

deScripto

A Journal of Media in South East Europe

No 03.2006

€ 15,-

DOSSIER

Europe

COUNTRY FOCUS

Montenegro



Letter from Editor-in-Chief

Dear Readers,

Regarding the access of the new democratic countries to European Union, the integration process has so many aspects that it makes it impossible to cover the entire complexity in one issue of this journal. Nevertheless we thought we should open that chapter in deScripto.

We decided to ask what is interesting to us and what we think could be interesting to the community of readers of deScripto unifying so many countries with some significant differences in their relation to Europe: what about Europe in South East European media?

Europe as a union is a construction that is as good as the communication in it. In order to set effective structures for mutual respect, interest, empathy and exchange the psychic preconditions for mutual awareness have to be developed. This act of intent has to be taken care of by media. Media is the agency of constructing a system of interchange of information, opinion, and discourse. Since media is

involved in economic and commercial interests it is inclined to please consumers and not to bother or provoke them with complex contents. Deconstruction and reduction of complexity, which is a journalistic and communicative achievement may quickly become trivial and – in combination with populism - tabloid.

Becoming Europe is a subject that is too serious and too important to leave it to simplification by populism or stereotypes. So it is a question of how media deal with Europe, especially in the framework of countries in transition.

So, we hope this issue of deScripto will enrich the discussion about the role of media in the approximation of South East European countries to European Union.

Thomas A. Bauer
deScripto Editor-in-Chief



Letter from Publisher

Dear Readers,

As the publisher I am pleased that you have in your hands number 7 of our SEEMO media magazine deScripto. In this edition you will find an interview with Danko Plevnik, a Croatian journalist, who received the Dr. Erhard Busek SEEMO Award for Better Understanding 2006 on 13 October. On 10 December we will present a second annual award – the SEEMO Human Rights Award. It will be presented to Abdulhalim Dede, a journalist working in Western Thrace, Greece.

Dede is the owner of an independent minority weekly local newspaper (Trakya' nin Sesi) and a local radio station (Isik FM). Minorities are very important for SEEMO. There is no universally accepted definition of minorities and the word is interpreted differently in different societies, by different cultures and in different countries. For that reason we tried to define it some months ago when we published the book Media and Minorities in South East

Europe, to present all those groups who are officially accepted by a state as a minority. You will also, however, find details about those minorities that officially do not exist in a country. So, if you are interested in this topic, dear readers, feel free to contact us for this book. Thomas Bauer, who is editor-in-chief of deScripto, is also, together with me, editor of the book Media and Minorities in South East Europe.

Of course, as always, feel free to contact us with comments and suggestions that will be of assistance in preparing the next issue of deScripto.

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

Table of Contents

DOSSIER EUROPE

- 4 **Media Going Europe**
European Values in SEE Media Communication
- 8 **Wanted: Well Educated, Multilingual, Experienced**
Foreign Correspondents of SEE Media in Brussels
- 10 **Sorting Through the Trash**
EU Reporting - Can Media Keep up With the Pace?
- 12 **European Wasteland?**
The European Union and Media in Croatia
- 14 **Access Denied**
EU's Visa Regime and Macedonian Media's Coverage of the Topic
- 16 **SEE Countries Feeling Second Class**
Interview with Danko Plevnik

COUNTRY FOCUS MONTENEGRO

- 20 **Disputed Independence, Discordant Media**
Montenegro's Media and the Country's New Independence

SEEMO REPORTS

- 25 **Your Excellencies!**
Recent SEEMO Protest Letters
- 27 **Preview**
Upcoming Events

Imprint

deScripto

A Journal of Media in South East Europe
Published quarterly

Contact

Thomas A. Bauer
Department of Media and Communication
Science, University of Vienna
Schopenhauerstrasse 32,
A-1180 Vienna, Austria
+43 1 4277 48336
thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at
www.deScripto.info

Editor in Chief

Thomas A. Bauer, University of Vienna

Executive Editor

Axel Maireder, University of Vienna and
University of Applied Sciences Vienna

Editorial Assistance

Kristina Benkotic, SEEMO

Contributing Writers

Kathrin Honauer, Ema Kaiser, Jessica Lee,
Karin Schneck, Marion Ziegelwanger

Guest Writer

Filip Nelkovski

Graphic Design

Axel Maireder

Advertising Contact

Thomas A. Bauer, thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at
+43 1 4277 48336

