television Supreme Council”.

The council’s rights and responsibilities are declared in The Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and Their Broadcasts, No. 3984 and international protocols. The members of Radio Television Supreme Council are elected by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for 6 years. The members select a chairman and an assignee from themselves. The chairmanship duration is 2 years. The members can not be a partner or a director of media companies. The Radio Television Supreme Council has the authority to regulate TV and radio frequencies. The Radio Television Supreme Council has the authority to regulate TV and radio frequencies. This means every TV or Radio channel needs to get permission from the Supreme Council to broadcast in Turkey. The Supreme Council is also responsible for preserving ethics on TV and radio. Law No. 3984 describes a series of ethical broadcasting standards. The Supreme Council is also responsible for advertisement regulations. The council has the authority to warn, impose a monetary penalty, force institutions to broadcast certain content as penalty, stop broadcasting for a certain time up to one year, and take back broadcasting licenses. Regular Supreme Council monitoring and complaints from viewers create data for possible penalties.

The Radio Television Supreme Council is also actively involved in academic research projects on Turkish media, education projects such as media literacy courses for schools and international representation of Turkish media in general.

We spoke with Zahit Akman, the current Chairman of the Supreme Council.

- How effective is the Radio Television Supreme Council on ethics and public good?

Akman: Ethics is really an important topic that has to be thought about, for both broadcasters and the listeners and viewers. The Radio Television Supreme Council and Television Broadcasters Association worked on this together and prepared “Ethic Principles of Broadcasting”, so broadcasters can agree on common ethical approaches. It was signed on 3rd July 2007 and became valid. Also we are preparing a media ethics guide with sector representatives and academics from communication faculties. At the same time, we keep this topic on the public agenda with some seminars, conferences etc.

- What is your position towards self control of TV and radios?

Akman: Because of Law No: 3984, the Radio Television Supreme Council has an incumbency, obligation of controlling TV and radio broadcasting. Apart from that legal incumbency, we consider something else; self-control. We are doing some studies to generalise the self-control, like the “Television Viewer Representative” system. Many television channels have determined their television viewer representatives. Those representatives are like a bridge between broadcasters and television viewers. We share viewer complaints coming to our telephone line, with those television viewer representatives and meet with them to share ideas. In Western countries non-governmental organisations are very effective on broadcasting institutions. We also care about the NGOs and try to see broadcasting from their side. We make suggestions to them so they can provide better content to the public.

- What do you think of the relation between the Radio Television Supreme Council and advertisement agencies?

Akman: Radio Television Supreme Council hasn’t got a legal obligation to provide data to advertisers. But ratings are one of the most important problems for us. Broadcasters, advertisement agencies and advertisement agencies work together on rating data. Especially, advertisers want to know which programmes are mostly watched by the viewers. We don’t do rating measurements. However, in the results we acquire from our public opinion researches, there are some points that concern advertisers. I think they use those results to a maximum profit.

- Your institutions works closely and mostly in collaboration with the government. What do you think about that relationship? What are the negative and positive sides of that situation?

Akman: All over the world there are institutions like the Radio Television Supreme Council, but all of them have different infrastructures. The Radio Television Supreme Council has its own infrastructure. Members of the Radio Television Supreme Council are selected by the Grand National Assembly but the structure of the Supreme Council is autonomous and self governing. Consequently, it is not connected to government but related to the government. The members implement their responsibilities independently, from the moment they were chosen, they would never be forced or directed for something.

- How do the process for content work, which contradicts with the Turkish Constitution and Supreme Council regulations?

Akman: Radio and television are monitored by the Supreme Council very carefully. For content which contradicts the Constitution some reports are written, after that we evaluate those reports and broadcasting copies and if it’s necessary apply some sanctions according to the laws. The Radio Television Supreme Council’s decisions are open to court. So, broadcasters can challenge the results and bring them to the court. After the decision of the court, the sanctions are applied or not.

- What do you think about the future of Turkish media?

Akman: The media sector in our country really has a dynamic structure and is developing very fast. This gives responsibilities to both the Radio Television Supreme Council and broadcasters. The quantity, supported by quality, will both contribute to democracy and the social and cultural needs of our citizens.
A part from the ones in USA and their affiliations in Central and South America, radio stations and TV channels around the world were organised as state owned institutions before the 1980s. Radio and television broadcasting was accepted as being more influential than written media. For this reason, their organisation and operation were not left to free market conditions. Radio and TV have always been centres of governments and other forces due to their power of reaching and affecting masses of people. Freedom in the written media has flourished in parallel to the developments in press technology whereas radio and TV have been treated differently and become devices that are monitored and manipulated by governments.

Radio and TV’s power of influencing and manipulating people makes the ownership of these institutions an important issue. Most countries accept the fact that radio and TV broadcasting should be in the hands of governments. In countries where private ownership is allowed, radio and TV broadcasting is specifically regulated and monitored. Official approval, which is not needed for written media, is given for radio and TV broadcasting.

Global changes in the 1980s have radically changed media of communication and raised the issues of privatisation of state owned media institutions and making regulations that would allow private and commercial institutions to broadcast. These forms are generally referred to as “deregulations”. In Turkey, until 1990, radio and TV broadcasting were monopolised by the state, with an understanding of Statist and socialist state principles. Private commercial broadcasting started as de-facto in 1990 along with similar developments in the rest of the world and was regulated later on. The 1990s could be described as the time when private entrepreneurs set up radio stations and TV channels, which afterwards turned into media corporations that formed an oligopolistic structure.

Having been supported by the deregulating pressures of global capitalism and free market philosophy of liberalism, big capital owners developed an interest in TV broadcasting and competed with each other to set up new stations in order to be pioneers in adapting the whole society to the new world order. In the beginning, radio and TV broadcasting attracted attention from entrepreneurs who had previous experience in written media and wished to transfer this experience to audio-visual media. Written media organisations gradually started radio and TV broadcasting and became integrated with the world of finance. In Turkey, despite an increase in media companies, news companies and magazines, the number of companies has been limited because there are a few big capital groups. As a result, although newspaper readers and TV viewers obtain news through a variety of channels, the message in the news they get is not varied. Mass media communication plays a special role in social systems, economic and political formations. Within the past 18 years, Turkey has got used to multi-channel TV and radio broadcasting, and the images which pass onto us from magnificent places of media corporations have become an indispensable part of our lives. Restructuring of media of communication has brought up another phenomenon: broadcasting organisations are no longer monopolised by governments, instead they are monopolised by private commercial corporations.

In Turkey, mass media is organised around two different ways of thinking: namely liberal and pro-globalisation and nationalist-religious (Islam) ways of thinking. Capital owner groups manipulate them in accordance with their own commercial and political interests and/or benefit from them with the purpose of spreading their philosophies to society.

This study claims that TV corporations’ capital and ownership structures are reflected in their editorial content and have the biggest share in stipulating general and fundamental messages to be given to society.

Analysing which TV broadcasting company is linked to which capital groups and other commercial activities will provide us with an insight into understanding the fact that capital groups have turned into monopolies. To this aim, the first part of the study consists of monopolisation terminology and elements, the second part, capital structures of TV broadcasting corporations in Turkey and the third part, discourse analysis of the editorial content of these corporations. Monopolisation involves expansion, enlargement and merging in order to increase efficiency. In the past, merging took place when financially struck companies were taken over by strong companies, however today strong companies with no financial constraints merge, indicating a monopolisation tendency. Merging has always been a method of expansion for organisations however the number and scale of company merging has peaked in the globalisation era.

The communication sector is powerful and that is why the loci of power try to intensify their monopolistic activities in this area. G. Burton asserts that the dominant characteristic of the media sector are monopolisation, enforcement, vertical merging, incorporations, variety, nationalism, capitalisation, cooperation and production and freedom in distribution (Burton, 1995: 85).

Because the majority of advertising sources are owned by holding companies which also own broadcasting activities, small scale and independent TV stations struggle to survive and finally withdraw from the sector or are taken over by big capital groups. This tendency has started shifting pluralistic and democratic structure.

The communications industry relies on high and sophisticated technology. Therefore the need of money is high. N. Cost says media economy is in contrast with the principles of pluralism and continues explaining why this is so: preliminary costs, high risks, advertising markets, delay of profits and losses necessitate entrepreneurship to depend on big capital groups (Cost, 1992:184). Financial strains caused by external factors make suitable conditions for monopolistic tendencies.

In 2008, there are 18 holding companies owning TV channels in Turkey, eight of which have close relations with the party in government (AKP) and two of which belong to foreign capital groups. All of these companies have commercial activities in construction, tourism, banking and finance as well as TV broadcasting. From among TV stations, those who are operating with in big holding companies with a liberalist and pro-globalisation way of thinking have the biggest advertising shares and ratings.

ALBATRAK GROUP: Besides their construction, industry, and tourism investments, they own a newspaper, a TV station (TVNET News Channel) and an internet news site.

EUROPE, AMERICA HOLDING: Besides banking, construction and service sectors, they own four TV channels (CINE 5, Gala TV, Viva TV, SuperSport) and four radio stations (Radyo 5, Radyo Vira, Radyo Nostalji, Show Radyo).

BAŞKENT UNIVERSITY: Besides hospital, spa hotel, food and oil industry they own a radio (Başkent Radyo) and a TV channel (Kanal B).

CANWEST: Canadian based international media group owns 28 newspapers, 5 magazines and 24 TV channels worldwide. In Turkey they own six radio stations, namely Super FM, Metro FM, Joy FM and Joy Turk. Canwest also has investments in advertising, software and news services.

CİNER GROUP: Having started their commercial activities with automobile spare part production, sales and import, Ciner Group today operates in three sectors: Ciner Energy and Mining, Ciner Media and Ciner Commerce, Industry and Services. In the media sector, Ciner Pri Holding, Ciner Media Investments, Kanal 1, Huber Türk TV and Radio Broadcasting, GD Newspaper & Magazine (Marie Claire, Marie Claire Medya, Avenue, Seventeen, EGM, PC, Empire, Super Alperen, FHM, OK), C Film Production, Ciner Publishing, Ciner Newspaper & Magazine.

ÇİÇEK Holding: They are involved in commercial activities such as construction, energy, textile, finance and trade-logistics. The company which has developed with the AKP government and channelled their investments to media sector after 2007 December is run by the Prime Minister’s son-in-law Media Tatlius Radyo Televisions Communications and Broadcasting, ATV, Radyo City, Sahib, Taktım, Gündaydin, Yeni Aşu, Psa, Fotomaj (newspaper), Beşteğ ve Sinema, Sofa, Home Art, Jamdan Psa, Yeni Akitel, Para, Global Energy, Transpot and Hukuki Perspektif (magazine), Merker Distribution.

ÇUKURÇA HOLLİNS: It owns a company that has direct and indirect investments in finance companies and other companies operating in industry, construction, trade, media, communication, IT technolo- gy, energy, transportation and services sectors. IT Technologies Turku, Kurey Kabra Turku, Gosec, Kecer, AzelCell, MobileCell, Life, Globalbillig, SuperOnline, e-commerce, TelComm, K.V.K., Inta SpaceTurk, Millenium Com, European Telecommunication Holding, Asl, Togo, Internet décor, Hidra, Hobin, AloVatan, bilyoner.com. Media: Akam, Gümüş, Tercem, Alen, Stuff, Plain & World Business, FourFourTwo, AutoCar, Total Film, Maxum, Evre, Digitpark (Comedy Max, Gold Max, Gold Max 2, Dizi Max, Mynam, Movie Max, Movie Max 2, Action Max, Emlas, Show Max, Türk Max, JOJO, Yenil, Akilli TV, TJK TV, IT TV, Lig TV, Intimity, Touch), Show, Show Plus, PC TV, Max, Joy Türk, Lig Radyo, Alem FM, Meşap Media Marketing, Zolrax Media Marketing.

DOĞAN GROUP Holding: Doğan Group companies act in energy, media, industry, trade, tourism and insurance sectors. Doğan Group has large investments in media with seven daily newspapers, national, one international, one newspaper, one magazine. Besides these, there are international partnerships in factoring, distribution companies and various other sectors. Doğan Media owns the following: Media: Newspapers published by Doğan Media Holding (DYH) (Hürriyat, Milliyet, Radikal, Posta, Furanki, Cansu Bekir, Referans, Türkün Daily News), magazines (Chip, PC Net, Level, Elle Decor, Evin, Maison Française, Atlas, Günsel Hukuk,
European Media Award goes to Nedim Hazar

By SEEMO

For his, so far, six-part serial “Turkey on the Move” Nedim Hazar, Director and Producer at NTV receives the 2008 Erasmus EuroMedia Special Award.

The Erasmus EuroMedia Award is a well-known and desired award that is given in Vienna every year to outstanding media productions and programmes that deal with European society, culture, politics, science, and values. The awards have been given by the European Society for Education and Communication (ESEC) in cooperation with the City of Vienna. In this thematic context, the winners are consistent with the educational contribution to the European identity and value discourse.

Through the work of the organisers of the event and the President of ESEC Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer, a total of 250 applications were sent this year and 50 media productions from 16 European countries (as well as Turkey and Russia) qualified for the final. Subsequently, the jury of international experts made their decision on who the winners should be and the split-up of the donation. The winners of the Grand Award, Special Awards and Sponsorship Awards have been selected and presented in a ceremonial event in the City Hall of Vienna on October 10th, 2008.

