

# deScripto

A Journal of Media in South East Europe

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DOSSIER

# Civil Society

COUNTRY FOCUS

## Hungary



## Letter from Editor-in-Chief Dear Readers,

In many conversations with political and media experts from the South East European countries I often heard such an analysis: the transition countries suffer from the lack of a civil society. There is a democratic principle which says that the power comes from the people. The more the state requires responsibility for societal development, the more bureaucracy will be established and the less people take over the task of developing structures that give power to the people. That is why we think it makes sense to check the situation and to find out, what civil society is theoretically and what is it like in the SEE countries.

Those experts also gave me the explication that in transition countries of South East Europe a mentality still might rule that leads to some extent to a resistance of self-competence combined with the expectation: The state will take care of all conditions of life. Maybe that thinking comes from the experience that - as it was in times of the communist system - the state holds all the competence which is

necessary in order to rule the country. Any personal or civil intervention would be taken as a perturbation of the state's expertise. Maybe.

The cooperation with ADA, the Austria Development Agency, through which we had the opportunity to research and to report on activities and initiatives in South East European countries in various sectors of public life (see the supplement: 'weltnachrichten') showed us that this analysis can not be generalised any more. There is a change in mentality and civil political practice which claims social responsibility for the environment, culture, education, regional development and so on. There are paradigmatic examples that show people taking care of conditions of social life by organising circles of civil intervention. It could be an idea to transfer that know-how of civil responsibility to the sector of media communication and media culture.

*Thomas A. Bauer, Editor-in-Chief*



## Letter from Publisher Dear Readers,

It is summer, a good moment to keep in mind problems that journalists in South East Europe have in their daily work.

Some states still continue with criminalisation of defamation. Journalists should not be punished under criminal law. Actions against journalists for defamation should be heard in the civil courts. All governments must respect freedom of information laws, enacted to protect the fundamental right to seek, receive and impart information and also respect the right of journalists to protect his or her source of information, even during legal proceedings.

There is a need to eliminate all government influence on media. It is also essential that every journalist, who has a regular press card, can receive a visa in a timely and unbureaucratic manner and without the burden of producing variety of documents. It is important to conduct investigations into cases of attacked, injured and killed journalists. In several cases of the murder of high profile journalists, the authorities have still not found the killers. This is so in

the case of two Serbian journalists: Slavko Curuvija, owner of the daily Dnevni Telegraph and magazine Evropljanin, who was killed in 1999 and Milan Pantic, a reporter for the Belgrade daily Vecernje Novosti, who was killed in 2001.

The South East Europe Media Organisation covered all this and other problems in two conferences: the SEEMO Dialogue Conference in Vienna, Austria, in May, and the SEEMO Dialogue Meeting of Investigative Reporters in Opatija, Croatia, in June. Of course, if you, as our reader, have some thoughts about all the problems, feel free to send them to De Scripto!

To close, one more piece of good news from SEEMO: we have published the book Media and Minorities in South East Europe. Having in mind different standards about minorities in the region, I am sure, that this book will help to secure a better position of minorities in the region.

*Oliver Vujovic, Publisher, SEEMO Secretary General*

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## DOSSIER CIVIL SOCIETY

# Great Expectations Insufficient Performance

The formation of a 'civil society' is widely seen as a prerequisite for democratic transition in former coercive states. But all civil activism remains ineffective if the media take no notice. An introduction *by Axel Maireder*

In the latest discussions on democratic transition and the consolidation of democracy in South East Europe, 'civil society' became one of the most dominant catchwords. The development of a 'civil society', meaning the formation and empowering of institutions through which different social groups articulate themselves, is seen as a

*The media can either contribute to the formation of a civil society and the implementation of democratic principles or complicate this development.*

concomitant of democratic change. By providing publicity – ergo an audience for the articulation of the different interests of the society's various groups – the media plays a crucial role in this process. The media can, through their mode of selection and their way of imparting certain issues, either contribute to the formation of a civil society and the implementation of democratic principles or complicate this development.

## Civil Society: Conceptions

While today's understanding of civil society often distinguishes it from both state and economy, the roots of the phrase very definitely included what we nowadays call 'the economy'. Originally understood as 'society minus the state' by Hegel or Marx, defined by the emergence of a political economy furthered by individual initiatives rather than by top-down delegation by the monarchs, the term 'civil society' changed its meaning through the ages. In the

1930s, the Italian Philosopher Antonio Gramsci referred to it as the space between the economic structure and the 'political society' of the state. Thus, 'Civil Society' was defined as the institutions through which society organised and presented itself autonomously from the state and vis-à-vis the economy. Jürgen Habermas and other theorists further developed Gramsci's ideas and drew up a conception of three overlapping and interdependent spheres including state, market and civil society.

Although civil society should hold the most dominant role in this conception, it is mostly either the state or the market which actually try to affect the third realm of society. Habermas refers to this as the 'colonisation of the life world'. In totalitarian societies, like the communist South East European ones until the 1990s, it is the state that tries to affect all parts of life, whereas in corporate capitalist societies, it is the market that tries to take over every aspect of the life world. Civil society remains suppressed in both cases.

East and South East European societies are undergoing a radical change of systems and system-related lifestyles since the breakdown of communist rule in the late 1980s. Authoritarian rule should be replaced by democratic, the planned economic system by a market-driven and the collective, close-to-party organisation of civil life by an individuality-based. Following Habermas' denotation, South East European countries were and are shifting from a state's to a market's colonisation of the life world, whereas the realm of civil society, being the most important for the proper functioning of a democratic system, is in danger to be marginalised.



# ations - erformance

## The Media: Serving Civil Society?

In the intersection of the three societal realms in the mentioned concept, the media act as an agent between state, economy and civil society. In a simplified model of mediated interaction within society, the media should provide information on politics (state) and products (economy) to the recipients, enabling them to decide about the usage of their political (voting) and economic (purchasing) power. Vice-versa, the media should impart information on societal developments and problems communicated through the institutions of the civil society, enabling the political actors to make the right decisions for the well-being of society. The exchange of information between state, economy and civil society should thus be organised through an intensive discourse between the various actors in what is called the 'public sphere'.

The accessibility of the public sphere - the openness of communication media - is a prerequisite for democracy. Only if people, or the groups they organise in, are able to express their needs through channels of mass communication, can they participate in the political process. To serve democracy, media (as a whole) should make efforts to give voice to various opinions from all parts of society, in an unbiased and balanced way.

Yet, the media are not those independent and fair brokers of argument as thought of in theory. Besides their fundamental role as agents within society, they are also economic entities, aligned to profit by maximising advertising impact for their clients, thus being dependent on the economy. Due to continued efforts to maximise the audience, which seems to be best achieved by simply 'entertaining' it,

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the media seem to increasingly fail to properly provide the society with 'serious' news from within itself. The awareness for problems articulated by civil society groups can be low.

Additionally, the media are - to a certain degree - also dependent on the political system, as it provides the rules and regulations that mark the framework within which the

*The realm of civil society, being the most important for the proper functioning of a democratic system, is in danger to be marginalised.*

media is allowed to act. Those media institutions financed through other means than ads - subsidies, taxes or fees - namely public broadcasters, are in a special position: Their dependence on the political system is very high indeed.

### Get Yourself Heard Through the Media

Through the media's dependence on and conjunction with the economic and political spheres, the civil society and its institutions are in the weakest position. They have to make great efforts to be heard by and get their messages transmitted through the media. In Western Europe, lots of the most important organisations of civil society were founded in the early years of democratic development, thus being experienced in getting their opinions mediated as well as being accepted as an organ of the society's interests by the media. That is different in the countries of South East Europe. As people were living in a coercive system for decades they never learned to organise themselves in order to articulate their opinions and needs.

Being used to a powerful, hegemonic state system that cares about nearly every aspect of social life, the knowledge of the how-to or even the idea of self-managed organisation was not able to develop. Thus, together with the lack of attention for civil society organisations by the media, the civic organisations themselves are mostly very young, small and less professionally organised than their western counterparts. Their lack in professional public relations work corresponds with the journalists' lack of interest for those groups.

A civil society that was completely suppressed through the decades before the system change had a hard time even after the transition to democracy. At first, the media were not promptly de-linked from the state. It took a couple of years before newspapers were privatised and the state broadcasters were transformed into public broadcasting services.

Thus, a huge part of the media content remained in the hands of the state's representatives. Even if they were democratically elected, they rarely focused on civil society



movements. Then, during the 1990s, the market took over most of the media companies, but the new owners were much more inclined to maximise profit than to ensure a plurality of voices.

### Current Developments

The present threat to democracy and the plurality of voices heard is the ongoing concentration of the media. Private ownership is not sufficient to ensure a media landscape that serves democracy. The diminishing of choice and plurality followed by the standardisation of content and mainstreaming of titles, deteriorates the chance of civil society groups to be represented in the media. Media content is produced through editorial policies aligned to the aims and values of the owners, civic engagement is often not of interest for their goals.

Contrary to the development of the mainstream media towards concentration and commercialisation is the emergence of new, alternative ways to impart messages. Especially for small civil society groups, the internet holds a lot of possibilities. People can spread their opinions through various forms of internet communication more easily than ever before. But, how invitingly and easy to use the internet is, it can still not replace the mass audiences the traditional media reach. ■

# Environment Needs Publicity

The first grassroots organisations did not have a spokesperson to get the attention of the media. Nowadays you have to work more professionally to find your picture in the papers. Environmental organisations in Croatia have learnt their lessons by taking journalists on board. *By Marion Ziegelwanger*

“Environmental NGOs do not have much sense for marketing which is an important part of protection of the environment,” says Tanja Devcic who works as a radio journalist for Croatian Radio station HR 2. In 1989 she started her radio-show “Z kao Zemlja” (E like Earth), which is broadcast every week and offers two hours of environmental topics, including music. More than 270 environmental groups are registered in Croatia. But according to Devcic there are only a few NGOs which really work professionally with the media.

*“We try to be popular and experts at the same time.”*  
Kruno Katus, Osijek Greens

There are some twenty environmental organisations and one of them is Osijek Greens – Free Movement. Kruno Kartus is one of the employees there who worked as a journalist before. “We try to be popular and experts at the same time,” he says.