Photos & Illustrations

Cover: Axel Maireder; Other: If not stated
otherwise, by the editors

Publisher

SEEMO - South East Europe Media Organisation,
Oliver Vujovic
Spiegelgasse 2, 1010 Vienna, Austria
descripto@seemo.org; +43 1 5133940
SEEMO is an affiliate of the
International Press Institute (IPI)

Publisher's Board

Remzi Lani - Tirana, Radomir Licina - Belgrade
Samra Luckin - Sarajevo, Stjepan Malovic - Zagreb
Georgios Papadakis - Athens, Risto Popovski -
Skopje, Ognian Zlatev - Sofia

Printed by

S. Polic in cooperation with Standard 2, Belgrade

Subscription

Standard: e 24,- /year, Students: e 12,- /year
orders by email: thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at
or fax: +43 1 4277 48344

Mission Statement

deScripto is committed to the enhancement of a
climate of critical reflection on media culture
and communication, in and among the SEE
countries. Published quarterly as a joint project
of the University of Vienna and the University of
Applied Sciences Vienna, under the auspices of
the South East Europe Media Organisation
(SEEMO), deScripto is an independent journal of
analysis and opinion dedicated to the democrat-
isation of the media and the development of
civic society in the SEE Region.

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

deScripto is a joint project of



**universität
wien**

University of Vienna
Faculty of Social Sciences
Institute of Media and
Communication Science



DOSSIER EUROPE

Media Going E

To a certain extent media represents the communicative status of a society. In South Eastern Europe that status is in transition. What role do European values play in that process and what role do the media play in linking the one world with the other?

By Thomas A. Bauer

It is not always clear, whether the South East European societies are as happy with the option of becoming a partner in European integration as other European peoples may assume. Since these countries firstly want to become their own and secondly do not have as many alternatives than belonging to a sustainable system of peace, progress

It is not always clear, whether the South East European societies are as happy with the option of becoming a partner in European integration as other European peoples may assume.

and prosperity, prescriptions from others provoke suspicion.

Since Europe is the only perspective of belongingness, but keen to be built as a safely organised society where members stand close to each other, demanding incoming members to put quite a lot of national traditions to the back seat, EU-citizens should not be surprised when South East European countries, to certain extent, feel more like a victim of transition rather than its sovereign. The perturbations in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina or Turkey - there because of the persecution of war crimes, here because of the hostility between possibly connected member countries - are just the tip of the iceberg. Below that there are many substantial conflicts due to different interests or cultural ideals that come out less as facts or information but more as emotions or collective mood.

European Values – Models of Sense of Social Life

Since the European Union understands itself as a community of values following the principles of democracy, human rights, state of law and secularity, it has to consider that these values can never exist or can be developed in a mind of a society when this society feels it is forced to apply them. Such constellations of 'hierarchy sized' interests, as they happen now in South East Europe, still exist within the EU itself, more or less obviously.

Such a wide ranging and, in its perspectives still work in progress is at same time the theory of practice as it is the practice of a theoretical concept. What is shown, especially in the negotiations with Turkey, is that nothing would kill the achievements of the project faster than a mindless continuation of the same routines when now – since Turkey is a new qualitative factor in the history of the European idea – the challenge has changed: the (quantitative) enlargement only makes sense in close relation with (qualitative) change - this may also mean the enrichment of values.

Values are cultural models of knowledge about the conditions of a sense of life. They have been developed over a long period of time and reach far back lying narrations, thus gaining a seat in everyday life. Life changes narrations and narrations settle life again in a different way. That is the reason why values change when the source of knowledge changes. No doubt about that: the Balkan perspective and the Turkish perspective intervene and change (widen, enlarge and enrich) the source of European models of a sense of social life for new aspects or even paradigms, espe-

urope?

cially concerning the cultural meaning of religion, family, history, social cohesion and other similar topics. Therefore, the EU is challenged to re-think the setting of values in people's everyday life – just as the European Union demands the same from new connecting countries, which is a challenging task. The only way to balance the similarities within the differences and the differences within the similarities is communication. If something needs to be better organised in order for Europe to become a unified body then that is the dialogical model of communication. The rationality of dialogical communication is to create and not to avoid difference, to generate itself further out of those differences and therefore out of this to opt for the mind. As differences and dissimilarities of perception do make sense under the conditions of communication, communication makes sense (sic!) where differences exist. There is no other way to create sense and construct reality than through communication. In this meaning, differentiation is not an achievement of scientific analysis, but a competence quality of social practice (communication) – long time before any systematic use of it. Europe as a conglomerate of several individually distinguished cultures therefore has problems of cohesion and identity. Europe seeks to hold itself inwardly through unity and shape, outwardly through diversity. But, this difficult balancing act should rather be taken as a challenge than a burden. Again this perception needs communication.