The Grand Award went to a TV serial on ten Balkan countries, their history, society and culture, called “Balkan Express – Return to Europe”. The serial was produced by Pro TV, an Austrian video production company with long experience in the South East European countries and broadcast by the Austrian Broadcast ORF and SAT this year. One of the three Special Awards went to Nedim Hazar, for his outstanding TV production called “Turkey on the Move”, which was broadcast during summer 2008 by the private Turkish TV broadcasting company NTV and received a large response from the viewers. The Special Awards are given for media productions that concentrate on a delicate but exemplary topic. “Turkey on the Move” does that, as the laudation of the international jury says:

“Turkey is a country in transition, socially, politically and culturally. That makes the country moving and changing. Turkey is a country, or even better, a society on the move, physically, culturally. That makes the country moving and changing. Turkey on the Move” does that, as the laudation of the international jury says:

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“Turkey is a country in transition, socially, politically and culturally. That makes the country moving and changing. Turkey is a country, or even better, a society on the move, physically, socially and culturally and is doing its way in search of its identity not only between the two poles of Kemalism and Islamism, not only with the streams of East to West and not only from Anatolia to Germany and back to Turkey just for a family intermezzo, it is on the move also from traditional cultures to stations of modern civilization, from rural habits in urban attitudes and from elementary lifestyle to more sophisticated performances of individual life.”
The Most Open Place in Istanbul – Acik Radio

By Miray Caner

On a very hot and sunny Tuesday morning my photographer friend Alper and I set off to Acik Radio. I was very excited because not only was it going to be my first interview experience but also I was going to undertake an interview with one of the most important men in Turkish media. On top of that Omer Madra, the Director of Acik Radio, is also my all-time favourite book’s (Salinger’s Funny and Zooty) translator.

Acik Radio is located at the ERN Han Building in Taksim, the culture and entertainment centre of Istanbul and is composed of two floors: studio and management. We met Omer Madra on the management floor. He sincerely welcomed us. He did something that I wanted but was too embarrassed to ask and invited Jak Kohlen to be with us in the interview. Jak Kohlen is the programme coordinator of the radio but, as I guessed, titles didn’t matter that much, because in the anti-hierarchical structure of Acik Radio they’re all just radio programmers.

Before this wonderful conversation, I want to give you some information about Acik Radio. First of all “Acik” means in Turkish “open” a name which also reflects the policy of the radio. It was founded on 13th November 1995 as a local non-profit radio station. It’s a collective with 92 partners with equal shares. All of the partners have a part of famous Turkish painter and sculptor Ahlbloom Dino’s “Tugralar” lithograph series as a partnership certificate. Behind each certificate this sentence is written: “This is to certify that the support you have provided for the founding of a free, independent, democratic, dignified, compassionate, and out-of-the-ordinary radio station would hopefully lead to the creation of other similar projects.”

The outstanding common characteristic of the whole bunch of Acik Radio programmers, producers, DJs, etc., is that they all “work” on a totally voluntary basis. That is to say, they are all volunteers, working without any salary or remuneration whatsoever.

Currently, 194 programmers – ranging from age 12 to 75 – are contributing with more than 122 different programmes to Acik Radio each week and share their individual interests with the audience. For example, one particular programme made a 6.5 year long rerun after his death (with his family’s permission). Another programmer was a newborn baby who was on air during the first six months of her life (her permission was taken for granted).

Acik Radio is also one of the most important media channels in Turkey. First of all it is completely free and independent. Everyone who can prepare quality programmes on a weekly basis can get on the air. The radio is run by the donations of listeners, something which creates financial independence. Because of its democratic structure Acik Radio is place with many sounds, but is would be not wrong to call it an advocate of environmental politics. Turkey’s EU membership, democratisation requirements and human rights issues are also common topics in popular shows. With no political connections, programmers criticise every public and political body. But Acik Radio is not a political radio. You can listen to shows on military history, pets, game culture and folk music besides more political shows on union or insurance politics.

Well, here I was, terribly excited and scared; but it wouldn’t matter if I screwed everything up and got kicked out because I would have finally met the man whose words I read as if they were Salinger’s.

- What is Acik Radio? Alternative media, citizen media, independent media are names which are mistaken for one another nowadays, which one of these are you?

Omer Madra: Actually this only shows our society’s general confusion. Media exists to give the public ideas about where the world is headed and help people choose leaders who might get them there. Media is an integral part of democracy; it is also called the fourth force, following parliament, government and justice organs. Media makes it possible to carry out democracy in an open and transparent way. It must have social and cultural functions like exposing corruption or provoking cultural dialog through music.

But when a media network has an owner, it eventually gets reduced to his master’s voice. Things that aren’t beneficial to the owner can not find a place in this kind of a station. For example if the owner is in the oil business, the network wouldn’t promote green energy. It is worst when these networks are owned by intercontinental cartel or oligopoly. These kinds of networks will eventually shape the society’s future.

This is where independence steps in. Acik Radio is a network without an owner and tries to stay in this way. It is a non-commercial, collective cooperation.

- To which extent does Acik Radio criticise media?

Omer Madra: Extensively. Mainly because mainstream media structure contradicts with our collective one. Media’s involve-
Omer Madra: TRT can not really make public broadcasting. It’s changing now but you can see that TRT still carries the strict, strong, authoritarian mentality both on its TVs and radios. It is a network afraid of prosecution. It used to be the sole media net-
work and there are still traces of this has-been monopoly. TRT is different from BBC in that, that doesn’t use its income from its independent programmes for its own benefit nor is it separat-
ed from the government. TRT is the public network but it is more government oriented than public. So what we need is pri-

tate and independent radios.

Jak Kohen: TRT isn’t independent. It has an owner in a sense. They need to be extra careful on some subjects and avoid some others completely.

Omer Madra: Yes, in a sense. It’s non-commercial because it is government funded but it also serves the government’s benefit.

Jak Kohen: It is the government’s voice so it can’t reflect the truth.

- Aick Radio was temporarily banned from broadcasting in 2002 because a part of a Bukowski novel was read. YouTube has been - and still is - banned in our country for some time. The public has simply forgotten this fact or is accessing it thoro-
gue illegal means. What is Aick Radio’s view on censorship?

Omer Madra: The internet’s primary benefit is free speech and free access to information; you can publish your own newspaper or re-
lease your own album, all without signing with a label or pub-
lisher. It also is a fitting medium for activist gathering. I think that this kind of censorship is insane. Some countries like Turkey still has internet censorship because of their old-fashioned laws. There surely are other ways of prohibiting insults to Kemal Ataturk or PKK propaganda. China and some other countries choose to censor although the effects are debatable like you said before. I think in the end we’re making fools of ourselves. Our station got temporarily shut down because of a Bukowski


our listeners support project is an original adap-
tation of a finance model which is rare throughout the world. It’s a small group of people. We have two pro-
grammes of music but that’s it.

Jak Kohen: It’s a small group of people. We have two pro-
grams prepared by the staff: Acik Gazete (Open Newspaper) and Acik Dergi (Open Magazine). All the other programmes are prepared by volunteers. We also have a technical staff made up of 27 people. We plan and list every studio hour, therefore you can find someone at the radio any green hour. We try to do every-
thing with our 27 people thanks to our 190+ volunteers.

Omer Madra: We have 194 volunteers to be precise.

- You are many volunteer programmers on Aick Radio. Can we say that Aick Radio contributes to Turkish citizen media?

Omer Madra: Our main goal is being a citizen media station. For example the only way to battle global warming is to make every-
thing with our 27 people thanks to our 190+ volunteers.

Omer Madra: We are all for exposure of individual views, within reasonable extents. Our station was founded with helping the cre-
ation of new democratic organisations in mind but we’re open for anything except totalitarianism and democratic party disbandment supports. We don’t plan on introducing religious programmes but our programmers are free to talk about religion. We wouldn’t allow spe-

courses on Islamic takeover nor military regime. The main idea here is supporting basic human rights and pluralist democracy.

Jak Kohen: Actually we have three: First is an American corpo-
ration by the name of Putumayo. It’s a non-commercial world music corporation dealing in world music records and radio pro-
grammes. Every Monday, for some years now, we are broadcast-
ing their programmes. We also make a world music program-

Problems of Turkish Local Media

20 years have passed since the break down of the state mo-

nopoly on broadcasting. Today, there are more than 1,000

local radio and television enterprises in Turkey. It can be seen that the excitement and enthusiasm in the very first days of private radio and television broadcasting has now changed to a se-

ries of problems and grudglocks. Local radio and televisions con-
tinue to make their own runways in the diversity of problems, like the structure that lacks original legal and technical arrange-
ments, the concern of television viewing, the pressure of adver-
sors, relationships based on self interest of political administra-
tion and of the capital, lack of a qualified work force and etc.

Jak Kohen: It’s a small group of people. We have two pro-
grams prepared by the staff: Acik Gazete (Open Newspaper) and Acik Dergi (Open Magazine). All the other programmes are prepared by volunteers. We also have a technical staff made up of 27 people. We plan and list every studio hour, therefore you can find someone at the radio any green hour. We try to do every-
thing with our 27 people thanks to our 190+ volunteers.

Omer Madra: We have 194 volunteers to be precise.

Jak Kohen: We couldn’t have prepared shows of this diversity even with a large staff. Our programmes cover a large area of in-


terests thanks to our volunteers. I know everything about two genres of music but that’s it.

Jak Kohen: We don’t know if we can call it citizen journalism but all of our 194 programmers are regular citizens. So are we. We've been on air for many years now but we’re not professional radio programmers. Most of our programmers are Acik Radio listen-
ers who decided to take part.

- How does Acik Radio finance itself?

Jak Kohen: Legally the sources of a media station’s income are only sponsors and advertisers. Acik Radio isn’t in it for the rat-
ings, we aren’t mainstream and we’re only a local station. So we don’t have to get a big slice of the commercial pie which anyhow

isn’t big enough for the radios. We switched to a volunteer fi-

nance model, “Dinleyici Destek Projesi”. “Listener Support Project” - a few years ago. In this model our listeners sponsor the pro-
gramme of their choice. This way we are mostly sponsored by individual listeners rather than corporations. According to the statistics of last 3 years, this covers our expenditures for four months a year. We also have commercial revenue, which fluctu-
ates with the economy.

Omer Madra: Our listeners support project is an original adap-
tation of a finance model which is rare throughout the world. It also feels good. We thrive on our listeners’ support, it really is something else.

- What kind of staff do you employ?

- Thank you very much for your time, do you have something to add?

Omer Madra: There’s one last thing I would like to add. Our website has grown to become a civil archive over the years. Some of the broadcast conversations are written up and uploaded to our site and then there are other articles which add up to a total of approximately 25,000 essays and translations. There are other sites which are far better but they don’t have their radio channels like we do.
From page 36

Turgay Tuyuz: “The most important reason behind why people watch local television is the news. People want to keep track of their environment first. The developments in a province are followed from local channels. They do not have the chance to see the provincial news on national channels unless the governor or the mayor had very important news. It gives us an advantage when we are making our broadcast flow; because, programme editing, shooting of TV series are very expensive and should be done professionally. But the news traffic and politics of the city are much easier than these. And people really want these from us. Even if there is an expectation of TV series and big productions, a local enterprise can’t afford them. We plan the broadcast flow like that.”

According to Balci, while national broadcasts present news that interests larger masses in a certain order, the demand for learning about what is happening in the city caused local broadcasts to be supported by people. However, Orhan Balci notices a problem:

Orhan Balci: “One of the reasons of the emergence of the local broadcasting was that a television enterprise that broadcast national content was limited to the news of Ankara and Istanbul. But local broadcasting enterprises developed some relationships with the local administrations on the level of the city. Local televisions and local radios that work hand in hand with the local administration. And this brought adverse consequences. The first goal was to do something against the monopoly of the national broadcasters on a local level. We can give another example. For example, there is an opening of a firm or an establishment and that firm or establishment called you. You go to that opening and broadcast it on your news bulletin. And you receive their advertisement in return. And you began to ignore negative news about that firm or establishment time to time, because you had good commercial relations with that firm. Unfortunately the business came to this point and quality drops. People, who make evaluations about TV-41, assert that we have very good relationships with the local administrations. We pronounce, especially to our workers, that there is no such thing.

Turgay Tuyuz agreed with Mr. Balci to a certain extent. When we asked him his opinion about the relationship of the local broadcasters with the local administration, he responded that this situation is tied to a delicate equilibrium. According to Tuyuz, from the aspect of local broadcasters these relationships are related to maintaining a financial source.

Turgay Tuyuz: “This is a very delicate issue especially for local broadcasters. All media doubtlessly has this kind of relationships. This is a one-pair shoe situation in Istanbul and in all other provinces including us. If there is an establishment that claims vice versa, I assure you, it is not a very plausible situation. But I want make a point here. If any political foundation or establishment wants to give any advertisement to my channel or want to do something that has a specified goal of advertising, I expect income in return. I expect a certain budget for this and try to realise what they want to do in my television or in my radio in relation to that budget. But aside from that we keep the same distance to all the political foundations in the sense of news. Of course, there is pressure in the sense of news, but when you look at it on the national level those channels also from suffer pressures too. These relations should not annihilate the balance of the news. Political foundations are one of the biggest sources of news for us. We follow their progress without separating them. We handle them in our news bulletins. Besides that we can hardly work with the political foundations unless they want to use the television for advertisement purposes and only in return for a budget, as I have said before. If that political foundation does not have an income or if that income is low, we cannot take them to television with advertisement purposes. We can take them to television as a part of our news. But if they want to make advertisements, they cannot make it unfortunately. In this sense, we can speak of the political party in power, it, undoubtedly, has more economic power. And they seem to make use of the television in this sense. I cannot tell if it is biased or not, but, if they want to use it for advertising purposes, it requires a budget. Because especially for local broadcasters it is very important and very hard to figure out, plan and carry on the budget.”

Advertisements seemed to be most important source for both managers. Mr. Balci and Mr. Tuyuz, emphasised that for a broadcasting company ad revenues are of vital importance.