The professionalism grew over the years: “I am active for five years, our president for ten,” he adds. Osijek Greens are sitting close to the experts since the Croatian Environmental Press Center (CEPC) is located in the same office.

Together they publish the online-magazine called Alert Online. According to Kartus, this online-magazine is very popular in Croatia. Usually members of CEPC and Osijek Greens meet every ten days to discuss current topics.

## Journalists and Environment

Last year CEPC organised a big conference to train journalists to write environmental stories and to understand the topics they are writing about.

“We also had a trainer from the Guardian,” Kartus says proudly. During the workshops at this conference, the participants indirectly discovered some political background concerning an illegal quarry in which many people were involved – even members of the government. According to Kartus, it was clear that there was no interest of the involved persons to make the story public.

Besides, the Prime Minister wanted to save some 700 jobs. And on the other hand, the environmental minister wanted to shut the quarry down. It was a good story to be published in the newspapers and a good training-topic for the journalists.

But it is not always easy to make successful press work. “We are happy even if five journalists show up at a press conference. Sometimes no one comes,” regrets Irma Popovic from Green Action (Zelena Akcija). ‘Only bad news is good news’ – this phrase also seems to be true for environmental reporting.

“Positive campaigning is not interesting,” Popovic asserts. In her eyes environmental topics are not very important for the press. Issues concerning the government in the capital seem to be more relevant.

“The environment is not interesting when workers are protesting and sitting in front of the parliament in Zagreb,” she adds.



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## Media Work For Environmental Concerns Is a Tough Job

### Government and Environment

The government in Croatia is not very helpful regarding civil society organisations. “Authorities are not very eager to solve problems,” claims Dusica Radojic, the president of Green Istra (Zelena Istra). Croatian authorities used to work alone. Now they are pressed by the European Union to let NGOs participate in the decision-making processes. “Things are changing – slowly,” she says. Radojic has worked as a journalist for several years and is now responsible for media relations in the organisation.

### Alternative Ways

Green Istra works with three employees and some volunteers. It is a regional organisation and one of the founders of Adriatic Green Net which cooperates with Slovenia and Italy on topics around the Adriatic Sea. The image of Green Istra in public is very good. The organisation also tries to protect those who cannot protect themselves – i.e. city initiatives. Green Istra helps them to make their problems public through media. “When a problem is published it starts to be solved,” Radojic is convinced.

*“When a problem is published it starts to be solved.”*  
Dusica Radojic, Green Istra

Kartus does not agree with her. He thinks that a published article makes nothing happen. “There are so many scandals in the country – one environmental problem more is not important,” he declares. He wants other ways of communication be used besides mass media – thinking of small independent things like Alert Online. “You put all in a mixed bag of media, that will be good for environmental NGOs,” Kartus emphasises.

### After the War

Public interest and the involvement of citizens concerning environmental issues in Croatia have increased since the late 1980s. But the war in the former Yugoslavia has also left its marks. A survey of the Academy for Education and Development found out that the most popular NGOs in Croatia are those of military veterans. The environmental NGOs are in second place.

If environmental organisations want to take the first place in the future, they might succeed in becoming more well-known. And to become ‘Number One’ it is essential to know how the media works and how a story finds its way onto the front page. One way to succeed is to take former journalists on board, because they know for sure how press-work is done professionally. The other way could be to look for alternative ways. In Croatia Alert Online is an example that might be adapted to other countries. ■

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# The Revolution Will Be Televised

After the protests against the election fraud in Belarus on 19 March 2006 were put down brutally after five days, many people were reminded of earlier 'coloured' revolutions in Serbia, Ukraine and Georgia. It showed how near success and failure of such action can lie together. And it showed once more, that it is the performance of the media that makes the difference.

*By Georg Gössweiner and Andreas Bosina*

**S**erbia, 24 September 2000: presidential elections. The opposition leader Vojislav Koštunica won with nearly a 10% advantage, but did not reach the required absolute majority of votes. Just like the pre-election period, the election on 24 September 2000 was not a free and democratic process. President Slobodan Milošević announced on state television, that there will be a second election on 8 October.

Ukraine, 21 November 2004: The final ballot between Wiktor Juschtschenko and Wiktor Janukowjtsch officially ended with a majority for Janukowjtsch. International

*Modern societies are based on information.  
You change information, you change society.*

observers did not accept the final results, because of manipulations and fakes during the election process. While Vladimir Putin continued his support by congratulating Wiktor Janukowjtsch, thousands of people arrived at Majdan, the Independence Square, in Kiev, demonstrating against the final results.

## Revolution and Information

Modern societies are based on information. You change information, you change society. This can be seen as the essential lesson of the 'coloured' revolutions, which took place in countries like Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine. The

main difference with what you might call a traditional revolution is that they in fact were exclusively based on well organised communication as the main means of a non-violent campaign.

Media has always been important as an instrument of propaganda during times of radical changes, but it is a very new development that well organised, strategic communication can even make up the total boycott coming from traditional media, such as TV. Both the movements and their use of media, in Kiev as well as in Belgrade, are good examples of how effective alternative publicity can be.

Independent media, both in Ukraine and Serbia had extremely bad conditions to become economically and politically independent far before these incidents happened. Due to the enormous lack of purchasing power popular periodical media had to be sold at a very low price. Such circumstances make journalists dependent on the sponsors and owners of the media, who in general have the primary interest to gain influence on the formation process of opinion, than to make independent unbiased information available. According to this, as Aleksey Soldatenko, Programmes Director of the International Institute for Regional Media and Information from Ukraine explains, media in Ukraine had and still have great difficulties understanding information handling as a business.

Threats against freedom of the press, such as the legal prosecution of journalists, administrative pressure from state services and censorship, also disabled the development of

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## How Information Changed Society In Serbia And Ukraine. And Why It Failed To Do So Elsewhere...

balanced political discourse in the big mass media during the election process.

Soldatenko remembers the steps that were taken against the repression of freedom of media: such as several information centres that were set up on Madjan, the Independence Square, in order to be able to supply information and picture material to journalists making them less dependent on the state and its information policy.

Both movements therefore had very bad conditions to get notice paid to themselves and their objectives.

For example it took a great effort until communication through the internet enabled civil society to emerge in Serbia, says Veran Matic, Chief Executive Officer of RTV B-92 and explains the crucial role of the internet: "The independent scene in Serbia began using the internet successfully all the way back to the four-month protests of 1996/1997. The Wired Magazine, then the New York Times and Washington Post wrote about this. Aiming to prevent possible monopoly on the internet by Milosevic's regime, we created the so called 'Opennet'. The centre was based on the idea to help non-governmental organisations, independent media, foundations etc. to improve their communication with the rest of the world (from the isolated Serbia) and increase their communication with institutions and individuals."

It was not the only common aspect of how media made use of their ability to unify resistance, which became a broad opposition movement. In Serbia as well as in Ukraine,

internet use brought a big advantage to the opposition leaders. Matic remembers the great development the alternative media took those days:

*Media in Ukraine had and still have great difficulties understanding information handling as a business.*

"In 2000, we already had over 50 independent radio and TV stations connected over satellite and the internet, which served as a core joining together the resistance comprised of non-governmental organisations, student and schoolchildren movements, artistic movements, unions and political parties." In Ukraine strategies to overcome media repression were similar and also faced similar challenges.

"Because of the state pressure on the media, Juschtschenko was not able to use traditional media," Soldatenko remembers. Websites of Juschtschenko's opposition party turned out to become forums of public discourse. While the Orange Revolution was going on, internet use increased strongly, although the spreading of internet access in Ukraine is very low, internet access only reaches about 10% of all households. Soldatenko sees the role of internet-communication as a kind of catalyst of the future development of traditional media. This massive use of the internet paved the way for higher quality in reporting because the demand



became obvious.

The same situation was in Serbia, where a very small number of people were using the internet, but even this fact contributed to more trust in the internet as a medium, which allows freedom of communication.

Matic states, "The greatest strength of the internet lied in its innovative use in combination with traditional media and traditional ways of communication." After the shutdown of Radio B-92 on 3 December 1996, they aired their programme via the internet and were overcoming technical difficulties by setting strong transmitters from the BBC and Radio Free Europe in operation. A combination of media development and the liberation from authoritarian communication regulations was the effect.

Also in Ukraine the Gala radio station enlarged its signal in order to reach more people.

Professional, strategic and smart use of communication also prevented the military and the interior ministry troops from striking against demonstrators in Kiev, Ukraine. This mission was accomplished by bringing together the opposition and the secret service, as C.J. revealed in his New York Times article "How Top Spies in Ukraine Changed the Nation's Path", published on 17 January 2005.

Something similar happened on the breaking point of the events in Serbia - independent media stood together to resist the total control from the regime while the pro-government media and other supporters of Milosevic followed their course just like in years before: repressing independent media, scare mongering the people, threatening journalists, while on the other side presenting Milosevic as the true winner of the elections. The Serbian Government announced on state Radio Television Serbia (RTS) they would punish any form of revolutionary action. Alternative organisations and independent media were described as criminal liars, supported by foreign powers. Pro-Milosevic

### *Independent media stood together to resist the total control from the regime.*

media like RTS and the daily Politika were guarded by special police forces to keep them under control. Therefore, independent media had to change strategies and began to use alternative, but very professional, ways of communication beside the regime control.

One day before the fall of Milosevic, on 4 October 2000, police forces tried to break the strike on the coal mine in Kolubara, which caused a reporter from Radio Lazarevac to scream for help on air. He was heard in Belgrade by Radio 988, a music and sports station. Students from Radio Indeks and Radio B2-92 took over the signal and informed the rest of Belgrade. Later that day, opposition members arrived in Kolubara. A famous scream since that day.