Why, therefore, should it be any wonder that Europe, when facing its future constitution, as a body of different members and opinions, during times of change, is getting confused with paralytic syndromes or with increasing scenarios of de-transfiguration - now mainly due to its enlargement process? Fiascos like that of the European constitution or the dilemmatic situation with Turkey's access to the European Union are unavoidable steps for a sustainable

way – even if learned and discovered post modo. In order to have a model of agreement for the next step you have to go through communication. There is a cultural evolutionary formula that also could be established as a political arithmetic in order to gain knowledge from this dilemma of the gap between enlargement and consolidation: that is enrichment. Cultures have always learnt to discover their own sources of enriching evolution due to environmental challenges.

Since the European Union understands itself as a community of values following the principles of democracy, human rights, state of law and secularity, it has to consider that these values can never exist or can be developed in a mind of a society when this society feels it is forced to apply them.

Within the context of the enlargement process the question of the possible resources for and of European identity rises. And this question can only be answered in turn through the insights of the consolidation process. On the other hand, this consolidation process requires a deeper inner-perception. How does Europe understand itself (inwardly) and how does Europe want to present itself (outwardly). In short, how does Europe want to be seen? The benefit of a concept (through which the self-understanding and the self-presentation could be put in order) lies mainly in the balance that should be achieved between a critical distance towards itself and a critical proximity to its environment. By that approach, a concept of a society based on values does exist. It provides increasingly a profile of Europe as a

community of values. By such an approach, Europe does not define itself in a territorial way, neither through political nor other institutions; neither through structures or borders; nor through ethnicities; nor through languages; religious rituals or other cultural representatives: Europe defines itself through the imagination of a culture of association. A community of values can be a community as they have the same values or are a community with distinguishable values. The hypothesis is: the same basic values ensure enough of a capacity to carry and to create different interpretations.

But politics often thinks small. Regarding political discourses, one must be aware of the fact that minimum-versions are preferred, in the closed minded manner of Bush administration: We have values and those who share these values belong to us. The others are excluded (from benefits of values). Regarding the models of discourses of practical politics, one can maximise the benefits, if one bears in mind that the values only become practically true, if we

share them (give participation to) with others. Thus, others are included (in the benefits of values). It would be a fascist aspiration per se to merge/unify only something that is similar to itself or because (or only when) it is similar to itself.

However, it is a cultural inspiration to merge/unify something because it is dissimilar or diverse in itself. In particular, it is the European programmatic framework for a cultural definition of social aspects and a social definition of culture - associating diverse interpretations and meanings of values opens the universe of values and unifies body and mind.

Shift of Paradigm from Total to Integral

Within this argumentation (unity makes sense because of diversity) it does make sense - not only theoretically, but also practically - to change our view from the European Union as a totality into one as entirety. Connecting to the concept of entirety we may determine the collection of differences to be a model of community.

If we define this concept of a community of values in this

Media are agencies, where Europe discovers itself – whether as a well-done or doomed project.

way, the issue of enlargement will not be considered as a problem of limitation and separation anymore but as a challenge to create a culture of coherence of possible totality. In this way, the topic of European values is not a problem of equal thinking of all citizens but a problem of sufficient resources to communicate the differences. If we think of totality, we think of equality.

If we think of connection, we think of cohesion. Therefore, the project of a European society is not a matter of equality because it would be a totalitarian impertinence. In fact, the project Europe is a project of connections of social differences within a collective unit. Connection is the paradigm, which allows us to link the enlargement (new societies) with consolidation (new perspectives of sustainable values). Again: what connects is communication.

The Role of Media: Place of Critical Self-reflection

It is clear that such a conception of the relations between society and community cannot be found in an existing model which we would just need to copy. Europe is a project in itself, searching for its implicit, but not yet realised images.

Europe will exist, as it discovers itself, even if it comes to reconsider its history again. Europe will become reality also in what it discovers. Thus, everything depends on (critical



self) perception, on reflection and distribution respectively participation of this perception.