Orhan Balci: “In order to reach a certain quality your economy must be strong. Our only revenue is ads. You do not have any other source of income other than advertisements. Therefore, you need to have a strong advertising department. With the revenue that comes from your advertising department, you both have to manage your company and make investments in order to keep pace with the technology. We try to survive with a limited portfolio. In order to overcome this problem, we establish various partnerships. We established professional and advertising unions with local television stations from other provinces. For example, we have a union called Local and Regional Televisions. Approximately for three years, we are in this endeavour. When we look at this endeavour the panorama is this: it brings in certain advantages to us. For example, we made agreements with one or two political parties and air their news at certain time zones. We cannot receive any efficient turnouts form commercial ads because every province has its own pricing policy. In order to get over with this problem, we have a firm called...
Television managers who execute different attempts for providing financial resources seem to regard certain equilibrium in direct proportion with ad revenues. Both Mr. Balci and Mr. Tuyüz suggested that they regard neutrality in the news. However, they admitted the fact that there are orientations, pressures and other attempts related to the political ads and commercial ads. Television managers point out that financial resource difficulties and hardship in the market of advertising caused difficulties in the flow of broadcasting and in the qualified work force.

Orhan Balci: “The end, it all comes down to economic survival. It is very hard to broadcast a documentary, a Turkish movie, a foreign movie or a TV series that are on at prime-time on a local television channel. It is around a million dollars to buy a finished TV series. In the same way, high quality foreign movies or Turkish movies had this problem, too. We sometimes broadcast old black and white movies. People sometimes criticised it and sometimes appreciated it. We do not have the chance to please everyone. But we have to work in order to please the majority. We sometimes miss some news. Sometimes we have problems with the content of the news. And this is because of the lack of man-power. We, unfortunately, still cannot give the job training both on the national level and on the local level. As for me, each corporation must deliver the job training.”

Turgay Tuyüz: “The biggest problem of local media is the manpower. We have left this problem since we took over the channel. People have to seek the way to work in the national media. Local press institutions cannot bring enough return to the workers, because they are not developed enough. As a result of this, people aim at the national broadcasters that may bring great financial income. If we are economically strong, we will be an institution that professional man-power will prefer.”

Both representatives see financial hardship as the root of the problems. Relationships that are based on self-interest, neutrality in the news, diversity in flow of broadcast, the employment of qualified work force are among the problems that broadcasters have to overcome. Mount Yetkin, the founder and the Chief Editor of Piramit FM which is one of the first private radio stations in Turkey, also agreed with these views. According to Mr. Yetkin, legal arrangements are also an important obstacle before the development of local broadcasting.

Mount Yetkin: “The most important obstacle before us is the Higher Council of Law that we have to the Higher Council from our ad revenues. This is a very pointless payment. They take 11% of every ad that a corporation airs. Local radio stations already hardly survive. We cannot receive official announcements. On the other hand, there is a frequency trouble. There are many radios that broadcast both in the national and local scale. This situation causes frequency contamination. Usmail frequency bid causes turmoil. We have problems with the musical organizations. I do not only mean MESAM and MUYAP! A new union emerges every other day that claim to protect the rights of the artists. Which artists are in these unions are unknown. Do we have to pay royalty to all of these unions? We want them to gather under one roof. We do not want to usurp the rights of anyone, but we end up in courts. And we have to pay each. We now pay to three or four musical unions.”

According to Mr. Yetkin, the basis of the problems encountered in local broadcasting there are financial hardship as well as the quality of the capital that make investment in that sector. Local broadcasting corporations are perceived as commercial prestige and it is asserted that investors began to have radio stations but do not care about the quality of the business. But according to Mr. Yetkin, the only people who are responsible for that are the managers of the local broadcasting corporations.

Mount Yetkin: “As for me, we are guilty. We experienced a hardship with one another. Everything began with the bringing down of the ad prices. There is not a paid ad list price in the sector. When radio stations do not earn money the quality drops. If you cannot earn, you cannot employ workers. When you cannot employ workers you cannot have good, serious programmes. There some radios that only employ 2 people. One of them airs the ads. The other provides the continuity of the programmes. They play music from a computer because they do not have any programmes.”

The enthusiasm and objectives that dominate the very first years of private broadcasting are brought into disrepute when we consider the views of the sector representatives and the time past. Today the problems of local broadcasting are centered around financial dead ends, the problems in the ownership of capital, relationships that are based on self-interest, neutrality in the news, diversity in flow of broadcast, the employment of qualified work force. The deficiencies and imbalance in the legal arrangements made it hard to overcome the problems that are before the local broadcasting corporations. However, local broadcasting is considered to be the future of broadcasting in the world as well as in Turkey. The experience of the local broadcasters should be considered in order to solve the problems of broadcasters in Turkey.

It is important to form joint work platforms in order to make arrangements. The most important duty that fall on behalf of the local broadcasters is to show a powerful willpower for public benefit that is isolated from relationships based on self interest. **

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** Article continues on page 37

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Access to www.youtube.com site has been suspended in accordance with decision no: 2007/384 dated 06.03.2007 of Istanbul First Criminal Peace Court.

Due to a single inappropriate content, banning of the website to the visitors using Turkish servers caused large-scale confusion and reaction both in Turkey and abroad. This first blocking ended after the YouTube team removed the material from the web-site on 9 March 2007.

After this relatively short time blockage, access to YouTube was banned for a second time on 17 January 2008 because of insulting Atatürk on the basis of the 8th section of the Act 5651. The act dated 4 May 2007 can decide to block access, if there is a situation raising doubt regarding the crimes mentioned in Turkish Penal Code including inciting suicide, obscenity and sexual abuse of children, facilitating the use of narcotics, prostitution, facilitating illegal gambling and the crimes also in the Act dated 25 July 1951 and numbered 5816 including the prohibition on inquiring the memory of Atatürk. The blockage can be done by Telecommunications Institution with a court order or can be also done on its own initiative. In 2006, more than 300 websites including world known Google.groups and Geocities were blocked based on Act 5651. Because there are no specialised courts, the blockages can be done by any court in Turkey.

After that Sivas and Ankara Criminal Peace Courts’ decisions on successively dated on 16 January 2008 and 17 January 2008; on 25 January 2008 with the removal of the related material by the YouTube team, the site was open to access again. After these on-off situations, YouTube was five times more banned in Turkey. According to the data of YouTube removed the related content from Turkish database, Turkish authorities continue the blockage because YouTube did not erase the content from the international database. Turkish authorities declare if YouTube applies for a license and authorises a representative in Turkey, they wouldn’t be blocked that often. On
the other hand, the time period that the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunication Institution had given to YouTube to apply for a license expired on 23 July 2008 and how the situation will progress is still foggy.

Regarding the site blockages, with the participation of judges, prosecutors, representatives from Ministry of Transportation, Radio Television Supreme Council (RTUK) and Turk Telecommunication Institution, a nationwide summit was organised in June 2008. In the summit, the definitional uncertainties and problems of the Act 5651 were discussed. The consequences of the summits included a greater emphasis on civic initiatives and voluntary activities on internet control and choosing filtration of the harmful content as a procedure instead of blocking the whole site. Blocking IP addresses was also emphasised to be seen as a final solution.

The civic movement “censor to censorship” started by Deniz Tan and Fuat Yıldız spread to a wide a public in a very short time using Facebook, Eksi Sozluk (one of the most popular wiki based sites in Turkey) and share videos on the internet. Until 20 August 2008 more than 350 websites shut themselves down to support the movement. After a while the websites of course re-opened themselves. The movement has its own website “sansure-sansur.org” now and contains a list of the supporter websites.

The banning of YouTube with a court order did not actually affect the daily usage of Turkish YouTubers that much in practice. After a few blockages, the users got experienced and found various methods to access the site including changing proxy settings or using filter breaking sites. For these, you don’t have to be a hacker or computer bug. Everyone who googles “alternatives to YouTube” will find himself a lot of sites where you can watch YouTube videos. Unfortunately, if you want to show your intelligence to others, you will have to pay very much for it. You can watch Youtube videos through these sites, but you can’t download them. The movement has its own website “sansure-sansur.org” now and contains a list of the supporter websites.

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The Sour Side of the Internet

Eksi Sozluk (Sour Dictionary) is a website which holds definitions under titles like a regular dictionary but the difference is that this dictionary is filled with user contribution. Titles are opened by the writers and any kind of title with maximum limit of 33 characters can be opened. Burak Türkülgül, a Ph.D. student from SUNY Albany, who is also one of the writers of the dictionary, categorises these titles into seven groups in his work about the meaning creation process of Eksi Sozluk.1 According to him the titles can be about physical or abstract concepts, events, names, statements, actions and states like “cutting your own hair” or “all philosophers being an atheist”, which can also be fictional like “such being the head of socialist international”, and surveys, which are not likely by most of the users as they have the potential to corrupt the format of the dictionary. There can be numerous definitions and examples under each title. These are called entries and they are numbered in chronological order, the nickname of the writer and the time that the entry was written can be seen under each definition. There is no character limit for entries; they can be as short as one word or as long as five pages. But there are several rules for writing an entry. The format of Eksi Sozluk distinguishes it from regular forums. According to the format, an entry should be a depersonalised definition of the title, an example or a hyperlink to another title. If the entry is irrelevant to the title, holds reference to other entries or a repetition of another entry, it will be deleted.

There are 32 rules listed by “s” under the title “subjects that should be adhered to while opening a title”. These are strict control over what is written in the dictionary. Türkülgül calls it a “despotic bureaucracy” as the owner of the website “s” has the absolute power and has control over everything. To protect the format, a group of “moderators” control if the entries and titles are written according to the rules. If a writer disregards the rules several times than he/she will be flung out or will be reduced to a lower grade and become a “rookie”, which is a temporary state in which the writer candidates are tested by the moderating staff.

There are two main uses of Eksi Sozluk that makes it one of the most popular websites in Turkey; the encyclopaedic definitions and personal views/experiences. Although according to the format the writers shouldn’t personalise their statements, definitions containing personal observation and experience can be accepted, which also gives the reader the pleasure of voyantism. Writers usually try to show their intelligence through entries. One of the writers of Eksi Sozluk, nicknamed “bewitched”, states that she generally looks for an ironic way to approach a title, which will distinguish her definition from the others. The motive to write something is to be critical and extremely observational. Writing smart entries equals to being a powerful individual in this community.

The fact that Eksi Sozluk is a social phenomenon shouldn’t be ruled out. TV personalities can cancel their shows regarding the entries under the show’s title in Eksi Sozluk or some celebrities can demand that the entries under their names should be deleted and threaten to take it to the court. In this case legal problems come on to the scene. There is a group of writers that deals with the legal problems of Eksi Sozluk called “praetors”. They are mostly lawyers and law students. They do not directly detect the entries like editors but moderators could consult them in the cases that they couldn’t solve or need legal advice. These lawyers also represent Eksi Sozluk in court when needed.

In 2006, Turk Telekom (The telecommunication firm in Turkey, which also holds the right to ban the reach to internet from Turkey) restricted the DNS reach to the website because of the title “weed” and the entries under it as they encourage youth to use drugs. The DNS reach couldn’t be made for a couple of months until the lawyers of Eksi Sozluk (Praetors) appealed in court.

On April 17, 2007, the reach to the website was restricted once again because the entries under the title Adnan Oktar (a.k.a Adnan Hodja) contained insult for the bearer of the name. Although the lawyers tried to assure the court that all of the entries under the title will be erased and the title will be closed, the website stayed closed for some time. After the trial, reach to the website was possible again but the writers couldn’t write entries under the title Adnan Oktar. The title opened for entries very recently.

Today, when the URL www.eksisozluk.com is typed in, a website with a commercial theme pops up. The screen is divided into two main frames. In the left frame the titles are listed in the order in which they are updated; the title with the latest entry shows up in the first place. On the right hand side, we see a commercial entry under the product’s title. At the top of the screen there are control buttons and the search tool. If we type in the title “eki sozluk”, the entry below shows up at the top:

“Eksi Sozluk 1. a magnum opus that fills in the hours, that I spend alone because of the time difference. state of the art.

(... 19.02.1999)

Eksi Sozluk started as “a time passer”, “a free time activity” for a little group of friends. Its code was written in one day and the first entry was under the first title “pick” (pens, in Turkish). Eksi Sozluk, was founded by Sedat Kapangülü (nicknamed: sug) in 1999. The first generation of writers, the writers who signed up in 1999, pretty much defined the format of the dictionary whilst writing in it. As the years passed and as the number of the writers increased, the format and the culture was adopted by the newcomers and the writers created their own community or their own “sub-culture.” Currently, Eksi Sozluk has 13858 writers, 175892 users, 1403436 titles and 736777 entries (by 15 August 2008). 2


2 http://www.eksisozluk.com/tr/2008/12/31/eksi-sozluk-13858-yazar/417652
The ABC of Media

How Media Literacy was Introduced into the Turkish Curriculum

The development of mass media has had a considerable influence on the education and socialisation of today's children. According to a survey on television viewing habits of elementary school children in Turkey, children are watching approximately three hours of television daily. Based on such data and following up on global media discussions, academics and experts have started to emphasise possible negative impacts of mass media on children in a growing rate. Increases of violent acts in schools; and also increases of sharing records of these acts on video sharing websites such as YouTube, can also be seen as reasons for the escalation of these worries: Television and internet content could not be reached easily by children without control.

In 2004 media literacy found a place in RTUK's agenda (for the first time). The “Anti-Violence Platform” meetings brought delegates from public bodies, NGOs and universities together. RTUKs proposition that media literacy should be a part of primary school curricula was largely accepted during these discussions. A proposition has been made in media subcommittee reports and placed in the action plan. In the same year RTUK sent a report on media literacy education to the Ministry of Education (MEB). Following this “official” start, the first international academic conference on media literacy in Turkey was organised by Marmara University in 2005 in Istanbul. Once again, academics, representatives of non governmental media institutions came together alongside governmental bodies; also present were Hifzi Topuz, the President of the “Communication Research Association” and the RTUK representative Golden Tresko. The importance of media education for school children was discussed and the necessity of improvement of children's media comprehension and analyses skills was emphasised.