After all, the majority of the Serbians and the Ukrainians beard to stand behind their representative opposition leaders. In Serbia, the final change happened on 5 October 2000 in Belgrade on Nikola Pasic Square. Demonstrators stormed inside the parliament and into the bureau of RTS, beating up the employees who remained inside pleading to Milosovic for help live on air, unable to escape from the blocked building. At the end of the day, Kostunica was the

*The means of communication in a society always also are the means of any revolutionary action.*

new leader in Belgrade and the pro-state media RTS and Politika began to broadcast new programmes.

In Kiev, the mass protests were responded to by a huge echo in the whole world, Juschtschenko's team pulled off a great coup, by building a satellite line and broadcasting live the protests right around the clock. Rallies ended successfully on 3 December 2004 when the decision of the Supreme Court of Justice was made: it declared that the election results of 21 November were invalid because of systematic faults. In the final election period up to 26 December, Juschtschenko took the victory and became the new president of Ukraine.

### **What a coloured revolution is made of...**

Most important to all these strategic moves was to only take non-violent action, to only take steps if they were sure that escalation could be avoided. The mastermind of this concept is Gene Sharp, whose handbook 'From Dictatorship to Democracy' influenced the strategy of resistance organisations around the world. Especially those mentioned, including 'Otpor' in Serbia, 'Kmara' in Georgia, 'Pora' in Ukraine, 'KelKel' in Kyrgyzstan, 'YOX' in Aserbaidshjan and 'Zubr' in Belarus.

All of them were the heads of, at least attempted, revolutions in their countries. Some worked out, some did not.

But what does the outcome of such a 'coloured' revolution depend on? Success seems to depend on three different factors: there must be some kind of engagement of a more or less well organised civil society, which can only develop, if there is communication between the people. To establish that must always be one of the major goals in order to mobilise them. Veran Matic affirms this correlation, when he remembers that the confidence B-92 had gained since the year 1996, resisting all attempts to be banned by the regime, was one of the major ingredients to keep the determination at such a high level.

Furthermore a society already has to have arrived in the information age. Only if most of the processes and social discourses in a system are based on information, for exam-

ple the production processes, a system can be changed by influencing information. The means of communication in a society always also are the means of any revolutionary action.

If police forces use violence to 'communicate', like what happened both in Belarus and in Aserbajdschan, you can hardly win due to non-violent, information-based action. This kind of repression obviously was the primary reason, why the very similar movement in Belarus failed to succeed. Eight days after the elections in Belarus, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklos Haraszti, described the vast harassments journalists had to suffer: "Although the exact number of violations is not available, it has been independently confirmed that dozens of Belarusian and foreign journalists were prevented from reporting, arrested, physically assaulted, and sentenced to short-term detention in summary procedures."

Fortunately the media in Ukraine had the chance to turn out to be a good counter example, when it took advantage of the developments in the period between the first and the second election.

"The Orange Revolution was a break point for Ukraine journalists," Soldatenko says, confirming that it was a good chance for media to accelerate their development. "The People forced the media to develop," he adds.

Obviously, regarding the continuing powerful protests against the election fraud, Ukrainian media changed their form of political reporting to a bit more balanced coverage of both candidates.

*Any superpower will always try to free-ride with and support any movement that has similar goals to their own.*

In numbers: During the pre-election phase, Janukowytsch was four times longer on air than Juschtschenko (1884 sec vs. 447 sec). The following month the disproportion was 'just' about two or three to one (3880 sec to 1420 sec). While ironical and negative presentations of Juschtschenko went down from 13 to 6%, Janukowytsch's went up from 6 to 8%. Although there still was no balanced broadcasting for both opponents, there was a clear upstream for Juschtschenko.

### What is still left is politics...

Another crucial factor for the outcome of such developments, as in Serbia so in Ukraine, has to be mentioned, although it sometimes turns out to have a problematic influence on the outcome of such developments: apparently there has to be some ally or supporter with great power looking after its own interests, providing resources either from the in- or - more often - the outside.

This aspect is one more common ground of the revolutions in Serbia and Ukraine.

According to many critics, among them well known authors, such as William Engdahl, Author of 'A century of War', K. Gajendra Singh, former Indian Ambassador to Turkey and Azerbaijan, earlier to Jordan, Romania and Senegal, there are many geopolitical links between the coloured revolutions.

As an example, Richard Miles, former American Ambassador in Georgia and Belgrade was also covertly involved in Kiev with the US Ambassador there, John Herbst, former Ambassador in Uzbekistan. It is well known, that the Ukrainian 'democratic youth' organisation 'Pora' was modelled on the Belgrade youth group 'Otpor',

*It is well known, that the Ukrainian 'democratic youth' organisation 'Pora' was modelled on the Belgrade youth group 'Otpor'.*

which Miles also set up with help of the NED and Soros' Open Society, USAID (US Agency for International Development) and friends.

Other supporters of the movement in Ukraine were major agencies like the Democratic Party's National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Republican Party's International Republican Institute, the US State Department and USAID, the Freedom House NGO and billionaire George Soros' Open Society Institute (OSI).

All these joint features of the coloured revolutions should in no way discredit the civil societies and their engagement in these countries or uncover them as marionettes of geopolitical interests. But it is true that the other way around any superpower will always try to free-ride with and support any movement that has similar goals to their own. This new strategy can be seen as a very economical way of looking after one's interests in the world.

Costs of such interventions are estimated around tens of millions of dollars, which bears no relation to the gained influence in a region or to costs of traditional ways of intervention, such as the military option. It also avoids the damage of structures - the take-over pays off immediately without a period of destabilisation and reconstruction, and also avoids the risk of former allies turning their back on you.

All the more, considering the danger that civil society based engagement could be abused, it is important to continue the struggle for independence.

Davorin Popovic, an 'Otpor'-activist, finds the perfect words in an interview with Roger Cohen, insisting 'Otpor' must preserve its control of the powerful in the future too, not to have power itself, but "to act as a watchdog of all powers." ■

# Youth Striving For Attention

Youth all over the world assemble in different youth organisations and so do youth in South East Europe. As these organisations are part of each countries' civil society, they are part of its public life and objects of communication. But how do these organisations use media, which topics do they communicate and is there a consciousness for political matters? In the last decade youth in South East Europe gained a new consciousness for their role within the society. *By Kathrin Honauer and Karin Schneck*

**Y**outh organisations are an important factor for young people, especially in South East Europe. After the war and the political change, they need to rebuild the feeling of being respected, also at a political level, for example by being involved in governmental issues.

## Young People for Parliament

One of the organisations which is trying to support young people and offers them necessary means and platforms for activities at a political level in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Youth Information Agency (OIA). This organisation operates mainly through the three sectors: information service, youth policy and capacity building.

It offers members of different youth groups within the country the possibility to participate in the Bosnia-Herzegovina Youth Parliament (BHOP), which has already taken place eight times. In this Youth Parliament different issues of youth policy are discussed, such as 'The role of International Organisations in the Youth field in Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Beside representatives of different national youth organisations, also Parliamentary representatives participated. According to Sanja Kavaz, Public Relations Officer of the OIA in Bosnia and Herzegovina, results and resolutions won in these youth parliaments are sent to different journalists who are meant to inform the public about them.

## Keeping Others Up To Date

The OIA uses different kinds of media to keep youth groups involved and media and governmental bodies up to date. Since 2002 there have been 107 newsletters sent to people on national and international level.

According to Kavaz, the organisation provides news about its activities to one national radio station which broadcasts news about their activities twice a week. Next to this PR activity, texts are sent to daily newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina to keep the public informed about the OIA and its activities.

Furthermore, paper editions are distributed in public places, like at universities, pubs or big gatherings to inform youth about new activities.

The OIA example shows that youth in South Eastern Europe has a consciousness for politics and does want to be one of the policy-makers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a matter of fact, the members of the OIA Youth Parliament already proved that young people can influence politics too. They have managed to get a first official youth document, the 'Resolution on Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina', accepted by the House of Representatives.

## Youth Reporting

In Hungary, the National Organisation of Students and Youth Journalists of Hungary (DUE) is a strong member



organisation of the European Youth Press. They work with about 5 000 young journalists in the whole country organising educational seminars, camps and publishing their own nationwide school and youth magazines. One important task of DUE is the support of school radios. Another example is the Centre of Young Journalists of Moldova, which is a non-profit association of young journalists in broadcast, print and electronic media from Moldova.

Two important goals of these associations are the support and promotion of the youth media among young people and adults. Furthermore DUE is trying to develop and establish an independent youth media and advocates young journalists' rights.

Both, the DUE and the Centre of Young Journalists of Moldova, are members of the European Youth Press and are trying to strive for the public's attention and to participate in their country's society as active citizens in a progressive way.

### Youth 'On Air'

Striving for the attention of the public is also one important task for the Youth Communication Centre (OKC, Omladinski komunikativni centar) in Banja Luka. This organisation offers young people the possibility to communicate issues they regard as important through their own

radio programme.

This radio station has existed since 1997 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and produces Radio Balkan. Eleven youth members of the OKC produce this programme. This radio station is a neutral basis for young people to communicate with the public. Different shows have been created which focus on young people and their problems within the society, school or at university. Contrary to the OIA's Youth Parliament, the activities of DUE and the OCK's programme, Radio Balkan primarily deals with young people's problems. Here, eleven young people are trying to help others to solve their problems in different situations of life via the medium radio. Kavaz explained that the focus lies on 'everyday' problems of young people, whereas the 'Youth Parliament' works on a political level and tries to improve the situation of youth within the country or, as their next activities focus on, wants to show young people the importance of going to the next elections in October, which is done through the campaign Youth and Elections. These examples show that youth in South Eastern Europe have developed a consciousness for politics and a sense for communication with others through different media. Young people have become an important member of civil society and are interested in changing and improving their situation in their country. They have learnt to use different

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kinds of media to spread their requests and to strengthen their situation within the society. Decisions are not only made about them, but increasingly with them.

### The Importance of Success

One very important thing for the success of the above introduced organisations is to receive help from different media by making their activities topics of reporting. Through being mentioned in a national or international medium the organisations' activities become a topic of communication and their name recognition rises.

Discussions held at the 'YouthMediaEvents-2005' in July in Brussels, an event formed by the Young Press Nordrhein Westfalen, showed that young people, unfortunately, are devastated that they are not taken serious enough in the public 'eye'. They cannot use the media in full potential as a platform, to mark the problems of young people.