Certainly that is an issue for media (in a media society). These are agencies, where Europe discovers itself – whether as a well-done or doomed project. However both ups and downs must be communicated. Here the relativity of steps is the only way to gain safety – step by step because there is no absolute standard. In this process the failure of Europe (either as a political or as a social construction) is like with other projects a necessary amplitude of imagination. But the status of failure is not defined naturally, only culturally. It never lies in the facts or conditions, but always in the interpretation of those facts and conditions. So, if we change these interpretations with dialogue and communication the threatened scenarios of failures will change (and even decrease) too.

Thus, there is no natural rational recipe, neither for securing nor avoiding failure. The failure as a contra-dimension to success is already pre-programmed. In everyday practice it is already culturally defined, what brings a project to fail and what makes a project successful. Therefore, a critical

Europe considers itself increasingly as a media society in a globalised competition. However this orientation is not only a myth, but also a performative and offensive declaration of society that wants to be an open one.

perception, which breaks the everyday practice of status rating, must come from the next system/order level – of systematically critical perception. To describe the way to it, we must analyse the (planned or already realised) path to success and also the image of success itself. Because – to say it again – failure and success are not absolute, but rather miscellaneous dependent amplitudes, each scaffold we need to ensure our success is relative – also the scaffold of values.

This consideration outlines the role of media in the construction of the European society very clearly: Which agency else has the potential and autonomy (as needed) to bring other (contra) positions sufficiently into discussion in time? So we gain two effects. First the new perspectives will increasingly assimilate and second the basic idea will be distinguished eventually through dialogues.

So, if it is about the question of European values (as exerting of images of values, in which Europe is a politically and socially a community of societies linked to each other – amicably inwards and agreeably outwards), what also counts is the theoretical maxim beforehand that not (only) the images of success, but also the images of failure display those references, through which the discourse about Europe can be broadened and enriched.

Community of Values and Media Society

Media display social experiences effectively, they make them visible and thus they construct correlations (media-communication). In doing so we need to ask, which ideas of value we should take as the direction of our perception, how to measure the quality of each action and above all, how to ensure the intention of the often unknown others. So media also has to comply with those rules, to which oneself has to observe. 'Action' has sense and makes sense, because it is why we make something out of it. Sense and action become one by 'doing'. We must co-orientate the commitment of 'doing' in these contexts, so we can ensure the liability.

In relation to media communication Europe is a Western organised society ('Lisbon Strategy'). It increasingly considers itself as a media society within globalised competition. However this orientation is not only a myth but also a performative and offensive declaration of society that wants to be an open one. Such society models declare themselves dependant on a mechanism of trust.

Such a society observes its (own) social change through the media like the society causes and forms this social alteration. The society crosses the limitation of space and time by organising its communication more and more medially. It is therefore present everywhere at anytime, for example how such a society is organising its communication, it communicates its organisation: rationality, acting-patterns, mental references, and matrixes of self-reflection and cultural annotation of its existential orientation.

Media ensure that the optimisation of the project Europe is not only a political issue – for various reasons: Media are societally organised agencies of exchanging perceptions and experiences. Media are culturally relevant places of constructing realities, of endowing meanings and frames of reference for decision-making of attentiveness and perception or denial, oblivion and expulsion.

Media bind criteria of respect and disrespect. Media have the position of symbolic concretion of an abstract trade of values to what deserves attention. Insofar as media realise what they indicate. Through the media things get a valuation and valorisation, they get a multiplication of sight and become estimable because they cross the individual border of perception. Additionally, behind this individual border of perception they become not only visible but also relevant for any others.

The principle of trust in relation to the media is the assumption that publicity gives the security of control. All that, of course, needs conditions of common sense about the principles of building a society on the fundamentals of freedom of speech and opinion, and on the fundamentals of sharing competence of social life. ■

WANTED: Well Educated Multilingual Experienced

In order to get the latest news from Brussels back home to Bucharest, Sofia, Zagreb or Ankara, the newspapers, TV and radio stations send foreign correspondents to the 'EU-capital', namely Brussels, so that no relevant topic can be missed. DeScripto has talked to some of these correspondents about their experiences. *By Marion Ziegelwanger*

At 8 o'clock the alarm clock goes off and Vera Tomasek gets up. She works as a foreign correspondent for Radio Croatia in Brussels. Over the next two hours she will check the daily papers and all the news agencies, as well as the TV and radio for relevant news. She will then attend the European Commission's Midday Briefing. Usually, after that she will go back home, write her story and cut her broadcast. "I am a one-woman-show," she says. "I am a technician, driver, bookkeeper and journalist in one person."