Between 2004 and 2006, RTUK did several studies on media viewing behaviours of Turkish people. These include comparative evaluation of media literacy practices of different countries and also exchange with foreign experts. Following these pieces of research a commission consisting of experts from RTUK and academics from Ankara, Gazi and Selçuk universities organised an international panel on media literacy, in 2006 in Ankara; with the participation of experts from the United States and several European countries.

After almost two years of research and preparation, RTUK signed a collaboration protocol with the Board of Education Subordinate to the Ministry of Education (TTK) in August 2006, which created the legal basis to the introduction of media literacy courses in the Turkish curriculum. Since 2006, RTUK and TTK are responsible for the full integration of media literacy courses into the Turkish curriculum. As a first step they started a trial phase. Media literacy courses were added to the primary school curriculum as electives. To support these courses a draft programme and a teacher's handbook were prepared. Social sciences teachers were assigned to teach these courses and a trial training programme for 20 teachers from five primary schools was organised in Ankara. A field trial for seventh graders in five primary schools was organised during the 2006 – 2007 school year.

The content of the media literacy course consisted of an introduction to communication theory, media economics, media ethics and practical applications on television, radio, newspaper and the internet; such as applied newspaper preparation. The aim of this course was to make children understand media and its importance while being aware of its impacts and being able to beware of them. The success of the trial media literacy courses opened the way to the full integration of the programme into primary school curricula in the school year 2007 – 2008. The course was defined as a 1 hour per week elective course, for 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The creation of media clubs in schools, interactive lectures with participation of media professionals and visits to media companies were suggested as supporting practices. Social sciences teachers and class teachers are expected to teach these courses.

Between 2007 and 2008, RTUK organised an international panel on media literacy with participation of experts from Turkey, the United States and several European countries.

Between 2009 and 2010, RTUK arranged an international panel on media literacy for experts from Turkey, the United States, Canada, Japan and Europe.

From 2011 and 2012, RTUK and TTK are responsible for the full integration of media literacy courses into the Turkish curriculum. As a first step they started a trial phase. Media literacy courses were added to the primary school curriculum as electives. To support these courses a draft programme and a teacher's handbook were prepared. Social sciences teachers were assigned to teach these courses and a trial training programme for 20 teachers from five primary schools was organised in Ankara. A field trial for seventh graders in five primary schools was organised during the 2006 – 2007 school year.

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teachers were assigned to the courses. To support these, training has been organised for 103 teachers; who were charged to train their colleagues afterwards. Besides the training of teachers, it was also necessary to inform parents about the new curriculum and the concept of media literacy, in order to increase the interest and participation to the courses. Letters were sent to parents whose children were already participating in media literacy courses, asking them to help children to apply the course content in their everyday life. Additionally, a trailer inviting parents to choose this course for their children was prepared and shown on television channels. A website containing information on media literacy was launched for children. Several side themes such as Turkish history, sports, books and games were also added to increase interest to the site. In addition to these, a page called “My friend TV” gave children the opportunity to comment on their favourite TV shows or even propose new TV content.

While this article was being prepared, the Ministry of Education had not yet released official education statistics for the 2007 – 2008 school year. There were no official indications to the success rate of the programme. Yet, our research showed, even though all the work mentioned above provided some progress, the results seems to be less than expected. Interviews with primary school directors and MEB officers, carried out in Istanbul (the biggest city in Turkey), show that there are some difficulties in the coordination between the MEB and schools. While some directors still relied on Google.com as their favourite website, which means that they were not even aware of the differences between a website and a search engine, maybe it was just because their teacher was not aware of this difference either. (Encoglu, 2007)

The introduction of media literacy courses in the primary school curriculum is a necessity in our media driven age and will obviously have several positive effects on children. Yet there is still a possibility of failure of the project. The lack of manpower and course material are the main reasons lying beneath this possibility. Can a few weeks of training prepare a teacher for the questions of students who were born in the same era as them? Yet there is another side of this critique: The quality of training of social sciences teachers is mostly criticised by communication faculties, which see the media literacy education in primary schools as a job opportunity for their graduates. Can these graduates gain educational skills easily? Besides these question of manpower, the question of course material is deeper one. The introduction of interaction and interpretation in classrooms is a positive development, but a difficult task for teachers not used to it. And also without creating the necessary educational infrastructures interaction and interpretation cannot occur. One possible problem of the new media literacy programme can be a dated understanding of media. Although it is too early to have a clear assumption, a media literacy conception which defines children as victims of media would not be adequate in a age where new technologies bring media production into the homes of ordinary families.

A similar critique towards the new curriculum comes from the academic world: Who will give these courses? Istanbul University Communications Faculty dean Prof. Dr. Saut Gezgin: “It is pleasant that the Ministry and RTUK decided to introduce media education in the curriculum, but the course should be given by communication faculty graduates who choose to become a teacher. They could have their pedagogical formation with a master programme and be ready to give the lectures. Otherwise, although the parent social sciences teachers have a good deal, because of the short training period, I’m afraid the course will not reach its potential.” Prof. Gezgin’s opinions echo the answers of another primary school vice director to our questions. He claims that the teachers in his school had no training about the course and had difficulties during the school year. Supporting data and more critiques to the efficiency of the media literacy courses can be found in a research by Yasemin Inceoglus research on the effects of the media literacy course on the teachers and students in the pilot school in Istanbul in 2007. According to this, most of the social sciences teachers were not interested with media concepts before the courses were introduced. So they were failing in defining the elements and functions of the media and they were unable to recommend any source material than the official web site of RTUK, which also does not give a reading list about media. Most of them were claiming to have difficulties during the lectures and for this reason they were having a hard time preparing the lessons by visiting the relating websites. As for the pupils attending media literacy courses, half of them stated that google.com was their favourite website, which means that they were not even aware of the differences between a website and a search engine, maybe it was just because their teacher was not aware of this difference either. (Encoglu, 2007)
In the 2009 – 2010 academic year, journalism departments of both state and private universities will open their door to approximately 1,800 new students. This number is enough to create negative long term theories. Starting in the 1990s Turkeys open economic model helped outside investors to enter the press sector. Big investments changed the traditional concept of Turkish press. The number of newspapers and TV channels were increasing, investment towards technological infrastructure which caused concerns about the demand of the new owners to quality journalists. Although new investment meant new employment opportunities, the fact that new technologies were not always job-friendly caused more trouble among workers. Today, about only a quarter of active journalists are communication faculty graduates. The number of communication faculty graduates increases each year. New graduates have problems finding a job. The demand is not high. Illegal employment of students as trainees is not uncommon. There is also the problem of quality. Journalism graduates have to prove themselves against graduates of different disciplines; who learn journalism whilst working and can add their diploma as a proof of expertise. On the academic side, the increase of student numbers means growing lack of resources and academic staff. Besides the need for more professors, low salaries, bureaucracy and high service hours make teaching hard and research almost impossible for academics in most state universities. Private universities on the other hand rely on low numbers of staff with more responsibilities. High numbers of students mean most of the time low quality education and lower chances for finding a job. In short, quantity affects quality.

The two perspectives

Prof. Dr. Suat Gragin, one of the important figures of communication education in Turkey and the Dean of Istanbul University Faculty of Communication Emphasises the multi-sided model of education they use. The faculty has been given both theoretical and practical knowledge on journalism together for more than 30 years. During that time due to changing conditions and increasing demands the faculty has been reorganised and the education started to include various areas of communication such as public relations, promotion, advertisement, radio, television and cinema. This change required the opening of new departments and creation of new programmes. To give a proper practical side to the education, the faculty uses its internal production units, such as a monthly newspaper and a fully functioning news agency. There are also advertisement and public research groups, radio and TV studios, and since 2008 a live radio broadcast vehicle donated by German WDR Channel, used by other departments in the faculty. This, according to Gragin, gives students the opportunity for practical training and applying theoretical knowledge to practice.

A second approach towards communication education can be seen at Ankara University Faculty of Communications. Here, communication education is based on a much more political and social sciences oriented concept, rather than the more practical, journalistic approach of the Istanbul University. Prof. Dr. Oya Tokgoz from Ankara University supports this social sciences approach and criticizes the tendency towards a “profession” education in the Faculty of Communications.art and theoretical side. The answer can be found in a three categories model where the courses are divided into so-

The others

Two alternative models in search for a broader understanding of journalism education in Turkey can be found at Anatolian University and Istanbul Bilgi University.

Anatolian University is a state university located in Eskisehir, an Anatolian city located between Ankara and Istanbul. The Communication Sciences Faculty is the first faculty using the word “science” in its name. The faculty itself tries to give importance to practical courses while showing tendency to communication science and communication arts. The faculty owns a newspaper, a radio station and a television studio besides the TV studios of TRT – Turkish national public broadcast corporation funded by taxes, government funds and advertising – which are used by the university for national open-university programmes. With lots of practical opportunities Anatolian University suggests qualification test for communication faculty entrance which can measure the will and skills of the candidates. In fact Anatolian University used such tests till the university reforms in the 2000. But for some academics the practicality and objectivity of such tests are always in question.

For a period of time, private universities in Turkey have been criticised for their close relationships with the professional world and accused of serving manpower to companies. When we look into Istanbul Bilgi University, a private university in Istanbul, we see a different picture. “Medya Kronik”, a web portal run by Istanbul Bilgi University Communications Faculty, draws attention to itself with its opposed and critical articles towards media. Here you can find articles about the problems of press policies, union demands of journalists, illegal rents, illegal opportunities, etc. These are issues which can cause a young graduate problems whilst looking for a job. Nevertheless, in the last few years, Medya Kronik succeeded in integrating practice with a critical and social understanding and became an important news source regardless of being a student new portal. One of many reasons of this success can be the usage of a relatively easier media. In fact an internet portal can be much more easily and cheaply managed and updated than a monthly news paper.

The future of journalism education in Turkey relies on several variables. First of all the numbers: For how many students how many professors in how many communication faculties will be available? The second variable is the method: How can we balance theory and practice? Which technologies should we use? The third one is the relations with the Turkish media: Do they have enough positions for our graduates? What is the position of universities on issues like a union for journalists? These are the hard questions Turkish universities will have to face in the near future. Their answers will shape the journalism culture in the country.

An Unsolved Problem: Labour Day

Labour Day

Labour Day has a special meaning for Turkey. Celebrated officially until the “Bloody May One” of 1977, when unknown snipers shot into a crowd of 500,000 people gathered in Taksim Square in Istanbul, Labour Day celebrations are now banned and have been replaced by a depoliticised “Spring Celebrations”. Since then, the first of May means for many Turks growing tensions between the government unions and NGOs in Ankara as well as growing tensions between security forces and workers, students and activists on the streets all over the country.

This year, the labour unions decided to celebrate Labour Day in Taksim Square. The government, however, decided to ban the rally due to possible security breaches and social disorder, proclaiming Taksim Square off-limits for all citizens. The reaction by unions differed. Some unions have fallen back, but others led especially by DISK (The Confederation of Revolutionary Labour Unions) have insisted on visiting Taksim Square with carnations.

The newspapers have carried the events to their headlines on May 1st, with different approaches parallel to their positions in the political spectrum. The Turkish media, caught in a speedy process of economic concentration and globalization, reflects both economic and political tendencies. A series of independent newspapers and media institutions compete with a large number newspapers and TV channels owned by a few media cartels. Secular, religious, conservative, liberal,
By Saat Gezgin  
Prof. Dr. Istanbul University Faculty of Communications, Dean & Department of Journalism Chair

Media and Democracy

freedom of the press is not only the journalist’s freedom of speech, but also the public’s freedom of information. Journalism in the meaning of being the public’s eyes, ears and voice, is the trust and main source of democracy.

On the other hand, unfortunately in our country it is really hard to say that the government is at peace with the media. The disagreement that started in Ottoman Empire period still shows itself in different dimensions and consent. It can be underlined from Article 28 of the constitution which says, "press is free under law" that press is free up to a specific point and it can be censored on a situation, contrary to law.

Of course it is extremely necessary to convey thoughts and opinions to public opinion for democracy to work correctly. But journalists should be aware of the importance of their duties and know their responsibilities. Today, the fact that great capital is going into the market brings along new discussions. The concept of the consumer entering the world of media affected the relationship between reader and media and the social responsibility mentality in a bad way.

After September 12, 1980, every foundation in Turkey including the press went through some important and radical changes. It is certain that today the press became a world where the one watched the most by the audience and losing its support. Briefly, press became a foundation distant from public base and support. In light of this thought, the newspapers were left to a life struggle in a world where the one with the highest circulation is deemed the most successful. The television channels in a world where the one watched the most is deemed the most successful.

Media is an economic enterprise

Maybe the best example that explains media being an economic enterprise is this quotation: "In whatever period, newspaper managers follow these three goals. Increasing the number of the text that will be published (in page count and circulation); enriching the content and diversity (texts, graphics, photographs...); continuous reduction of production costs (to keep the sale price in balance and to reduce it)". As it can be seen, the goals that are made for newspapers, is actually enough to explain the economical enterprise character of media. This
The organisation of media as a public monopoly cannot be justified anymore. The best answer to this question is presentation of the state that television, radio, and other mass communication media for a long time were the monopoly of the state. The protection of the state is environment of diversity that market competition offers. But this does not mean, that the commercial profit measurements of the owner of the private broadcasting company take the place of quality; and cheap game shows, empty entertainment shows which are not different from the commercials and magazine shows fall in nearly the whole hours of broadcasting. Although we translated ourselves from another point of view, the consumer also proposes that they are against a choiceless and enforced presentation. Without a doubt this approach is expressed by the circle with this sensitivity. It taken as a whole production and consumption processes revive an economical circulation and process. The quotation above is justified with this point. While the newspaper is against a process of being purchased, the television is not applicable to television and radio. The product and the service should be made more attractive for the advertiser in radio and television.