Viktoria Serdult, a young journalist, who works for

*"The missing solidarity among young people dismisses a European Youth movement, which earns its name."*

Dieter Rucht, Youth Expert

Hungarian daily Magyar Hirlap says that the public is "...interested, but only vaguely. They only see what appears, but not the cause behind the problems." Due to that it seems to be very important that any youth organisation learns how to spread information with the help of different media produced by them, as it is done by the organisations such as the OIA, DUE or OKC.

### Using the World Wide Web

For most youth organisations, the internet is the most popular medium by which they inform others and which they can use as a platform for intercultural discussions.

"But the press freedom of the internet is not so protected as the press freedom of traditional media in democratic countries," says an article from Reporters Without Borders (RSF) in the year 2005. "The right of speaking out your ideas (..) is going back," the article continues.

That is why young people should use or already use the traditional media to grow into a community and "bring society and youth closer to each other, because right now there is a huge gap and misunderstanding between the different generations," says Serdult.

"The missing solidarity among young people dismisses a European Youth movement, which earns its name," says youth expert Dieter Rucht. This is the point where youth organisations and youth media should start working, so that youth can turn out to become a strong voice between nations and within their countries. ■

# Love Ger

## Do Free Media Support

In a traditional catholic country like Croatia, it is an act to admit being homosexual. Not only that the support is questionable, but also the political situation, the social situation makes it for you a hard time. *By Ema Kaiser*

**T**here are always two sides to a story. In the case of an accident which took place in Croatia on 4 March 2006, there are different points of view, which are miles apart. The fact is that 10 homosexual men ended up in hospital after being beaten up badly in a club called Santos. Zoran Dominkovic, one of the victims said in an interview with the radio station Free Europe: "We were having a private party, when suddenly a group of men entered and started kicking us. Next thing I remember was opening my eyes at the hospital."

The party was organised by Iskorak, which is a non govern-

*The average voter in Croatia still believes in the patriarchal and conservative systems. This is also why politicians are doing campaigns against homosexuals in the media."*

Dorino Manzin, Iskorak

mental organisation with a mission to fight any discrimination based on sexual preferences and gender expressions. Iskorak sees this incident as an act of physical aggression on an innocent civil minority, which is an act of undermining their human and civil rights. Due to the fact that this was obviously a hate reaction against sexually different orientated persons, they lobby particularly the government to condemn the aggression in a lawful way and to Croatian citizens to accept and tolerate other sexual orientations. Dorino Manzin, the head of Iskorak, says the following: "It is unbelievable that the government does not react. The only conclusion is that they are afraid to loose votes. The average voter in Croatia still believes in the patriarchal and conservative systems. This is also why politicians are doing campaigns against homosexuals in the media."

A similar organisation deNormativ is also fighting for the

# Generation

## Support Free Love?

It is an act of great courage to  
 support by the family and friends is  
 n, the society and the media will give

same cause. They describe themselves as a non profit, non governmental organisation, founded in 2005 in Zagreb, as a result of the public need for a non-exclusive, all-determining civil movement to change the society, which is not egalitarian, but ruled by patriarchal institutions and their conservative norms and values.

Both organisations have online portals and do not reach the mass public. Globus, the weekly nation wide newspaper, does. The column by Boris Dezulovic in Globus makes fun of the incident, saying the aggressive homosexuals were destroying their baseball bats on the homophobes.

The public opinion was divided due to different reports in the media. On the one hand, there was a short note in the daily newspaper Jutarnji list (6 March 2006) that there has happened a little accident involving a group of men. Nothing else was mentioned. The next day, in the same newspaper there was a big note about how homosexuals are becoming more and more aggressive.

The political voices are not silent either. Niko Rebic, a member of the conservative party HDZ (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica), said in an interview that in his opinion the gays are very aggressive.

His quote came out in a discussion held in the Croatian parliament about homosexual partners and partnerships. Among his party, there are several members of the same opinion. For example, Lucija Cikes (HDZ), is strongly against homosexual partnerships, saying in her speech in the parliament on 17 March 2006, that the whole universe is heterosexual, beginning from the little atoms and ending with an elephant. "There are several similar opinions in the Croatian government and to change that state of mind is going to take years and years. All we can do for the moment is to report to the European Commission and to the United Nations," says Vesna Terselic, from the Center for Peace Studies in Zagreb.

Nevertheless there are people living in Croatia, with a cosmopolitan spirit and an open mind. Like Rujana Jeger, an established journalist from Zagreb, who writes monthly columns in the Croatian edition of the magazines Cosmopolitan and Elle, and is the author of 'Darkroom', a novel translated in several languages.

*What is your opinion on the situation in the homosexual scene?*

Well, I am extremely sorry that my beloved country is so backward as it is, and I will try to do my best to change what I can. My writing is one of the ways to do it. My first novel, Darkroom (2001) was even labelled as 'gay novel' just because one out of three main characters is gay.

*Why is it so hard to be a homosexual in Croatia?*

Because it is a very backward, patriarchal society and war has not made it any better...

*In your point of view, why is the media giving such a negative report about the gay-community?*

Because media is either state owned or private and thus sensationalistic. Small, independent media is not that way, but you hardly hear about them....

*Why are they beating homosexuals all the time and why is the media giving a negative picture of the situation?*

Well, because they are considered a threat for the society, from the religious point of view onwards.

*How is this possible in a democratic country that newspapers are allowed to do such a thing?*

Newspapers can do anything unless they are brought to court, media played such a great role in the outburst of war, so this is not a wonder – and they also are a picture of what mainstream culture is...

*What do you think about the gay-parade in Zagreb?*

I think it should never stop - It is an ongoing fight and I hope one day it will be as much fun and as normal as the 'Regenbogen Parade' in Vienna! ■



# Pleading For

## Media Diversity: A Positive Step Towards an Ethical Media Community

It has been said that diversity can inspire creativity, social and economic progress and empower vibrant communities. However, if employed in the wrong way and exploited, it could help to create conflict and fuel discrimination. *By Jessica Lee*

**T**he media has always played a central role in shaping the hearts and minds of citizens all around the world. The media has a powerful hold over its citizens to which it reports and therefore holds some responsibilities. The idea

*Civil society groups and institutions are important to the development of communities. They promote freedom, democracy and give citizens a voice and a sense of belonging.*

of media diversity is producing the news in an indiscriminate manner, giving an accurate account. It is about reporting about different communities within a society whilst adhering to an ethical journalistic code and using the media as a platform to report about other cultures, nations and events in an unprejudiced style.

In the western media, journalistic ethics are taken for granted. Some nations within South Eastern Europe continue to fight the uphill battle to report news across different media outlets in an objective fashion. Whilst coming a long way since the end of the political situation, editorial independence, inexperienced and untrained journalists are some of the barriers which this region faces to provide a diverse media landscape. The media, whilst holding a very important stake in the public sphere, should see its responsibility to provide information to its citizens by allowing them to form their own opinions, not reporting based on

hearsay events and incidents. Diversity reporting aims to inform and promote social harmony, not to inflict social unrest. Media diversity is a realistic opportunity to strengthen ties between community groups, reduce stereotypes and help to support the functioning of the civil society.

### Media Diversity and Civil Society

Civil society groups and institutions are important to the development of communities. They promote freedom, democracy and give citizens a voice and a sense of belonging. The impressions and opinions of which individuals and groups hold about civil institutions are largely linked to the way they are expressed in the media. Thus, media diversity and diversity reporting play an essential role especially in the underdeveloped regions across South East Europe.

In Hungary alone there are over 47 000 registered non-governmental organisations in operation. These are funded largely by tax payers, who have the option of donating 1% of their earnings to any organisation of their choice. This method of fundraising, introduced in 1996 has the potential to raise over USD 26 million in one financial year alone.

### The Media Diversity Institute - London

Throughout the years media diversity has been acknowledged as a positive step towards a more ethical media com-

# Diversity

munity. Many organisations across the continent were established to educate and promote diversity reporting. Most notably, the Media Diversity Institute (MDI) is dedicated solely to this. Based in London, it runs projects across 14 countries including the region of South East Europe. The projects in which the MDI undertakes aim to assist ethnic minorities by bringing together civil group leaders, media representatives, journalists and communication students. The main purpose of the MDI is to educate the people. Only through education can one truly understand both sides of the story and keep an objective view on all aspects of the media. Research projects, roundtables, forums are workshops are being run all around the region in hope to improve the situation and heavily promote diversity reporting.

## Media Plan Institute - Sarajevo

On a more grassroots level, the Media Plan Institute (MPI) was one of the first organisations of this kind to be established in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based in Sarajevo, the institute opened its doors in 1995. Since then it has built up a large knowledge base of programmes for constantly expanding, crossing the borders of language, politics and culture in the quest for excellence in knowledge and practice. “There has been a significant change in media landscape over last 10 years, which is mostly influenced by changes in media market and media legislation,” says Bojana Sutvic, project coordinator at MPI. “Our area of activity is media transition, application of new communication technologies, development of media industry and media market.”

The MPI works closely with the Media Diversity Institute, on projects within the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## The Next Generation

With education being an important means of encouraging

media diversity, being critical of the current institutions training the media personnel for the next generation is paramount. Universities across South East Europe should have the same objective to instil the notion of ethical and moral media practices on the students as they enter the media workforce. Hungarian student, Oszkar Fakete, 23, is currently studying Communications and History at the University of Szeged in southern Hungary, close to the Serbian border. Whilst media diversity is not directly a part of the curriculum, he thinks that media diversity within the Hungarian media can be much improved on. “After the revolution we have had a free media. It could be even better, but I think that it is much better than before,” says Fakete after a moment of thought. “There is still a lot of bad press about minority groups such as the Roma and

*There is still a lot of bad press about minority groups such as the Roma and women are not represented fairly within the media sector.*

women are not represented fairly within the media sector.” New breeds of journalists are slowly emerging, hopefully holding the ethical and moral characteristics of a modern-day journalist.

“The new generation is a lot better,” says Fakete optimistically, who hopes to work in either television or for a newspaper as a sport or politics journalist.

“Unfortunately we still have a lot of older journalists who have a lot of alumni party associates. These journalists are not always ethical, because they write what the government or their associated parties want.”

As we look toward the future of media diversity, there is a large array of media organisations, mostly run by volunteers to raise awareness on media diversity, reporting and improving the state of affairs across this region of Europe.■

# Vojvodina at Cross Roads

## Serbia's Province between Hope and Resignation

by Rudolf Bernd

### Like 'The Seagull'?

A few weeks ago I had a chat with a journalist from Vojvodina. I had been to this Northern Province five years ago and was very interested in the situation there. She told me thoughtfully: "For me, the situation here is very similar to the mood in Anton Chekhov's play 'The Seagull'."

This is a story, which tells us about failing relationship among people. At the end, Constantin, who wants to be in love with his adored Nina, commits suicide, supposing that

*Despite political pressures the independent media emerged as dynamic political actors.*

there is no future. On the other hand Nina survives, due to her female strength she lives on. The synonym of life is a seagull, which flies high up in the air, skilfully using the wind to exercise the art of flying. Somebody with a bored character shoots the bird...

Marta Palics, journalist for the daily Magyar Szo from Novi Sad, is wondering herself about the fact, that she has found this example to compare the situation of many people in the country to Chekhov's play. But indeed, most of people there live in desperate conditions, without any strength to change their situation.

### Civil Society and History

Vojvodina is the northern part of Serbia and belongs to the Pannonian Plain. In the history of the Austro-Hungarian Empire this territory was the south of Hungary. For many generations various nationalities lived there as a part of the 'military border', a zone in which people were settled in order to defend the empire against the Turkish pashas and their territorial interest in central Europe.

The former Turkish rule had left the area depopulated. Therefore people from several parts of the monarchy came

to live there: Hungarians, Slovaks, Germans, Jews and others. People learned to live together, a multi-ethnic society was formed and after World War I the province became a part of Serbia, following the project of the U.S. President Woodrow Wilson. After World War II the modern state of Yugoslavia was founded. In the course of time, Vojvodina developed into an autonomous region of Serbia. The Milosevic era changed the situation. It was a time of war, international isolation, sanctions, political repression and a rapidly falling standard of life. But despite political pressures the independent media emerged as dynamic political actors. They developed under difficult political and economic times of the 1990s and successfully supported civil and democratic process. Because of their immediate opposition to anti-democratic and pro-war government policies the number of restrictive measures against civil society organisations (CSO's) and media increased as the years of Milosevic's rule went by. As a result of the growing poverty, unemployment and collapsing State-provided social support, the importance of civil society and media has increased.

### The Hungarian Minority and Media

Beside the Serbians, the Hungarian minority has the most influence in the province and have their own papers and journals. Magyar Szo (Hungarian Word) daily is published in Hungarian in Novi Sad. From 290000 persons in Vojvodina who have Hungarian as a mother-tongue, 30000 buy the newspaper twice a week (Thursdays and Saturdays). On the other days the circulation is very small (about 4000 – 5000 copies). At the beginning of the 1990s the paper was nearly at its end, as a result of the Milosevic times.

When Magyar Szo was founded on 24 December 1944, the intention of the founders was to create a paper for all Yugoslavian topics. Since the end of Yugoslavia, the influ-



ence of local politicians has changed the situation: the reports of political topics about 'Belgrade' were reduced and the paper was adapted to the interests of the Hungarian readers. That is why many articles deal with Hungarian traditions and culture and want to inform about the topics from Hungary. In that way articles concerning the 'national identity' are preferred. Beside Magyar Szo there are several other newspapers published in the Hungarian language: Het Nap (Seven Days), a political weekly newspaper of the most important Hungarian political party in Vojvodina, Mezeskalacs (Honey cake) a weekly newspaper for children, Jo Paitas (The Good Friend) for children attending school, Kepes Ifjusag (Picture of the Youth), since autumn 2005 a supplement to Magyar Szo. For special interests (with very few readers) there are many journals for culture, literature, political sciences, education and others. Media in the country cannot be defined as really independent in a democratic way; at best some of them can be called semi-democratic. At the moment one can observe a serious crisis in the relations between Serbia and the European Union. It seems that many reformatory efforts have reached a deadlock. What people need is a ray of hope to overcome resignation. Media can support this difficult process.

On that account, deScripto has interviewed Marta Palics about her experiences with SEEMO and the recent situation.

*DeScripto: Mrs. Palics, you are a member of SEEMO. Why is this organisation important for you?*

Marta Palics: SEEMO is a brilliant Idea. It connects the regions and journalists again, which were disintegrated or in conflict. This organisation was founded in the year 2000. There also existed several other organisations for journalists before SEEMO. They had in common to invite only those journalists and politicians, who were well-known as constructive, democratic, and simply 'normal'. Now gradually also those are invited, who are representatives of the previous compromising political media... I like this, because in that way not only the like-minded come together so a 'real' dialogue is possible. I get pleasure in meeting those journalists. Therefore I have contacts, even friends, in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia, and naturally in Belgrade too... previously I knew very few of them... and they elected me to be one of the members of the leadership in the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS). I have done this job for several years. Now my mandate is at its end. But I have made up my mind not to stand for an election once again, though they asked me to do so. Belgrade is 80 kilometres away from the place where I live, the town of Novi Sad. I have a very hard time due to my job behind me, so it would be nice to have a quiet time now!

*Vojvodina has traditionally a multi-ethnic society since histor-*

*ical times. What is the part of media in such sort of region?*

I think media should shed tolerance. It is very important to support the process of democratisation. Media should not only entertain, how they often do, they have a social responsibility and should be ready to take responsibility!

*Each society has people, living 'on the edge', the poor, the disabled. Do you think those groups can articulate their problems in media...?*

No, I do not think so. Thus, after three or four ... I do not know how many lost wars... within the last fifteen years, with many refugees, poverty, criminality, no trace of democracy and order. Not only several groups, we are all in a serious situation indeed! Even the smaller minorities and border groups have no voice for their problems.

*But there are many non governmental organisations...*

NGO's are important, but they have no power. Their influence is very small. And they have to deal with the problem, that most of people do not like them. Serbian people distrust any influence from abroad.

*The European Union has decided to support the democratic structures in Serbia. What chances would you give to these ambitions?*

At the present, I think, most people do not like the European Union. They have no ambitions to become part of it. ■

## ESEC

European Society of Education and Communication e.V.

The European Society of Education and Communication, based in Vienna, was founded 2005 in Berlin in order to build a net-work of experts and institutions working in the area of science and practice of media, communication and educational media with European background or interest. ESEC provides a net-work for international cooperation for projects in research, knowledge development, consulting, education and training to any interested party.

ESEC wants to establish representatives in all European countries. Therefore institutions, organizations or experts in the field of media, communication, vocational training or consulting, coming from all European countries, that are searching for congenial partners are invited to apply for the status of becoming an ESEC Representative in their countries. In case you are interested to participate in this unique opportunity, please send your application to: [thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at](mailto:thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at)

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## COUNTRY FOCUS HUNGARY

# Divided Public Squabbling M

High foreign ownership, strong commercial broadcasting and a deep spat between left and right wing journalists are the main characteristics of Hungary's media market today. *By Christoph Sommerauer*

**T**he Hungarian media underwent a radical transition from communistic propaganda policy to a privatised media market dominated by market forces. This gradual change started in 1988 and took, by and large, 10 years. Yet the term privatisation is somewhat misleading in the Hungarian media market.

The exceptional circumstances of the political transition

*The term privatisation is somewhat misleading in the Hungarian media market.*

from the authoritarian political regime to democracy made an extraordinary way of privatisation possible which today is referred to as 'spontaneous privatisation'. The journalists themselves and not the representatives of the state set the speed as well as the terms of the privatisation process. The journalists themselves managed to fork out money for the publishing of newspapers that already existed on the market. In addition, many new titles were introduced within a short period of time, which were mostly tabloids and consumer magazines.

This development is the result of different processes which occurred with the system change: The end of political control of the press and the liberalisation of press markets; the commercialisation of the media by foreign owners introducing Western-style tabloids or acquiring stakes in local popular papers. Changes in newspaper demand, such as in reading habits and decreasing buying power of the population were influential factors as well. The development of popular papers led to a segmentation of the Hungarian

press market into three groups: tabloids, qualities and specialised titles. Despite the strong increase in circulation and market share, tabloids do not dominate the Hungarian market the way they prevail in the press markets of the Western world.

The circulation figures delivered by the leading market observation entity MATESZ, which are available both in professional periodicals and online, are accepted by all market players as a yardstick of market position. They also show that quality papers retain higher circulation figures overall and perform better in the advertising market. This is partly due to the fact that many press titles of the communist era managed to transform and rejuvenate themselves into market-type quality papers benefiting from the fact that they were already familiar to readers.

Today, the main characteristics of the media scene in Hungary are a strong foreign ownership, a commercial radio and television that massively outshines the public service broadcasting sector with its vanishing market share - a situation which is comparable to the political press that is losing ground while tabloids numbers are spiralling - as well as a journalistic community, deeply divided by political opinions. This state of uncertainty simplified the development of a hidden misuse beneath the system of state subsidies.

Officially, there are three state funds that provide support to the cultural sector in general, and the broadcasting sector in particular, but none of them particularly subsidises the print media. According to Mihály Gálík, a Hungarian media expert, there is another, less transparent form of state support, besides official state subsidies. It might be called a 'grey zone of subsidies' where governmental organisations,

# ic - Media

municipalities, state owned companies, etc. take out ads and thus support media outlets. These sums are not easily estimated but according to Gálik 8-10% of the aggregate advertising spending (approximately EUR 500 million in 2002) might be labelled as 'driven by non-market forces'. If these estimates are correct, these 'unofficial' subsidies outweigh the official and largely transparent state subsidies.