It is possible to extend the assessments about media’s economic dimension. But, although media is not seen directly as a commercial facility, it is an important actor of a commercial process directly or indirectly. By means of all of its processes it indicates an economic enterprise. It has to continue its profitability and efficiency to keep its continuity and permanence like every other economic enterprise. For example, the numbers given in an international dimension defines the important potential. For example, some numbers like 12.5 billion USD of profit for Time Warner are uttered. Especially the cooperation of these enterprises made with company marriages exposes a scene with even more dimensions. This is an example just to give an idea. These examples can be increased.

Liberals of the market are against the monopoly of the media protected by the state. According to this, public service broadcasting restricts the representation of personal needs and worries. It tightens, narrows and reduces the field of choice. The conjecture that the government always is to blame: “You cannot leave the choice of what they want to watch to the people. They have to be supervised by the ones who know what is best for them and whose thoughts are close to each other.” If considered from another point of view, the consumer also proposes that they are against a choiceless and enforced presentation. Without a doubt this approach is expressed by the circle with the sensitivity. It taken as a whole production and consumption processes revive an economical circulation and process. The quotation above is justified with this point. While the newspaper is against a process of being purchased, the television is not applicable to television and radio. The product and the service should be made more attractive for the advertiser in radio and television.

The direction of some of the attention that private media organisations attract towards the organisations which conduct public broadcasting may lead the commercial media organisations to straighten up a bit. One of the priorities to provide this is to display the state’s methods of censor and to remove them. When these priorities are applied the dominant definition concerning the public broadcasting will change radically. When public service communication is mentioned, communication foundations, which are sponsored and protected by the state, but also staying out of the state and providing a thought circulation between citizens, will come to the mind. With this, polyphony in press besides a full and quality broadcasting will be provided. A communication environment in which the citizens will follow the economic, political and social developments and changes in the world, and the country’s agenda properly, and make their own comments will be provided.

It appears clearly in many example situations from the time that press has come to action that communication has great importance in relationships made in a healthy political system. Relationship between politics and media

According to political scientists, political parties of the government and all political events are formed by the members of the society. In other words, there is a continuous relation and interaction between the administrator with the power and the governed. Public opinion has great importance in democracies in which the power stems from the people. Three basic elements are indispensable elements for democracy: Freedom of thought, freedom of publishing and printing; Constitutional State (Human rights, independent court); Political participation (Citizens contribution to administration, free elections, and political parties). In this system media being free and independent is the most important condition for the function of democracy. Media, being free and independent, is something that the other elements need and if it is right to call it a “libertine” which helps them function. Public opinion is a first of all created by the media. Media provides the information to be transferred to form a free public opinion, oversees the circumstances and conditions, forms development and changes, voices the criticisms, reveals the negativity.

According to Rekta: public opinion appears in this relation and interaction process. This relation and interaction process’s main devise is the press. As already known, for a public opinion to form first of all the people in charge or the groups should be informed and discuss on it later on. In the face of a controversial issue, in order for the people or the group to impose their own ideas as an agreed-upon public opinion, they should get in touch with the mass media and explain their ideas and thoughts. Here in all of these relations communication’s role is very big. Mass communication media, which is accepted as one of the most effective elements, transfers information in this communication process.

Media researches, in historical process, are positioned in three main axes. First of all, the answer is to these questions: “how did public space transform, how did public communication reform, with the effect of the media?” The second question that media researches tried to find answer to is “how did public communication reform, with the effect of the media?” The third concentration point of researches is “the form of the effect of the media receivers’ political tendencies in the construction of characteristic reality...” The main conjecture is that there is a political function, description and effect of media with its historical development. This is emphasised that the events and facts in the production process of media are faced with another production process. There are important arguments in the events in this sense and how these events are formed after the media filter. “What is the change or mutation that the fact or the event has gone through?” is the question whose answer is searched the most. The government relies on is thus: “You cannot leave the choice of what they want to watch to the people. They have to be supervised by the ones who know what is best for them and whose thoughts are close to each other.” If considered from another point of view, the consumer also proposes that they are against a choiceless and enforced presentation. Without a doubt this approach is expressed by the circle with the sensitivity. It taken as a whole production and consumption processes revive an economical circulation and process. The quotation above is justified with this point. While the newspaper is against a process of being purchased, the television is not applicable to television and radio. The product and the service should be made more attractive for the advertiser in radio and television.

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The examples for this can be seen in Turkey and in other parts of the world in different dimensions. Assessments made under the title of media and democracy without mentioning this structure will be far from the reality and won’t have the power to make a diagnosis. Considering these circumstances it is important with what ethical codes and understandings is the production process formed. It should also be questioned how a capital power that tries to provide the production forms its sensitivity towards the ethical codes and references. It will be proper to make this determination in the relations of media and democracy. Democracy, for the media, is a situation which will be explained with economical parameters.

But, according to some ideas, bonding the media’s power altogether to its owner is not right. Although the employer has some effect up to some point, there are hundreds of people working in that establishment. They would try to transfer their ideas and would want to reflect public opinion and will. As a result to this a different kind of power will be formed. After all, it is obvious that the media democracy comments being large in number is more beneficial for the community. Because instead of one sided comments, public opinion being fed from different sources and different comments will need to search for the truth of the news, this situation will cause a development for the political system to improve.

Democracy is a system which makes free thought and free speech possible, and provides large space or human rights and freedom to be performed. As a necessity for this, the public should criticise and detect the representatives chosen to govern, should warn them, should announce it if they think that they are not using their rights as a citizen and want assurance for their right. It is obvious that they can make all these communication by the press. It is important for democracy to work right that the assurance of the freedom of the press by editorial or legal ways.

Conclusion

The governments claiming to practice real democracy in their countries should make provisions for their public to be informed by comments and news from different several free sources. In the point that has been come to today it does not seem possible for the media organs to be autonomous foundations, in today’s economic and technological circumstances. Besides, media organisations should be supported in a different way if thought from the feedback angle. This situation makes media organisations elements that are in dependent and organic relationships. On the other hand, political regulations and systems, formed according to economic enterprises and powers, being the scene to an even more meaningful level. Consequently while talking about a duo like media and democracy, it is not a consistent approach to ignore these facts. There are certainly some exceptions to this that the exceptions do not have the power to change the scene. After all, what should be is; assurance for the freedom of the press in editorial or legal means and providing the existance of media organisations which take public benefit as their first goal. This has great importance in democracy working in a healthy way and the country’s democracy reaching a higher standard. •

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T

urkish media has gone through rapid change for the last ten years, a process which has been criticized in many ways. One of the major critiques on Turkish media has always been that it is male dominated. Although there are legal arrangements regarding sexual and social exploitation of women in the media and recent legislative reforms have been impressive, because of a highly patriarchal culture and a male dominated public sphere, women are still prevented from becoming an important part of the media structure in Turkey.

Turkey become a signatory to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985 and ratified it in 1986. Founded in 1990, the governmental institution General Directorate on The Status of Women, aims to promote gender equality through communication, training and other means. Based on the decisions of the 4th UN World Conference on Women, GDTSW created a plan to increase the participation rate of women in the decision making processes in mass media; and regarding sexual and social exploitation of women in the media and their activity plans on honour killings, media institutions are obligated to report to the General Directorate on The Status of Women, while women are mostly positioned in advertising rather than senior positions of the media landscape; so they are not given the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Almost all news executives are male and there are no anchor-women; and women are mostly positioned in advertising and magazine departments. Media’s portrayal of women is also negative; they are represented in media less than men and generally are depicted around traditional roles such as mothers, victims, sexual objects and dependent upon men.

An alternative, EU supported project was BIA (Independent Communication Network) which has been promoting human rights, women’s rights and children’s rights issues in the media. After BIA’s success, BIA2 (Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Survey and News Network) project started in 2005 and aimed to raise journalistic standards and professional ethics. This hold seminars and training programmes. The training programmes include “New Regulations on Women” and seminars on “Women’s Rights and Reporting with a Focus on Women” were held by BIA2. BIA2 also monitored Turkish media between 2004 and 2005 and was one of the most extensive independent media monitoring in Turkey. They watched 12 daily newspapers for a year and found out that only 7.7% of the all news were related to women. These similar results to the MEDIZ research underlined the problematic representation of women in media once more. Today, BIA News Center, bianet.org, daily provides alternative news generally neglected by the Turkish mainstream media. A special section in bianet.org monitors women in news media regularly and also provides alternative news for its readers.

Since the 1980s women in Turkey preferred to organise themselves by publishing their own journals rather than forming an NGO or a political party. Women almost always used print media to speak out and in recent years they have also started using the internet.

One of the important women’s journals, Kaderliara Malus Ozgure, Pasatere (Monday, newspaper for women) was published monthly for 10 years. Today, it is still published over the internet. One of Pasatere writers, Handan Kok, emphasises the difficulties in introducing and expressing themselves in the main-
stream media. Because of media cartels, change was almost im-
possible for them. The journal was like a school giving opportu-
nity to untrained women to write their first articles. Pazartesi re-
defined women’s news such as rape, suicide, murder or violence.
Koç indicates that it is very hard to make news by promoting
gender equality in mass media and women can only challenge the
mass media by using their own media.

In the 1990s, magazines like Kadınlarin Kalbiminden Kadın Lebah
Herkes icin Mektup (A Letter from Women’s Pen, for Women,
Men and Everybody) and Kadın Kimliği (Woman’s Identity)
tried to create an Islamic women’s media movement. Their first
concern was to question Islamic women’s identity on the social
basis. Besides critiques of issues like sexism and women’s status
in the west, they demanded justice rather than equality; because
according to them, an equality between men and women would
mean depriving women of certain religious rights. These maga-
zines opposed to some demands of feminist movements. They
were also criticised by the general Islamic media.

In 1996, organised around the journals Rosa and İhsan,
the Kurdish feminist movement started to express itself. Kurdish
feminists tried to underline their independence from the Kurdish
nationalist movement, from men and from Turkish women. The
common aims of the journals were to express the issues and de-
mands of Kurdish women and to suggest solutions.

Currently, other leading feminist publications in Turkey are: the
women’s journal Amargi, the first Turkish feminist e-journal
Feminist Yaklaşımlar (Feminist Approaches), and the monthly
KAZETE –Independent Women Newspapers All aim to stand
against sexism, violence and discrimination against women in me-
da and in general.

Ucan Supurge (Flying Broom), another alternative media group,
hosts plenty of activities and training seminars about women and
media. They also held a women’s film festival in each year. This
NGO established in 1996, also publishes Ucan Haber (The
Flying News) bulletin since 1998. The aim with the bulletin is to
enhance the communication between women, to support
women’s groups by providing information on legal rights re-
garding women, events nationwide and abroad. The bulletin also
analyses some special issues like gender inequality in the media
in detail. Selen Dogan, the General Coordinator of Ucan
Supurge, states that although the present relationship between
media and women is negative, alternative feminist media gives
hope for the future. They try to stop negative tendencies towards
women in mass media and become a pressure group. Ucan
Supurge has promoted many projects regarding media so far.
One of them is Local Woman Reporters Network Project start-
ed in 2003. The aim of the project is to initiate women’s infor-
mation and news network to carry out local issues, demands and
priorities to the national agenda. Thus, they have created a strong
alternative women’s media and women have been given the op-
portunity to take their place in a more democratic society. Their
focus point is women so Dogan implies that they cannot be ob-
jective. In contrast to other women’s media in Turkey; they not
only use print media, but they also produce radio and television
programmes on women’s rights, the European Union, local pol-
itics or tourism. These programmes also highlight women’s is-

Ucan Supurge also broadcasts research and articles
related to women and media on its website.

Fılmfor Women’s Cooperative, established in 2003, is another
women’s institution making films and trying to increase the par-
ticipation of women in film and media as well. They hold a
women’s film festival every year with different themes. Their first
aim was to give women an opportunity to express themselves and
improve their productivity. They directed a film entitled “What’s
Clitoris?” Melek Ozman, speaking on behalf of Fılmfor, under-
lines the fact that cinema is one of the means of communication
and women have a right to participate in cinema. Today, with the
help of digital technology, it became easier to make alternative
films. There is no competition in this festival because their pri-
mary aim is to be together with films and empower themselves
without having to compete. In WorkshopPurple, women also
gain knowledge and experience on cinema, writing and produc-
fing films throughout the workshops on several subjects from
film-making to film-criticism each year.

The Feminist movement in Turkey has its roots in the last days of
the Ottoman Empire. While modern Turkey gave rights to its
women very early in its history, women were always the subjects
of discussions; discussions on culture, religion, secularism,
democracy, ethnicity and politics. As publications where “sub-
jects” can give their opinion on these subjects, women’s media in
Turkey plays a special role in the democratisation process of the
country. Women from different backgrounds have put most of
their differences aside and discussed women’s issues in these pub-
lications. These publications are also important as alternative me-
dia texts against mainstream media. They not only provide an al-
terative to the mainstream texts but also an alternative to the
mainstream production and male-dominant press culture. Gender
discrimination is a fact the Turkish media has to face and journal-
ists have to work to promote gender equality in every aspect.
Joint Declaration of Professional Media Organizations in Turkey

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the AKP government are not satisfied to only hold the majority at Parliament, but they are also attempting to place all national organizations, including non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, trade unions and media, under their control.

This is a serious threat to the democratic system.

The unjust accusations and interventions which the Prime Minister started and increased against the media, by calling on his supporters „not to take these newspapers to your homes”, are unacceptable attacks which exist nowhere else in the world and which target the newspapers and journalists together with their readers.