Returning to the aspects of the foreign ownership, it is conspicuous that out of all the media outlets registered in Hungary none is a public company (which would bind them to adhere to limiting laws). It makes them less transparent than public companies, but a certain degree of ownership transparency is guaranteed by a set of laws like the Broadcasting Act of 1996 which has several anti-concentration provisions on ownership and market share.

The three largest circulation national dailies are published by different media companies, but foreign professional investors dominate all of these. Nevertheless, in the case of the largest circulation political daily, Népszabadság, a Hungarian legal company, the Free Press Foundation, which is close to the Hungarian Socialist Party, has a controlling interest in the publisher. Swiss company Ringier is the majority owner of Népszabadság.

Another notable fact: The titles of the four political dailies on the market are the same as those that existed in 1988. Of course, every other feature of the four political dailies – their publisher, content, size, design, printing, circulation, etc. – changed considerably since then, but the titles, serving as brand names in newspaper publishing, are the same. Analysts of the press industry share, by and large, the same opinion that the sub market of national political dailies is overcrowded, and market forces provide support for only two titles: the centre-left Népszabadság and the centre-right political daily Magyar Nemzet. The three largest circulation national dailies are published by different media companies, but foreign professional investors dominate all

of these.

Magyar Nemzet is published by Nemzet Publishing Company Ltd., and owned mainly by a Hungarian person who also happens to be the editor-in-chief of Magyar Nemzet. The left wing daily Népszava is owned by its editorial staff, and the fourth title, the centre-left Magyar Hírlap, was owned by the Ringier group until 2004. This sub-market is de facto closed – all the three market entries during the 1990s have failed, and – according to MATE SZ analysts – “no one expects that a new title will appear here

*“It has become more and more obvious, that the foreign owners of the political dailies do not want to get involved into entrenched political fights of the different papers.”*

Szabo Istvan, MATE SZ

in the near future.”

Szabó István, entrepreneur and analyst of MATE SZ says: “It has become more and more obvious, that the foreign owners of the political dailies do not want to get involved into entrenched political fights of the different papers, neither do they want to set an editorial line or interfere in any way with the day-to-day practice of making a political daily.” It might sound ironic, but it is true to say that the two national political dailies in Hungarian hands are regarded as party papers by both professionals and by the man-on-the-street alike. Of course, there is nothing wrong with party newspapers in themselves, unless the unwillingness of their editors to accept professional journalistic standards remains within good ethical practice and they do not refuse to show due respect for colleagues working for other titles.

The deep political divide between the ‘two worlds’ in Hungary is mirrored in the political press, and opinion



## COUNTRY FOCUS HUNGARY

leader journalists are not able to set standards to be followed.

Tabloid and consumer magazine publishers followed different lines. Most of the titles on the market are new, and have been brought to the scene by foreign publishers relying on the experience of developed media markets: saturated markets at home drove them to the emerging market economies in Central and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, and the lack in supply was filled quickly. The role of the journalists at these publications is seemingly not more than to provide entertainment to the general public. Until today, there is no consensus in Hungarian journalism on how investigative journalism should be defined. In the last decade, political debates and fights have supplanted professional debate. Questions such as what kind of professional rules journalists must follow when they write investigative pieces, what an investigative piece looks like, and what kinds of requirements both the editors and the audience should have of an investigative article, remain unclear. However, in the past few years it became fashionable to mention investigative journalism whenever a controversial case emerged, or when any kind of scandal erupted.

Unfortunately, such events are related to the phenomenon journalists call among themselves 'dossier-journalism': whenever any journalist obtains a secret or confidential document from any authority – regardless of who leaked information and what kind of intentions lay behind – both the representatives of the profession and the public start to say that this was a journalistic investigation.

As far as the broadcast media are concerned, commercial television has conquered the media scene in five years. Their programmes favour mainstream commercial values and consumer culture. They do it efficiently, capitalising on the heavy investment owners have made since 1997. They do not care too much about politics: the news and current affairs programmes they provide do represent the infotainment genre.

Although in July 1990 government coalition parties and opposition parties came to an agreement on the nomination of two persons with high social prestige to the posts of president of Hungarian Radio and president of Hungarian Television, and they were appointed by the President of the Hungarian Republic, they had no legal power to carry out the transformation from state to public service broadcaster. The new, democratically elected government could not resist the temptation to interfere with the day-to-day operation of the two broadcasters, and the good old excuse used to legitimise this effort sounded rather familiar: the country faced a long process of transition and complete democracy was not yet possible.

The situation today has not changed much from this state, although 15 years have passed. Print and broadcast media is still under heavy influence of politicians' opinions, yet it would be naïve to say, that is a post-communistic phenomenon. It is a way of presenting their own opinion, and politicians in every country try to look better than they perform. ■



## South East Europe Media Handbook 2005/2006

...is a publication realised by South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). Its aim is to enhance better understanding of the media situation in South East Europe and to serve as a source of information concerning press freedom violations in 2005. Next to detailed country reports, the publication contains a database with contacts of selected media in the region.

You can order "South East Europe Media Handbook 2005/2006" for EUR 40,-.

Contact:

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# Radio Mi - The Civil Reality

It is hard to get any working knowl-  
edge in the field of media in Hungary.

By *Balasz Kiz*

In the city of sunshine, Szeged, many factories have been closing down since the end of the communist regime in Hungary. Simultaneously, a few new faculties have been established at the University of Szeged. Namely, Hungarian politicians want to lead the country towards a knowledge-based society. 'The gateway to the Balkans' is heading towards development. Although everyday life in the country is much better than ten years ago, many still complain. In the same period, a handful of local commercial TV and radio channels have appeared in the versatile media market. But who are the people who CAN and DO work in the media?

Media Studies at the University of Szeged was established ten years ago. The education at the Department is largely theoretical and the students do not get enough practical training. A few teachers, together with undergraduate and graduate students thought that they should change the tendency.

## Making Another Tendency

Radio Mi was started in March 2005, with the generous help of a foundation. The initiator of the whole idea was József Balogh, a teacher at the Department of Media Studies. The station is a non-commercial civil radio station, officially called a 'small community radio' by the Hungarian Radio and TV Broadcasting Organisation's (ORTT) definition. Consequently, the range of broadcasting is small, but the profile of the programmes is rather wide. Anybody can listen to Radio Mi on the internet ([www.radiomi.hu](http://www.radiomi.hu)) or on the radio in and around Szeged. The programmes are mostly done by undergraduate students at the Media Department. Namely, this is a great opportunity to try themselves out in live situations. Both undergraduate students and students from secondary schools, in addition young adults can also try to do radio there. Unfortunately, they do not get enough practical instruction at the university. For instance, on the specialisation of electronic media, only two practice lessons are offered in a week in the sixth semester, other classes are lectures. Although the teachers are well trained, they do not get the chance to pass that knowledge on to them. The studio equipment is also very old. There are not enough camcorders, only a few minidisks, etc.

The problem with obtaining practical skills is that the training plan (programme) does not involve compulsory training classes. Ferenc Tóth, one of the undergraduates at the Media Department who is working for the Radio Mi, tried to work himself into a commercial TV station but he was rejected. It was not for the money, the only thing that motivated him was gaining some practical knowledge of how the media works. The manager of the station was helpful at first, but when he realised what Ferenc actually wanted, he just wanted to write him a certification and said they did not need any apprentices.

"The Department helped the Radio Mi a lot. There were some hard periods, when we did not know whether we can pay the bills or not. Since then we introduced a compulsory membership fee for the people working at the radio, which is HUF 1 000 per month (about EUR 4 ). This is not a lot of money, approximately two lunches at the university canteen," says Ferenc. What is more, the Department of Media won an EU tender of HUF 40 million (EUR 154 000). They have to cooperate with the University of Újvidék (Novi Sad) in Serbia in the project of making mutual electronic media issues.

## Alternative Programmes For The University Subculture

There is not enough staff at the Radio Mi to make a non-stop programme. Various music styles are represented in the morning and early afternoon. What is more, they are specialised in alternative music. Thematic weekly magazines on campus life, literature and some interesting research are broadcasted every afternoon. Young DJs play reggae, new wave and other progressive music songs. "Together with a few group mates of mine, I am doing a one-hour radio magazine with new information on university life. You can listen to us on the Radio Mi on Mondays from 2 to 3 p.m.," explained Ferenc. The small editorial group consists of an editor-in-chief, two anchors, a newscaster and a radio reporter.

## Universal Tendency In The Hungarian Education System

It seems rather odd to have such little practice in the field that is basically all about working live and in the moment. The tendency is primarily characteristic of media studies – it is extremely difficult to acquire a competitive knowledge of the field. It is a frequent phenomenon for ex-reality show stars to become journalists, reporters, presenters. The knowledge does not matter, only the name. Young, talented, skilled media experts are put behind ignorant TV stars. However, students at Radio Mi believe in hard work and hope to get a proper job one day. ■

# The South East Europe Media Organisation

The South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is a regional non-governmental, non-profit network of editors-in-chief, media executives and leading journalists from newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, news agencies and new media in South East Europe. SEEMO was founded in October 2000 in Zagreb, Croatia.

One of SEEMO's main activities is protecting press freedom. Over 60% of SEEMO's press releases and letters of protest to governmental and other officials have had positive results in the past. Every SEEMO protest is distributed to more than 12 000 addresses: to leading regional and international media, national and international governmental and non-governmental organisations, politicians, and also public persons and institutions.

During the last four years, SEEMO has assembled over 3 000 editors-in-chief, media executives, leading journalists and public persons from the region in various meetings. Helping journalists means also furthering their education. Several workshops and seminars were organised in the field of education, especially for investigative reporters and representatives of minority media.

SEEMO regularly publishes De Scripto, a quarterly media magazine for South Eastern Europe, which is committed to the enhancement of a climate of critical reflection on media culture and communication, in and among the South East European countries, and the South East Europe Media Handbook (SMH), an annual publication covering media developments, which includes selected media contacts.

SEEMO also gives two annual awards for outstanding achievements in the field of media: "Dr Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding" and the SEEMO Human Rights Award "SEEMO Award for Mutual Cooperation in South East Europe".

#### Contact:

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# Your Excellencies!

## Recent SEEMO Protests and Press Releases

### Protest Romania, 23 February

*To: H.E. Calin Popescu-Tariceanu, Prime Minister of Romania*

*H.E. Monica Luisa Macovei, Minister of Justice*

SEEMO expresses its outrage at recent government pressure on journalists in Romania.

According to information by the Civic Media Association in Bucharest, since the beginning of February 2006, six Romanian journalists have been placed under judicial pressure in Romania as a result of their professional activities. On 7 February, anonymous sources provided two national dailies from Bucharest, ZIUA and Romania Libera, with military documents about Romanian and US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. However, the newspapers decided not to publish this information. The military information was sent to the editorial offices on a CD copy, which was later handed over to the authorities.

Afterwards, the Romania Libera correspondent from Vrancea county, Marian Garleanu, was arrested on 16 February and released after two days. His arrest was part of a broader investigation into the leak of military information by a former Romanian soldier, which has been described by some as classified.

Sebastian Oancea, another journalist from Vrancea county and a correspondent for Academia Catavencu magazine in Bucharest, was also implicated in the case by the authorities. His home was searched on 18 February, and his personal CD's and his computer hard disk were confiscated.

On 20 February, the public prosecutors in Bucharest charged and indicted Oancea for the possession and distribution of state secrets.

Defense Minister Teodor Atanasiu said the information was two years old and "doesn't threaten our forces...but it is very serious that something like this was leaked."

Three journalists for ZIUA daily, Bogdan Comaroni, Doru Dragomir and Victor Roncea, who is also a member of the Civic Media Association, are now also under investigation by the public prosecutors for possession of the information – in spite of the fact that the journalists informed the authorities about the information and handed it over.

Ovidiu Ohanesian from Romania Libera is also being investigated in the same case. Elsewhere, Sorin Rosca Stanescu, Director of ZIUA daily, and Petre Mihai Bacanu, Director of Romania Libera daily, were questioned by the prosecutors about this case.

SEEMO strongly condemns the attempt to pressure journalists into revealing their sources. Governments should not involve journalists in their criminal investigations, nor intimidate them in order to influence their reporting.

We urge Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to stop these practices and to prevent such cases from happening in the future. SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellencies that an open media environment allowing for the free flow of information is a fundamental principle of any democratic society.

### Protest Bulgaria, 10 April

*To: H.E. Sergei Stanishev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria; H.E. Rumen Yordanov Petkov, Minister of Interior Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria*

SEEMO is alarmed about a recent assassination attempt on a Bulgarian journalist.

According to information before SEEMO, on 6 April 2006, a bomb exploded in front of the house of Vassil Ivanov, an investigative reporter for Nova TV channel. The explosion destroyed his apartment, and smashed the windows of the building and the cars parked nearby, but luckily nobody was injured. Ivanov suspected the assault might have been connected to his reporting on crime and his investigative stories.

SEEMO strongly condemns this bomb attack, which was a clear attempt to kill the journalist and his family. Journalists should be able to work freely, without their life being threatened due to their reporting.

We urge Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to stop these practices and to prevent such cases from happening in the future, as well as to secure safe working conditions for journalists.

SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellencies that an open media environment allowing for the free flow of information is a fundamental principle of any democratic society.

### Protest Croatia, 11 May

*To: H.E. Ivo Sanader, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia; H.E. Ivica Kirin, Minister of Interior Affairs*

SEEMO is deeply concerned about recent death threats against Croatian journalists.

According to information before SEEMO, on 9 May 2006, Drago Hedl, the editor of the Croatian weekly, Feral

*continued on page 29*

## Integrating News Distributors by Nedine:

# Good News from Europe

Until Yesterday, technical heterogeneity, language barriers and disjunct document formats hindered international news access and distribution over country borders. With technology and know-how from Vienna University of Technology, a new business model is opening the door for multilingual and multinational news distribution in Europe. *By Markus Schranz and Schahram Dustdar*

**E**uropean business today is highly segmented and widely unrecognised beyond national borders. Business news mostly bear national relevance but hold the potential to spread cooperation opportunities and business changes towards an economically and socially integrated Europe.

Motivated by a new business idea and supported by academic research in modern communication technology, three news agencies from the heart of Europe as business pioneers and experts from Vienna University of Technology created a project idea that finally lead to Nedine, an international association of news agencies together with academic support within this NEws DIstribution NEtwork.

The initiative successfully created a network to integrate multiple European national information sources consisting of participating news agencies, PR agencies and independent journalists into an international information service for news professionals and decision makers. The goal has been to provide a network of news exchange and distribution that supports mutual awareness of relevant topics and information areas within all European countries. With its main focus on wide-spread availability and affordability for all partners it addresses news providers to transport national and international information to the relevant target group, regardless of the origin, nationality and financial capability of the information provider.

A sophisticated news platform and a high performing distribution network based on convenient digital news exchange technologies, not only targeted at newsrooms but aimed at reaching as many business leaders and decision makers as possible directly and personalized at their desktop, advances business in Europe to a new level.

### A Modern Business Model for the Network

The Nedine distributed news network aims at European journalists and opinion leaders. Despite the ongoing success in expanding Europe to a multinational social and business union, European people suffer from a lack of specific national information from the growing set of partners.

In order to build closer relations between new partners, relevant national information related to multiple areas needs to be exchanged.

Information about current news plays a crucial role for business executive's ability to act and is the base for successful management. Whilst most people are highly aware of the importance and value of receiving and managing information, there is the second view on the other side, the well directed and strategic distribution of specific information by private or public organisations.

The classic way to bring these complementing interests together,

is the use of mailing lists (mainly by PR-Agencies contracted by the private or public organisations) to reach journalists and press agencies which redistribute the information to the end user and the main target group.

Digital content production and content management accelerates the speed of information-distribution, but also increases the amount of uncontrolled and unwanted information flow (spam). The end user is overwhelmed with information directly sent to him, or strongly depends on the quality of the external filters, be it technical selection or professional journalists that select which information is redistributed via newspapers and multimedia.

Consequently, distribution activities, as well as exploitation of available news is accompanied by high effort and (for distributors) high costs. Abstracted to decision makers which operate on a trans-European level, the problem is even aggravated: the significantly higher amount of available information is multilingual and cannot be easily evaluated related to its relevancy. Additionally, for information distributors there is the need for inter-national distribution channels which are expensive, and the information needs to be available in more than one language.

In parallel we are currently enlarging the European Union which has been increasing the need for the flow of information dramatically. As the Central and South East European countries are important strategic targets for international business operations, the involved decision makers urgently need information from this area. On the opposite, organisations within the Central and South East European Countries might be strongly interested to find potential investors and co-operation partners, and therefore spread information to neighbour countries or entire Europe.

Nedine fills this gap and provides an efficient distribution channel that attracts journalists and opinion leaders by providing high quality news articles and 3rd press releases from private or public organisations.

### Technical Challenges and Major Results

With the wide-spread availability of computer networks and the open architecture of the Internet, a convenient way of information exchange is available today to all European countries and a significant number of individuals can be reached via basic Internet protocols like E-Mail or the Web.

Technically, the intelligent news network Nedine provides a Web service for nationally and multi-nationally relevant business news. From experiences with an international news presentation and distribution service in the German speaking market, such news presentation services with freely accessible business news face more than 10 million page visits per month. As

a consequence, modern Web presentation services have to be dimensioned to be able to receive dozens of calls per second, all targeted to the database backed news service.

In order to overcome mechanical bottlenecks like database access frequency and web server performance, Nedine has defined adequate service architectures and hardware as well as software precautions to meet the ambitious goals of technically supporting a pan-European network.

Under professional supervision of the Vienna University of Technology (TUV) and Universidad Polytechnica de Madrid (UPM), the pioneering news agencies with the Nedine association, CIA (Czech Republic), SITA (Slovakia) and presstext (Austria) have evaluated their local news presentation and distribution services in order to identify common service features, communication and news interchange interfaces, and provide guidelines on how to adapt future services to make them ready to join Nedine.

In order to both obey national business solutions and modern network integration technology, Nedine has successfully designed and implemented a modern Peer-to-Peer network architecture for Nedine. Synchronous and asynchronous news exchange, standardized network communication based on modern XML-Web Services and especially Security and Scalability have identified this solution as most appropriate for a modern multilingual and multinational news exchange and distribution service. Basic online content management software has been extended with features for multilinguality, XML standard formats for news presentation and exchange.

Current distribution technologies have been extended to reach information professionals at multiple end user devices in most current formats. Nedine has prepared news distribution for different submission channels by using standardized data formats like NITF and NewsML. All relevant measures have been documented within the Nedine project phase (funded by the European Union) and are available to future network partners as technical and business guidelines at [www.nedine.org](http://www.nedine.org).

Additionally, to semantically connect European business news most up-to-date approaches from artificial intelligence have been utilized: for each news article distributed by Nedine, automatically the semantically most relevant matches in the topical neighbourhood of the article in focus are identified. Based on semantic technologies like the Vector Space Model, business news from all over Europe are locale enriched with most relevant related news, thus attracting interested readers and potential customers for the news distributors and increasing the quality of the business news for the entire network significantly.

The advantages for European businesses are obvious: relevant business information are delivered fast and accurate directly to the decision makers, allowing them to have direct access to unfiltered and independent information at the same time.

With Nedine news agencies and SME companies especially from South East European countries have the opportunity to set business decisions based on internationally relevant details aside of pre-filtered comments of local or national media and in most cases with a head start in the field of business information. Indeed, this is good news from Europe.

*continued from page 27*

Tribune, received a death threat. Hedl said the threat was directed at him because of a series of articles he published in the weekly on the torture and killings of Serbian civilians in Osijek.

This is not the first time that Hedl has received death threats, and SEEMO issued a letter of concern on the subject in December 2005. On this occasion the threat allegedly came from a local politician.

We would also like to bring to your attention the case of Slobodna Dalmacija journalist, Sasa Jadrijevic Tomas, who reported a death threat to the police at the beginning of May from a retired Croatian officer.

The threat came after Jadrijevic alleged that the officer was illegally using army draftees to work on his construction site.