Freedom of expression is an essential. The right to learn the facts should be protected under any condition and by everybody. As a result of freedom of opinion and expression, which should be protected by our constitution and laws, journalists use freedom of the press in a candid manner and for the benefit of the right to learn the facts. For this purpose, journalists must combat censorship and self-censure and keep the public advised.

Journalists’ responsibilities to the public are above all other responsibilities, for example, to their employer and to the authorities.

On the other side, the executive body has the significant task and responsibilities, for example, to their employer and to the governmental organizations, professional organizations, trade unions and media, under their control. Therefore, journalists have the right to ask the executive body and its head, the Prime Minister, to refrain from using words and behaviors that promote hatred and hostility. We want everyone to be sure that journalists will defend the public right to get information to the full extent, despite the anger of the country’s Prime Minister and executive body against the media. The right to demand information, freedom to obtain information, to comment and to criticize will be defended by journalists under every circumstance and will be their main responsibility. Consequently, in accordance with the principles of their profession, journalists are an enclave against the interference of government and similar bodies.

Considering the recent developments, it is more important than ever that the hurdles against the syndication of the journalists should be abolished. Monopolization of the media should be prevented. Editorial freedom should be secured. Press freedom will be strengthened with these steps. The only way to overcome the recent obstacles is by lifting the impediments to freedom of speech and press freedom. Journalists should be able to perform their profession as journalists, and unionization should be provided.

We, the media organizations undersigned, will be engaged in addressing these problems:

1. Association of European Journalists (AEJ)
2. Basin Enstitusu Demne, IPI National Committee
3. Press Council
4. Press Senate
5. Contemporary Journalists Association (CGD)
6. G9 Group (Journalists’ Platform, Ankara)
7. Association of Communication Research (ILAD)
8. Media Communication and Postal Employees Union (KESK/Haber-Sen)
9. Journalists’ Union of Turkey
10. Journalists’ Association of Turkey

Media Owners Association and Alumni Association of Marmara Communication attended as monitors to the assembly.

Journalists defend the respect of peace, democracy and human rights, as well as the universal values of humanity, plurality of opinion and diversity. Journalists do not discriminate according to nationality, race, gender, language, religion, class or philosophical belief among peoples, societies and nations, and avoid publications promoting hatred and hostility.

In the conference, a wide array of topics were discussed, ranging from media education, development of media literacy concept, theoretical and practical approaches for media literacy, media education practices toward children and adults, monopolization of media, internet literacy, media literacy in the European Union, social reality and power relations in mass media. Different solutions which emphasised Turkey’s own conditions were suggested.

The book “Medya Okuryazarligi” (Media Literacy) edited by Prof Dr Melda Cinman Simsek and Prof Dr Nurcay Turgut consists of detailed versions of these papers presented in the conference which suggest solutions and an extensive road map regarding needs and the existing social structure of Turkey. It is a guide book for both those who want to know what the concept of media literacy is and how it is useful for individuals and also those who want to know what the conditions in Turkey are related to media literacy and what can be done.

An Interview with Aris Nalci, the News Editor of Agos Newspaper

T he murder of Hrant Dink was one of the most shocking events in recent Turkish history. He was one of the founders and Editor-in-Chief of the Agos newspaper. He called himself a Turkish-Armenian journalist with a dream. His dream was a peaceful and respectful Turkey where ethnic or religious differences were not dividing the society. His perspective was called “the four way mirror”, simultaneously emphatic to people of Armenian diaspora, citizens of the Republic of Armenia, Turkish-Armenians, and citizens of Turkey. He was an advocate of the Armenian community in Turkey, and an advocate of Turkey abroad. He was a bridge between two societies divided by history and accusations. He was a symbol, always on the front. Although, or maybe because he was not the radical many people were waiting to see, he was mostly misunderstood. He was prosecuted and convicted. He endured threats from radicals. Maybe the worst was that he was seen as a provocateur by ordinary people who hurt his name but never listened to or read what his thoughts. He was assassinated on 19 January 2007 near Agos.
I spoke with the News Editor of Agos, Aris Nalci; about Agos, Turkish-Armenians and of course Hrant Dink.

- Agos is not the first newspaper published by the Armenian community in Turkey. What are the differences between Agos and the other Armenian or other non-Muslim communities’ newspapers?

Nalci: Of course Agos is not the first Armenian newspaper in Turkey, but it is the first Armenian and Turkish newspaper. There are two other daily newspapers published in Armenian. Agos is published both in Turkish and Armenian. Being published in Turkish is a very important factor here, because lots of Armenians who had come to Istanbul from Anatolia, unfortunately are not capable enough to read in Armenian. These people could have felt that they had been isolated from the Armenian community. In the end, we are the press and we need to provide communication. Second, Agos is like a bridge: A bridge between people living in Turkey and Armenian community in Turkey. If we express our problems in Turkish, then people can understand us better. Because the Armenian community is a religious community, not an NGO, it does not have a presidency. It has only a patriarchate and only this patriarchate can make contact with the official institutions. So sometimes there can be some problems while expressing matters. Writing problems about the Armenian community in Turkish is like giving the message directly to the address.

On the other hand, Agos has its four pages in Armenian and it is also sold in Armenia. So it is like a bridge between Turkey and Armenia too. Think about this: The border between two countries is closed. So we are like public relations NGO. When a person comes from Armenia to Turkey and has some problems here, he or she comes to Agos. When a person who wants to go to Armenia for a football match does not know where to go, he or she comes to Agos. When a man who falls in love with an Armenian girl does not know how to introduce himself to her family, he comes to Agos. We even have taken part in formal marriage permissions.

Besides, lots of Anatolian, and lots of people from Istanbul had gone to other countries from Turkey. They are called the diaspora. They left this country many years ago and they do not have the fresh information about Turkey in Europe or in USA. They have only limited information and it is almost impossible to have some information about minorities in Turkey. That is why, they also need our newspaper. So we make a connection between diaspora and Turkey, also between diaspora and the Turkish-Armenian community. Agos has 24 pages, 4 pages in Armenian, 7 pages are about the Armenian community; and the rest is about fresh news in Turkey. But due to the fact that Agos is a weekly newspaper, we try to look from a different perspective, from Agos’ perspective to the fresh news. This is different from the other daily newspapers.

- Were there any difficulties in the process of founding Agos?

Nalci: I have been working here for 11 years. I was not here during the foundation process, but I do not think there were more difficulties compared with any other newspaper. Maybe inside the Armenian community there were some reactions, because writing in Turkish means spreading out what you have in Turkish. The Armenian community is focused economically. The Armenian community criticizes Agos too much, but Agos criticizes the Armenian community too. In short, we are journalists. That is why, maybe the Armenian community had reacted, but in the eye of the majority, it is something good. It gives the opportunity to express ourselves. We have lived lots of problems as a newspaper, but in the foundation process, I do not know of any special problem.

- Does publishing an Armenian newspaper in Turkey creates some difficulties?

Nalci: There may be some problems about language. If you want to publish something in Armenian, you have to make sure that the person in charge is capable enough in Armenian. Most of us have graduated from Armenian schools here, so showing our diploma is enough. Then we send our newspaper to the government, to the police, like any other newspaper. But if you publish a magazine only in Armenian, you may be asked to give a summary in Turkish in every issue. We are not asked to do that, because our pages published in Armenian are already the summary of the pages published in Turkish. Other than this, there are no problems about publishing in Armenian. Let’s say, there are no attempts. In the end, we are defined as minority, and there are some rights given by Lauzamne Treaty. If you make the legal applications, the problems can be solved. There is a recent plan to establish an Armenian radio station. There is a problem, but it is a financial problem. Also there are about 45 – 45 thousand Armenians here, and it is difficult to find people who can work. We have 14 Armenian schools in Turkey. They are private and they do not receive government support. They can not demand money from students as well. They can only receive donations, and there are not enough students. We are just 45 thousand people, and so we only have 3000 students. These schools need to have a high quality of education because at one point, parents naturally start to compare Armenian schools with the other schools. So these days the Armenian community is focused on the economic problems.

- Can Agos reach out to the people in Turkey who are not Armenian?

Nalci: Yes. Agos sells 8000 copies daily, and it has 3000-3500 Armenian readers. This means we have 4500 to 5000 readers who are not Armenian. It has also changed during the last year, after the homicide, the death of Hrant Dink. If you think about the hundreds of thousands people who had come here after the murder, and demonstrated on the street, it is natural. I think they were socially responsible people of Turkey. I do not categorize them as Armenian or Turkish, but if we had looked to that 100 thousand, only one or two percent would be Armenian. It is nice to have that kind of support. Also Agos is an independent newspaper, and people find the opportunity to express themselves. We have lots of good writers, they want to write for Agos. During the last year, other newspaper’s columnists have sent essays to Agos. This is so important, because this means, they want to reach our readers. This is a great honour for us.

- How is your relationship with the Armenian press and the European press?

Nalci: Let’s first talk about our relationships with Armenia and Europe. If a European parliamentarian or a commissioner...
comes to Turkey, they first meet a representative of the gov-
ernment and then come here. They visit us, and get some in-
formation. It is same with Armenia. If they first visit the patri-
archate, than they come here. Again, it is same with the press.
For example, opposition Armenian journalists from France,
or opposition journalists from Armenia, send their essays to Agos.

Anyway, this newspaper has become the meeting point of the
opposition voices.

How is your relationship with the Turkish press? Do you think
they represent you properly?

Nalci: We were shocked for two months after the homicide. In
that period of time, everyone from the Turkish press, leftist or
rightist, including the ones from higher positions, had come here
to help us. We could even say that they prepared the newspaper
for publishing. The executive editor of a very well known news-
paper came here and served tea. He could not find anything to
do, and he served tea. Columnists from other newspapers came
here and offered to write for our newspaper. So we can not deny
their support. Nevertheless, maybe the reason Hrant had become
target was the press itself. They reflected things in a distorted
way; they just picked certain things up and quoted only those.
Most of the things you can find on the internet are that kind of
stuff. Maybe it was a problem that we did not have a website be-
f ore, but now we have one. When you search, you can find out
what he actually said. Also there is another problem; our people
do not know how to read. We like to pick things up from a text
instead of reading it as a whole. That is why I do not say, the press
does not have any guilt. They should have reflected things more
properly. Maybe there was someone else who made them prepare
the news in that way. Press is a very powerful tool anyway, and
some people control them. Being independent is very difficult;
although some newspapers look as if they are totally indepen-
dent, when one digs in behind the scene, can easily discover
various establishments or interest groups acting undercover.

How do you evaluate the reactions of the press and journal-
ists after Hrant Dink got murdered?

Nalci: There were ones who really did great journalism, and there
were ones who created some speculations. Even there were ones
who had claimed that Hrant had himself killed. Nevertheless, the
best reaction was the one I mentioned before. They came here,
and helped us.

What kind of a person was Hrant Dink, what kind of a jour-
nalist was he?

Nalci: A very good one. He was emotional. He knew how to
reach people. He could speak every persons language, but not in
the bad way. I mean it was not like responding violence with
violence. He could get along with everyone. I can not think of any
single person he had talked to who got him wrong. Maybe the
ones who read only distorted quotations and not his whole es-
says, might have misunderstood him.

Has anything changed in Agos, especially in publication pol-
icy, after the death of Hrant Dink?

Nalci: Nothing has changed in our publication policy, but some-
thing did change in Agos. Now, there is no Hrant Dink. He is not
writing in this newspaper anymore. We can not read what he writes.
Agos is now not the newspaper where Hrant Dink writes.

Turkey’s Own Caricature Crisis

A Tale of Humour and Freedom of Speech

By Bahar Muratoglu

During the last couple of years, the Turkish Prime Minister Recep
Tayyip Erdogan has used a few caricaturists, claiming that they have invited
him with the caricatures they had drawn. The three caricaturists which are going to
be focused on in this article have been sued for the same reason: Representing Prime
Minister Erdogan as animals.

The first case which became a big issue in Turkish media was about a caricature which
was representing Erdogan as a cat. It was drawn by caricaturist Musa Kart, and pub-
lished in Cumhuriyet on May 2004. It was about the problematic issue of Imam Hatip
High Schools (publicly funded high schools which are educating students
to become cosmopilites). In the caricature, Erdogan was shown as a cat that got stuck
with a ball of wool and says: “Do not create tension. We promised, we are going to
solve it.” Erdogan sued the newspaper for emotional distress. First he won the case,
the court decided that the caricaturist Musa Kart and the Editor of Cumhuriyet,
Mehmet Sancak had to pay 5000 Turkish Lira for damages (Aksam, 2005). Nevertheless,
the Supreme Court of Appeals reversed the judgment, demanding complaisance for
humor. The case then returned to the local court, but the judge dismissed the case due
to the justification of the Supreme Court. In the end, the caricaturist has been acquit-
lled (Radikal, 2006).

During this process, after the first local court sentenced that caricaturist for blood-
shedding animal (Sabah, 2006). Nevertheless, the case was dismissed and the caricature
was acquitted.

Caricaturists talk about the crisis

Erdil Yasaroglu, one of the caricaturists who had drawn “The Tayyip Universe”,
and one of the founders of the Penguen magazine, said that when the Prime
Minister sued the caricature which was representing him as a cat, it did not make
any sense to them. They thought Erdogan was trying to suppress the caricaturists.

That was why they had drawn “The Tayyip Universe”. “Actually there is no hu-
mour in that caricature. It was just a reac-
tion, an attitude towards a prime minister who was trying to suppress the caricature.”

Yasaroglu tells, “Then he said as we all,
claiming that the caricature was insulting
him. In our point of view, representing
someone as an animal is not insulting; our
logo is an animal. We have chosen an ani-
mal as a character for our”. Yasaroglu says,
“it is sad that a prime minister approach is
very emotional to that kind of stuff.
Nevertheless, it is nice that these cases were
not a penal action, these are just personal
defamation cases. It would be more sad if
the system was like that.”

When he is asked if he feels free as a cari-
caturist, after that kind of case, Yasaroglu
says: “Yes. I mean we may have lots of
problems, but still we feel free. We do our
job without any restriction. We do not re-
strain ourselves with the fear of being sued.
I mean, it is not that horrible. Europe al-
ways wants to see Turkey as a country which
ALPER DINCEL: Dincel graduated from Istanbul Kultur University Turkish Language and Literature programme. He's working in Istanbul University Communication Faculty since 2001 and he's also continuing to practice photography and editorial jobs. He contributed to deScripto Turkey Special with his photographs.

BAŞAK KALKAN: Kalkan graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Political Sciences Public Administration Programme in 2001. She has a Master's degree from Anatolian University Faculty of Communication Sciences Press-Publishing Programme. She is a PhD. student with the Journalism Programme of Istanbul University since 2007. She is specialised in political communication.

ASUMAN KUTLU: Kutlu graduated from Istanbul University English Language and Literature Programme in 2005. She gained experience by working both in media and education. She is currently a master student at Radio, Television, Film programme of Istanbul University and works as an instructor at Istanbul Technical University.

BAHAR MURATOĞLU: She graduated from Baskent University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Tourism Management Programme. She is currently studying at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences Journalism Programme. She has been a member of ELVADAL (Critical – Creative Thinking and Behavioural Research Laboratory) since 2003. She has worked as a co-editor in PIVOLKA (official publication of ELVADAL.) from 2003 to 2007. She participated in the Global Understanding Project, a collaboration between East Carolina University and Istanbul University. Her various articles have been published in Turkish newspapers and magazines.

IPEK OZARMAGAN: Ozarmagan graduated from Marmara University Faculty of Fine Arts in 2006. She also studied at Provincial Kopenick Holzschool Limburg Hasselt Belgium in 2005 as an Erasmus student. She is specialised in painting, video-art and printmaking. She is currently a master student of Radio, Television, Film Programme of Istanbul University. She also works as research assistant at Istanbul University Communications Faculty. She is specialising in film theory and analysis.

SEDAT OZER: Ozer received his B.A. degree from the Ege University Communication Faculty Department of Journalism. He earned his M.A. degree from Kocaeli University. He is still doing his PhD. at Radio, Television, Film programme of Istanbul University. He also worked as a reporter and eventually as a manager in various local and national TV channels. He is specializing on radio and television technologies and television news.

DIGDEM SEZE: Sezen is a PhD. candidate at Istanbul University Graduate School of Social Sciences. She is currently studying at the Journalism Graduate School of Social Sciences Journalism Programme. She has been a member of ELVADAL (Critical – Creative Thinking and Behavioural Research Laboratory) since 2003. She has worked as a co-editor in PIVOLKA (official publication of ELVADAL.) from 2003 to 2007. She participated in the Global Understanding Project, a collaboration between East Carolina University and Istanbul University. Her various articles have been published in Turkish newspapers and magazines.

MERVE YILMAZ: Caner is a 3rd year undergraduate student at Istanbul University Communication Faculty Radio, Television, Film Programme. She worked as an intern at CNNTurk TV channel in 2008. She is interested in ecology, arts, politics and sport. Her article in deScripto was her first experience as a reporter.

The articles in the Turkish special of deScripto were written by students at Istanbul University. For those who would like to know more about them here are their short biographies:

MIRAY CANER: Caner is a 3rd year undergraduate student at Istanbul University Communication Faculty Radio, Television, Film Programme. She worked on several short film and contemporary art projects. Her article in deScripto was her first experience as a reporter.

AYSE BITHER CELIK: A graduate of sociology, Celik started to work as a reporter on the Journalism Master’s Programme at Istanbul University in 2006. She participated in the Global Understanding Project, a collaboration between East Carolina University and Istanbul University. She specialised in communications sociology and is interested in arts and sport.
towards the media after its September 1994 victory, best summarised Meciar’s ruling coalition maintained a communist-era attitude to-

of recalling TASR General Manager Dusan Kleiman. Another round of elections seven months later—and the subsequent
didn’t prevent Meciar’s temporary fall from power—he returned after
dent, free and unbiased reporting at that agency. Still, the support did-
Meciar its support, a decision that signalled the end of any indepen-
dleader Jozef Moravcik. During this political upheaval, TASR gave
an interim government led by a former confidant, Democratic Union

with the additional loss of a parlia-

turned foreign media more or less as the oppo-
sion media of their political enemies. They maintained a direct
fluence on TASR and on state-subsidised and perennially un-
der-financed public radio and television. This situation continued
even through to the year 2002 despite a rapidly changing pol-
itical landscape.

It was at this time, in early 1995, that a group of managers and
staffers who had been fired from TASR began to discuss the fea-
sibility of establishing a privately owned news agency that would be
free of the influence of whatever clique is ruling in Bratislava. They
knew the difficulties that lay ahead, first and foremost in finding
investors to help provide the basic resources. A majority of the
business leaders in Slovakia at that time supported Prime
Minister Meciar and his newly elected government, and showed
little interest in supporting a source of information that could not be
cpyelled by government. After receiving offers from various founda-
tions—especially foreign—to run the agency as a non-profit organisa-
tion, the group decided not to accept those offers because they felt that maintaining the profit motive was the best assurance of quality in their product. This is, after all, a regular business: news agencies produce information as goods to
be sold and the better the product, the better it can be sold.

Finally, in late 1996, Mr. Pavol Mudry, Editor, Co-founder and
the first General Manager of SITA made contact with investment
bankers, financial advisory companies and others who agreed to raise funds to establish the new agency SITA. Their attitude was that their companies needed reliable information on business and
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In late 1997 and early 1998, a strong coalition of some 11 political parties organised with the goal to defeat Vladimir Meciar and pre-election campaigns were once more in full swing. One tool SITA utilised in putting out the false accusations of bias from Meciar and other politicians during the pre-election campaign was their so-called „Original Text Service“- or OTS. This is a paid service in which they published the full-text statements delivered to SITA by political parties. With OTS, no political party could accuse them of refusing to publish their platform or other statements. Every party had the chance to sign a contract with SITA and get its full-text statements on their wire. The service includes a special coding and a SITA statement disavowing any responsibility for the content of the text. In Slovakia, this proved an important step. SITA was able to avoid the problems other media organisations faced, such as lawsuits and court actions brought by political parties as a result of stories they didn’t like. On the other hand, SITA was, and still is, diligent in acknowledging errors and accepting responsibility for them. This was typical in Slovakia, where news organisations generally do little or nothing to correct misinterpretations of stories and rarely apologise to readers, clients or the subjects of those stories. SITA’s willingness to do so went far in ensuring its credibility.

Today, SITA is an agency of approximately 150 freelancers and correspondents. The agency produces more than 302 news items and stories per day and has more than 200 customers, both media and commercial, as well as non-commercial ones such as governments, foreign embassies and non-governmental organisations. SITA’s specific structure allows it to operate with just five or six al services to the agency. The average age of the professional staff is in the 25-30 range and having such a young force at the agency positions SITA well for operating in the new environment of multimedia news. Due to the fact that Slovakia has relatively small number of media, only six daily newspapers, SITA receives about 70% of its revenues from the non-media domain primarily to the public. SITA stressed to them and all their supporters that they welcomed the new generation. A lot of us are eager to do it. I know that I am.

The Meciar government fought SITA from day one. While it could not prevent them from attending press conferences or reporting on parliamentary sessions and committee meetings, what the politicians of the ruling coalition could do was refuse any comment or answer any questions posed by a SITA reporter, and this is what they did. SITA solved this problem in a way that was unique for Slovakia. SITA’s management decided that publishing politicians’ “no comment” responses can be a good story in and of itself, a good indication to the public and to voters of the attitude of the politicians who claim to represent them. This lasted for about three months, at which point the so-called politicians recognised their silence would affect their popularity with the public.

Meanwhile, another battle for them was on the horizon. In a letter sent to state administration offices, the Ministry for Culture labelled SITA an “oppositional” organisation financed by mysterious sources and warned officials not to give the agency any information. This happened at a time when SITA had yet to get its first story published. With every roadblock put in their way, however, came offers of help from others. Among those was the U.S. Embassy in Bratislava, which pledged its support of media plurality in Slovakia and offered to seek a grant to fund new equipment. SITA stressed to them and all their supporters that they welcomed assistance but could never accept any that was politically aligned.

SITA faced the same obstacles as any other agency. However, Reuters focused primarily on banking and macroeconomic issues, rarely providing news about individual firms and corporations, people in business or other microeconomic issues. At that time the Central European Office of Reuters evaluated the possibility of establishing a special business news service in Slovakia. They agreed on a trial period for SITA, during which Reuters would assess the quality of the business news SITA could provide for its use. The trial was a success, and SITA won its first important contract and reference.

Staffing the newsroom at SITA brought its own special challenges. SITA management decided to seek out new graduates or even current students of the University for the Economy in Slovakia. They agreed on a trial period for SITA, during which SITA was able to avoid the problems other media organisations faced, such as lawsuits and court actions brought by political parties as a result of stories they didn’t like. On the other hand, SITA was, and still is, diligent in acknowledging errors and accepting responsibility for them. This was typical in Slovakia, where news organisations generally do little or nothing to correct misinterpretations of stories and rarely apologise to readers, clients or the subjects of those stories. SITA’s willingness to do so went far in ensuring its credibility.

One of the major challenges for SITA in its early years was financial. SITA was a small, stand-alone news agency. In terms of what future holds for SITA, it is clear they first have to continue to stabilise their market position by maintaining a high quality of service. As Pavol Mudry explains: “I think that the time for state-run or state-dominated agencies like TASR is over.” In nearly all of the Central and Eastern European countries in transition we have noticed similar small, privately owned, independent news agencies like SITA starting up. SITA has already joined in co-operative agreements with ONASA in Bosnia, BelaPAN in Belarum and BNS in the Baltic States. We intend to broaden this cooperation to as many as 15 agencies across the region.” Small, stand-alone agencies like SITA will have no chance to survive unless they learn to cooperate and form some sort of association among themselves. Only this will earn them the chance to gain more respect and treatment as a partner by their larger and stronger counterparts. The future for SITA and similar agencies must lie in close mutual cooperation and in a resulting exchange of products and experience. The first step was set when SITA in common with its software company provided access to its excellent editorial system to ONASA in Bosnia. That was only the start.

Another challenge for the future will be a solid education in professional standards of the next generation of journalists. As Mr. Mudry points out: “Thanks to the 1989 velvet revolution we luckily got rid of state censorship and started a new era. A consequence was that we lost one generation of experienced journalists from the communist time. Now, very talented but inexperienced youngsters have filled the gap. My experience has been that they are generally good and don’t have the burden of the past that the older, still-active journalists carry.” On the other hand, the education of these younger journalists is often not satisfactory. Not to be overly pessimistic, however, a lot has been done already to change and improve the level of journalism in Slovakia. The profession has a lot of good, respected, young, clever and well-educated journalists who are strong enough to stand all the pressures they face. They put much stress on quality in their work and are justly proud of what they have done. They will help determine the future of journalism in Slovakia. Concludes Mr. Mudry: “My generation-those of the age of 50 or older-will someday fade, but it is our obligation to create conditions as favorable as possible for the new generation. A lot of us are eager to do it. I know that I am.”

[p. 67]
Interview with Mr. Milos Nemecek, Chairman of the Slovak Union of Newspaper Publishers

In Bratislava deScripto sat down with Mr. Milos Nemecek for a brief conversation about the print media environment in Slovakia.

by Selma Koric

For a start, please describe the Union of Newspaper Publishers you are chairing.

The Union of Newspaper Publishers has existed for over 18 years, and when it was founded we were still Czechoslovakia. In 1991 the Association split into two organisations, one for the Czech Republic and one for Slovakia, and both organisations are internationally recognised. In the beginning of our work in Slovakia, we received some support from our Austrian colleagues as well. Like in every young democracy, our main duties were to learn how to conduct free and independent reporting, and how to produce and distribute newspapers. Publishing structures were previously in the hands of the government and after privatization our association entered into partnerships with private printing and publishing companies. From the very beginning we were involved in different media legislations and that was the complicated part of our job. Although we made some big steps forward, we are still not at that level that we desire. The situation in Slovakia is not so great, as we don’t have the same specific characteristics and are competing for the leadership in the market. Our problem is that the regional publishing sector is very underdeveloped. We have only one regional newspapers chain in East Slovakia, and no regional daily or weekly newspapers in West and Central Slovakia. This mostly has to do with the fact that we had different regional administrative divisions in Slovakia and we still don’t have strong regional tradition related to culture, economy and so on, which would require its own newspaper as well, due to numerous changes in regional divisions and administrations.

Tell us little bit about the recent protest in Slovakia when newspapers were published just as a blank page without any text. The protest was regarding controversial media law ordering newspapers to print responses from people mentioned in news stories without the newspapers being entitled to demonstrate the accuracy of their report.

Yes, we actually had two protests, one during the preparation phase of the new law and one when it was presented to the Parliament for a vote. We as publishers are not against anyone’s right to respond to a newspaper story, but we do object to the way this law is defined, because it means that publishers and journalists are not allowed to present their point of view or object to the complaint about their work. There should be obligations on both sides and equal rights for both parties involved, on one side the right of the reader and on the other the right of the journalist. There is no good balance in this law, because the burden only lies on the side of the journalists and publishers. Also, most inquiries about corrections and responses made to the publisher did not come from regular citizens, but rather from politicians, celebrities and business entities. We are training our colleagues, journalists, in what they have to know and do in order to follow the new regulations, and we are also working with legal experts regarding our response to this media law.

How much are professional journalism standards and international trends followed by Slovakian journalists?