SEEMO is deeply concerned about the re-occurrence of threats against journalists and kindly asks your Excellency to do everything in your power to urgently investigate these cases, and to take all necessary steps to protect their lives. It is very alarming that threats against journalists in Croatia are increasing.

We would like to remind Your Excellencies that a safe working environment for journalists is a fundamental principle of every democratic society. It is also in the interest of democratic development in Croatia that journalists are allowed to investigate stories free of any pressure.

### **Protest Macedonia (FYROM), 22 May**

*To: H.E. Branko Crvenkovski, President of the Republic of Macedonia; H.E. Ljupco Jordanovski, President of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia; H.E. Vlado Buckovski, Prime Minister of the Republic of Macedonia*

SEEMO is outraged by a prison sentence handed to a journalist in Kumanovo, Republic of Macedonia - FYROM.

According to information before SEEMO, Zoran Bozinovski, co-owner and deputy editor-in-chief of the daily Trojka and a journalist for Forum Plus weekly, was recently given a 3-month prison sentence for criminal defamation and insult.

The sentence was handed down by the Court in Kumanovo after charges were brought against Bozinovski for an article published in the local weekly Bulevar on 25 December 2003. At the time he was the newspaper's owner and editor-in-chief.

In accordance with the SEEMO Vienna Declaration of 6 May 2006, SEEMO regards prison terms for defamation as a gross violation of internationally accepted standards and believes that defamation should be treated under civil law, not as a criminal offence subject to punishment of the state.

SEEMO also finds this sentence unacceptable because, on 10 May, the Parliament in Skopje adopted an amendment to the Criminal Code, which abolished imprisonment as a

punishment for criminal defamation.

SEEMO has also been informed that Bozinovski has to report to the police today at 3 p.m. in order to start serving his sentence.

However, the above-mentioned decision by the Parliament will be implemented on 23 May. At the moment, there are 82 pending charges against Bozinovski, mostly initiated by public officials. As a result of his investigative reporting, Bozinovski has been physically attacked and seriously injured in the past.

We remind Your Excellencies that reporting on controversial figures and topics are not only in the public interest, but also provide a context to delicate and difficult subjects. SEEMO, therefore, asks Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to rescind this court decision and withdraw the charges and the sentence against Bozinovski.

SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellencies that an open media environment, allowing for the free flow of information, is a fundamental principle of any democratic society. ■

## MEDIA AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING PRODUCTIONS WENT TO SEE COUNTRIES

The well noted Erasmus EuroMedia Awards 2006 were delivered in a public ceremony in Vienna in June

Since 1995 the European Society for Education and Communication (ESEC, <http://www.esec-online.net>) awards the Erasmus EuroMedia Seals and Medals to remarkable media-programmes and media-productions in all media categories coming from all European countries. After ten years being delivered in Berlin from this year on the prize will be awarded in Vienna – not at least because of the cross-cultural position of the city of Vienna, bridging east and west, north and south of Europe. This year the ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Award ceremony was held together with the Comenius EduMedia Award Ceremony for outstanding educational media programs, given by the GPI - Society for Pedagogy and Information (Germany). The well attended ceremony took place at the Episcopal Palace of Vienna on the 22nd of June and had been organized by the Austrian Society for Education and Communication (OeG:BK) who is the representative of ESEC in Austria).

The media works being submitted came from 10 countries, many of them from SEE- region. This year eight Erasmus Medals, 15, Erasmus Seals and 2 Erasmus Special Prices were given to applications from Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovenia. They cover on the one hand European themes reflecting local or regional dimensions of past in reference to the European history, analyzing the present shape and expecting the future coming out of Europe. On the other hand they pursue educational goals regarding the European topic such as European values, European identity and consciousness, trans-cultural communication in Europe, social integration, solidarity and peaceful neighbourhood. The political-cultural purpose of

the EuroMedia Award is to mobilize the inner-European communication, to overcome cultural barriers and to connect the idea of Europe with the reality of Europe, to achieve more sustainability in the European concept.

The ESEC Erasmus EuroMedia Awards are honorary awards and therefore not connected with any financial benefits for the winners. The value of the award lies mainly in the fact that the awarded projects get international attention. Within the past ten years the ESEC with its Erasmus and Comenius Awards became a competent network entity between various projects and project operators. It is not only recognized but also appreciated by experts, award candidates and award winners. The application process for the Erasmus EuroMedia Award 2007 will start in December 2006 by an international Europe-wide invitation for tenders.

The winners of this media competition had been determined by didactic and scientific analysis by the international ESEC Jury. This year's most honoured media programs came from Austrian broadcasting Service (ORF) for a production on Carl Szokoll and the Moral Courage – Stauffenbergs Last Witness, from the city of Vienna (PID) for its inter-city-network ([www.wieninternational.at](http://www.wieninternational.at)) and from Germany (Tellux) for the series Donauklöster.

The laudations, the decisions of the international jury and short trailers of all honoured pieces can be visited at the award website under <http://www.comenius-award.net>.

For informations concerning next year's application contact the Austrian Society of Education and Communication (OeG:BK) Christian Kuei Wang ([ck.wang@comenius-award.net](mailto:ck.wang@comenius-award.net)).



**SEE Media Forum Zagreb**

5-6 October 2006, Zagreb, Croatia

**Dr Erhard Busek SEEMO Award 2006**

13 October 2006, Vienna, Austria

**SEEMO Investigative Reporting Seminar Serbia**

December 2006, Belgrade, Serbia

**News from Young Journalist Center from Moldova**

Young Journalist Center from Moldova and European Youth Press organize an international training!

Young Journalist Center from Moldova (YJCM) in partnership with European Youth Press organize from July 22 till July 28 an international training that'll take place in Moldova with the theme: "Compass Training: Team Building". 28 young journalists from Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Austria, Hungary and Moldova are going to attend the training.

Objectives:

- To give the participants tools to structure a project description; To give them ideas about how to find alternative sources of funding/co-funding; To give the participants an in view of different selection procedures; To offer ideas and inspiration on how to strengthen relations with donors; To give the participants a feeling of the steps of project writing; To show the possibilities for an international solution on different problems; To show the various possibilities within existing funding lines; The participants understand communication as a tool for teamwork and improve their communication skills in order to improve their project work; To make the participants develop ideas of projects they can develop.

Working language: English

for details: [ciorici@gmail.com](mailto:ciorici@gmail.com)

**Netnovinar - Centar for investigative journalism and media education**

All trainings will be held in Mediacentar Sarajevo.

September 4-8; fourth generation of Investigative Reporting Distance Learning Program - Organized criminal stories. This is a 5 month program; combination online learning and two face to face workshops. Participants are from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. This is the first face to face workshop. Total 12 participants. Applications deadline: 31 July.

September 14-16; the first 3 days training for electoral reporting. Participants are the journalists from BH print and electronic media.

September 21-23; the second 3 days training for electoral reporting. Participants are the journalists from BH print and electronic media.

September 28-29; the third 2 days round table War crimes and media: Possibility of reconciliation for Transitions Online. This is the final meeting this year. Participants are journalists, NGO representatives and experts who cover war crimes from Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

October 2-6; Training Business Reporting for journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

November 27-29; Media Leaders Forum - meeting of owners and chief in editors from southeastern Europe with CNN and BBC experts.

December 4-8; The fourth generation of Investigative Reporting Distance Learning Program - Organized criminal stories. This is a 5 month program; combination online learning and face to face workshops. 12 participants are from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro. This is the second face to face workshop.

New Book

**Minorities and Media in South East Europe**

published by SEEMO

To order please send an email to: [info@seemo.org](mailto:info@seemo.org)

# Vienna Declaration On Strengthening And Building Media In The SEE Region

We, the editors, media executives and journalists assembled on 6 May 2006 at the SEEMO Dialogue Meeting in Vienna, having discussed the media situation in countries of transition in the region of South East Europe (SEE) and the standards for EU membership, appeal and urge the governments and authorities in the region, as well as all involved, including relevant international institutions, to:

- Not undermine in any way the very means of dissemination of information. Ensure that citizens in the emerging democracies in SEE have access to free and independent media. There is also a need for strengthening and building independent media, both old and new ones, in these countries.
- Respect the social need for diverse voices, including those of minorities and ethnic communities, in private, public and state media, as well as anti-monopoly laws applicable to all businesses.
- Eliminate all government influence on media, as in the recent case of RTV Kosovo when a law was passed that seriously endangers financial and editorial independence, as well as state support to some media - giving some media a monopoly position or a stronger financial position than the private media.
- Grant the licences for terrestrial radio and television stations after open and transparent competition with clear criteria. The recent case in Serbia is one example where the frequency allocation was not carried out in a transparent and unbiased manner.
- Issue multiple-entry visas for journalists free of charge. It is essential that every journalist, who has a regular press card, can receive a visa in a timely and unbureaucratic manner and without the burden of producing variety of documents.
- Conduct investigations into cases of attacked, injured and

killed journalists, as well as to end impunity by bringing to trial the killers of journalists in the region.

- Change the laws dealing with defamation in accordance with international standards. Journalists should not be punished under criminal law. Actions against journalists for defamation should be heard in the civil courts. All damages should be proportionate and in scale with the economic realities of the country, as well as the individual and company concerned.
- Ensure free access to information and respond to media requests without delay. All governments must respect freedom of information laws enacted to protect the fundamental right to seek, receive and impart information. Where necessary governments should advertise how and where to use these laws.
- Tax print media in the countries of the region, especially those aspiring to become EU members, at a reduced rate, or even at a zero-point rate.
- Respect the right of journalists to protect his or her source of information in each situation, even during legal proceedings.

SEEMO and the Association of Private News Agencies (APNA) welcome the will of the government of the Republic of Macedonia – FYROM expressed by its decision to transform the news agency MIA from a state financed entity into a regular joint stock company as part of a free market. However, SEEMO in its declaration stresses that a joint stock company in the media market is obliged to respect the legal framework of a free market, to implement all relevant principles defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia – FYROM and the Resolution of the Council of Europe, which calls governments not to use state budget funds at the expense of independent media outlets.