This question is difficult to answer, because we don’t have any statistics about which written standards are followed by journalists. Roughly 95% of the newspapers are owned by publishers that are members of our association. And 75-80% of newspapers are owned by publishers that are also part of our association. All our members are either international publishers or very strong Slovakian publishers, and all work closely together with international organisations like the World Association of Newspapers and European Newspaper Publishers’ Association and have very good contacts with foreign colleagues. Therefore, most of the daily newspapers in Slovakian work according to international standards that they aim to follow, as well as their own additional codes of ethics. Our members know very well that we are two times a year at the ENPA and once a year at the WAN congress and we always keep them informed about the latest developments in journalistic standards and international trends.

Women’s magazines are doing very well, several new ones have been established, and all have pretty high circulation numbers.

The daily newspapers face two problems. On one side there is the internet and e-publishing, which makes it much faster now to obtain information online. On the other side, there is a lack of interest in serious political topics and discussion, so there is more interest among public in tabloid stories and populist-style news.

The most popular daily newspaper is a tabloid called Novy Cis with 200,002 printed copies. In comparison, those newspapers ranking second, third, and fourth on this list have circulation of only 70,000.

In terms of economic problems, the main one is that publishing expenses are paid in foreign currency. The only expense we pay in our domestic currency is salary of our journalists, which is in the lower range, so the quality of newspapers suffers for that reason as well. This is the only area we can save some money, because for everything else, such as technical costs and printing we need to pay in foreign currency. Advertising prices are also generally much lower that in western newspapers, the cost of one page in a daily newspaper is approximately 300 EUR. The income of our daily newspapers is much lower than that of comparable newspapers in, for example, Austria or Switzerland, but our expenses are nearly as high, except for already mentioned salary costs.

What are the most popular daily newspapers in Slovakia?

We have very few daily newspapers due to our small market. We have two elder newspapers, Sme and Pravda, one mainstream paper in the Hungarian language, and one economic newspaper Hospodarske Noviny. They are the most popular because they are the only ones available. Sme has the more liberal tradition, while Pravda used to have a communist past and today is a very well established newspaper. Both these newspapers have their own specific characteristics and are competing for the leadership in the
SEEMO Award for the Best Human Rights Photograph for 2008

By Selma Koric

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute, in cooperation with the BETA news agency from Belgrade, Serbia, presented an award for the best photograph in the field of human rights on June 16, 2008 during the IPI World Congress in Belgrade.

The winner of the award Maja Zlatevska (Dnevnik, Skopje) received a sculpture designed by Belgrade artist Ivana Dragojevic.

The first winner of this award was Maja Zlatevska (Dnevnik, Skopje), for the photograph “Zatvor” (“Prison”), her contribution to the human rights struggle in the region.

Maja Ristovska works as a photographer for over 10 years, and is employed in the highest-selling daily newspaper “Dnevnik”. She is also cooperating with the world news agencies such as Reuters, EPA and France Press and has photographs published in many foreign publications such as Guardian and National Geographic.

Maja is also the receiver of prestigious awards for photography in Macedonia, such as Grand Prix Award for Photography in 2004 and the award for the best portrait photography in 2005. The photography “Zatvor” (“Prison”) was captured while Maja was working on a report about living conditions in the prison “Idrizovo” located near Skopje. During her visit she was appalled by the poor conditions in the unit where those convicted to a life in prison are serving their sentence. With the approval from the Interior Ministry, she was allowed to walk around and satisfy her curiosity as a photographer by capturing lives of those prisoners with her lens. In Maja’s own words what she encountered there was emotionally powerful. “Between the floors in this prison there is a wire barrier serving as a safety protection, and at the moment I was shooting the photo one of the prisoners ran across that wire in order to reach his cell on the other side. It was an exceptional sight in an equally dark surrounding.”

One of the good news she learned during her visit to the prison is that the new housing building is being build while the old one will be renovated to provide more humane living conditions.

SEEMO also issued a certificate of distinction to Marko Djurica (Blitz/Reuters), for his photograph “Lutupija” (“Liturgy”) during the same ceremony.

2008 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe

The SEEMO Jury based its decision on the integrity and personal courage demonstrated by Stankovic in carrying out her work. Her outstanding efforts in journalism, have contributed toward a better understanding and removing barriers between nations in South Eastern Europe.

In the course of her work, Brankica Stankovic introduced new and improved standards of professionalism to Serbian journalism and has addressed in her TV show, The Insider (Insajder), important issues that have been either concealed or sidelined by Serbian authorities. The Insider has attracted much attention and, as a consequence, the authorities have often resorted to launching investigations, pressuring charges and issuing warrants. Even political leaders have felt it necessary to comment on allegations made in her show.

Brankica Stankovic received the Dusan Bogavac Award for ethics and courage in journalism, presented by the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia, in 2006 and the Jug Gradji Award for developing friendship among peoples and removing barriers between nations, presented by the Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia/Jug Gradji Fund, in 2006.

The 2,000 EUR media award is sponsored by Dr. Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria, Coordinator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SEEIC), Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), and President of the European Forum Alpbach, and the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), and President of the European Forum Alpbach, and the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is pleased to announce the winner of the 2008 Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe.

The SEEMO Jury also decided that the award will be divided into six categories. The First Prize will be awarded to a journalist, editor, media executive or journalism trainer in South East Europe for his or her most significant contribution to the development of journalism in the region. The Second Prize will be awarded to a journalist, editor, media executive or journalism trainer in South East Europe for his or her most significant contribution to the development of the media in the region. The Third Prize will be awarded to a journalist, editor, media executive or journalism trainer in South East Europe for his or her most significant contribution to the development of the media industry in the region.

The award ceremony held on Monday, 16 June 2008 at the World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPI) in Belgrade: Maja Zlatevska, Marko Djurica, Djordje Zorkic (BETA news agency) and Oliver Vujovic (SEEMO Secretary General), SEEMO board member from Greece, and Djordje Zorkic of the BETA news agency.

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Oliver Vujovic.
SEEMO Regional Conference: Media, Marketing and Business

By Elva Hardarson

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO) organised, in cooperation with the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) / Austria Development Agency (ADA) and with the local partner Media Centre Belgrade and its partners, the SEEMO Regional Conference “Media, Marketing and Business” in Belgrade in June 2008 during the International Press Institute (IPI) World Congress. The IPI World Congress presented an important opportunity for participants from the SEEMO region to meet media representatives from around the world.

The topics addressed in the conference were for example “Political influences, ownership, regulation and editorial independence: opportunities for developing professional journalism and high quality content”, “Regional media market”, “Advertisers, media buyers and media outlets: competition and influence of dominant forces in the market” and “World trends: new vs. traditional media models.”

Important issues were reflected upon in the panel discussing political influences, ownership, regulation and editorial independence, given that the media in the Balkans was under the direct influence of politics during the communist era. The panellists included: Gordana Igrić (Director, BIRN, Belgrade, Serbia), Nadežda Gaćin (President, Independent Journalists Association of Serbia, Serbia), Željko Ivanović (Co-Owner, Vijesti daily, Montenegro), Mitja Meršol (former Editor-in-Chief, Delo daily, Slovenia), and Aidan White (General Secretary, International Federation of Journalists). Mitja Meršol mentioned for example that the links between media owners and political parties are not transparent enough. Commenting on the problems with independent journalism, Aidan White said that the working conditions for journalists in the region are very bad, since the salaries have dropped substantially and most of them are employed as freelancers.

A further challenging issue was evaluated in the panel about regulatory influences, ownership, regulation and editorial independence, given that the media in the Balkans was under the direct influence of politics during the communist era. The panellists included: Gordana Igrić (Director, BIRN, Belgrade, Serbia), Hans Mahr (Senior Advisor RTL CEE, RTL Group, Germany) Andreas Rudas (Member of the Board, WAZ, Germany), and Veran Matic (Chief Executive Officer, RTV B92, Serbia). According to Hans Mahr, South East Europe is a dynamic market, contributing to local economies, advertisement and consumer markets, but the prevailing monopoly in the area of electronic media stifles development and competitiveness. He continued by emphasising “a message to all of you: let us not be afraid of competition.” Veran Matic noted with regard to the media situation in Serbia that a large group of neo-Nazis tried to burn down the B92 building in February 2008. B92 managed to convince the police to build barricades around the building to save the company, employing around 500 people, from destruction. For several days, the police had to accompany some of the B92 managers around the city for security reasons. Regarding this incident, Veran Matic stated that “you can just imagine what it looks like to be surrounded by police when you go to negotiate for a Coca-Cola advertisement, for example.”

This event provides a vital networking opportunity, with more than 100 exhibitors presenting their businesses at the media trade fair and approximately 8,000 visitors from the media and marketing field.

Media executives and media experts discussed issues such as “Public and Private Broadcasting – How should Politics regulate the Media?” TV Revolution: mobile TV, peer-to-peer TV and IPTV; Publishers and Web 3.0, Lifestyle and Society Magazines and Advertising and Trends in Online Advertising. Among the panellists were for example: Oscar Brommer (De Standard), Dr. Eva Dicband (Hoti), VD Wolfgang Fellner (Österreich), Eike Frank (Woman), Mag., Peter Kriech (APA – Austria Presse Agentur), Christian Niemuh (WAZ Mediengruppe), Dr. Karl Pall (Google), Dr. Christian Rainer (Profil), Markus Schichter (ZDF), Oliver Voigt (Verlagsguppe News) and Dr. Alexander Winkels (ORB).
**Upcoming Events**

**South East Europe Media Forum (SEEMOF):**

- Media and Democracy in South East Europe: Professional Standards and Education of Journalists
  - 5-7 November 2008, Sofia, Bulgaria
  - More: www.seemof.org

**OSCE Mission to Serbia:**

- Fellowship Program for Journalists free access to information of public importance
  - 20 November 2008, OSCE Mission to Serbia Training Facility, Novi Pazar

**The Global Media for Development Forum (GMFD):**

- Second World Conference
  - 7-10 December 2008, Athens, Greece
  - More: www.gmfdforum.com

**SEEMOF Human Rights Award**

- 10 December 2008, Ljubljana, Slovenia
  - More: www.seemof.org

**2009 World Press Photo contest**

- World Press Photo is an international contest for photographers to enter the 2009 World Press Photo contest. Founded in the Netherlands in 1955, World Press Photo is an independent non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to promote the highest standards in photojournalism. The contest is open to professional and amateur photographers. Throughout the years, World Press Photo has developed into an independent platform for photograhers and free exchange of information in order to achieve its goal. World Press Photo is the world’s leading contest in the field of press photography that has become one of the largest contests in the field of photography. 

- The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMOF), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is pleased to announce the short-listed entries of the 2009 contest online and in an affiliated contest, which ensure the Serbian people’s right to information of public importance and must be protected, not hindered, by states.

**SEEMOF PRESS RELEASE MONTENEGRO**

- Vienna, 28 February 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMOF), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is pleased to announce the short-listed entries of the 2009 contest online and in an affiliated contest, which ensure the Serbian people’s right to information of public importance and must be protected, not hindered, by states.

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Continued

**SEEMO PRESS RELEASE ALBANIA**

Vienna, 27 March 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), criticizes the recent police action in Albania.

According to information before SEEMO, on 2 April 2008, Razvan Martin received a phone call from anti-globalisation movement protesters who were there with the experimental Russian “Politika” broadcast station in Tirana, which they were gathering for a workshop had been surrounded by the police and media units.

In a separate incident, the police in Tirana have also recently made a number of arrests and interrogations.

Martin notified the media about this development and ar- rangements were made to attend a police press conference, which was also attended by the chairman of the National Council of Press, Mr. Adjani. The conference was attended by a restricted number of journalists, who were allowed to take notes, but not the media from the opposition.

Mr. Martin said that he was being detained, but was not formally arrested or charged.

In both cases, the police were violating freedom of movement, assembly and speech.

Mr. Martin stated that the police in Tirana were lying, which was not entirely unexpected. Mr. Martin also commented that the arrest targeted journalists who were covering the protests and were trying to report on the matter.

Mr. Martin commented that the situation in Tirana is serious, and that the authorities must respect the rights of journalists and the public.

Mr. Martin emphasized that the police must respect the rights of journalists and the public.

Mr. Martin stressed that the media in Albania are not free and that the authorities must respect the rights of journalists.

Mr. Martin concluded that the situation in Albania is serious and that the authorities must respect the rights of journalists.

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SEEMO PRESS RELEASE SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Vienna, 10 July 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and lead- ing journalists from South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is concerned about new threats to the media in Kosovo, and the police's continued failure to track the assailants responsible for the June 12 attack on a Kosovan journalist.

According to information before SEEMO, on June 12, a Kosovan journalist was attacked in Pristina, while reporting on a public event. According to SEEMO, the police came to the scene two minutes after the attack, but failed to take the necessary measures to protect the journalist and to bring the attackers to justice. SEEMO expresses concern about the hampering of the independent work of journalists in Kosovo.

Meanwhile, SEEMO has again urged the police in Kosovo to move to the side, from where they continued to cover the event, in order to report on it. The police entered the public building where the attack occurred, and the journalist was not permitted to both watch the event and film the police.

SEEMO has called for the immediate investigation to identify the individual responsible for the June 12 attack on a Kosovan journalist, and to bring the assailants to justice. SEEMO also emphasises concern about the hampering of the independent work of journalists in Kosovo.

Vienna, 16 July 2008

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (COREPS), has expressed continued concern about the ongoing failure to track the assailants responsible for the June attack on a Kosovan journalist.

According to SEEMO's latest information, on 12 June, a Kosovan journalist was attacked in Pristina, while reporting on a cultural event. According to SEEMO, the police came to the scene two minutes after the attack, but failed to take the necessary measures to protect the journalist and to bring the attackers to justice. SEEMO expresses concern about the hampering of the independent work of journalists in Kosovo.

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