Whenever the European Parliament holds its meetings she

must also go to Strasbourg or Luxembourg. As the first correspondent for Radio Croatia she has been in Brussels for five months now, but there is also room for a private life. Normally her day ends with a dinner with her husband or a trip to the movies.

Tomasek is one of the 1284 accredited journalists who are in Brussels. Of these there are 104 accredited journalists from South East European countries there at present. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova have sent none. Usually the foreign correspondents are employed by newspapers they work for. This is the case with Stojan Deprato, who writes for the Croatian daily *Vecernji List*. He has been working as a foreign correspondent since 2002. But

being employed does not mean that you are sitting in a safe boat. For the last months his position has been weak as it was not sure that the newspaper wanted to have somebody in Brussels or not. So Deprato had to go back to Zagreb once a month and ask his editor-in-chief to sign him a monthly contract. This summer he got a one-year contract. Vecernji List is one of the most-read newspapers in Croatia. It is economically independent and focuses on regional news. The new editor-in-chief, who was appointed by the Austrian owner Styria Company in spring 2005, is the former press officer of the late Croatian president Franjo Tudjman. Although the paper itself is actually pro-euro-pean, like most Croatian newspapers that have been taken over by companies from the EU, it has also gone tabloid and does not want to „bore“ its readers with too much serious journalism.

But being a correspondent in Brussels also has some nice things to offer. „Journalists can travel free of charge by train through the whole of Belgium,“ says Tomasek. Sometimes she can use these free trips out of town to go and see places like Brugge or Antwerp, in order to write a story beyond EU-topics which will be broadcast on Radio Croatia. „It is good for my editor that I can speak French,“ she says.

As Croatia is a Candidate Country, what is happening in Brussels and the EU institutions located there naturally should be very interesting for people at home. These institutions have created their own language which no one outside can understand without translations.

Therefore the foreign correspondents also have to work as translators. „We try to use examples,“ says Tomasek. But it is not easy to give a good example when you only have one

The EU is a structure which is continuously under construction. You have to be very careful about the technicalities when you report on difficult topics.

Selcuk Gulatsli

to two minutes airtime and want to tell everything relevant. „But it also depends on how much these institutions want to communicate on the subject,“ Mihaela Gherghisan, who works for the Radio France International and Euexpands, continues.

Usually the foreign correspondents can decide by themselves which story is relevant and should be told. Sometimes they recheck this with their editor-in-chief, and if necessary, „I withdraw my proposal and replace it,“ says Gherghisan. „Or sometimes we decide this together,“ she continues. That is how it works in Turkey as well. „I am a bit lucky in the sense that my stories are usually published. But if there is something very specific then Istanbul can ask me to follow certain occasions,“ says Selcuk Gultasli, who writes for the Zaman daily.

Being a foreign correspondent is a hard job. You work alone, in a country you do not really know, under enormous pressure of time and difficult circumstances.

Zaman was established in 1986 and is one of the most-read quality newspapers in Turkey. It was the first Turkish daily on the web in 1995. Gulatsli started working in Brussels in June 2001, well before the Accession Talks. He has two Masters Degrees on the EU – one from Turkey and one from Belgium. He thinks that the job of a correspondent is more stressful than that of a journalist in his homeland. „I think so mainly because EU stuff is such a hot potato for Turkey these days,“ Gultasli explains.

Writing a good story on a complex topic is hard work – also for him. „The EU is a structure which is continuously under construction. It is already very complicated,“ he says. „You have to be very careful about the technicalities when you report on difficult topics. Cyprus is one of them,“ Gultasli explains. The Cyprus conflict throws a shadow on the start of the Accession Negotiations with Turkey.

Being a foreign correspondent is one of the most treasured professions. But it is a hard job. You work alone, in a country you do not really know, under enormous pressure of time and difficult circumstances. That someone has to have a good educational background, knowledge of foreign languages as well as organisational and improvisational talent is clear. Therefore only the best will be wanted. ■

Sorting Through the Trash

EU Reporting – Can the Media Keep up with the Pace? *By Jessica Lee*

The European Union (EU) has many different meanings to different people across the continent of Europe. These opinions are formed through the help of a variety of mediums. More important than ever, the reporting of EU issues in South East Europe (SEE) is of high value and sometimes takes precedence over other news items.

The history of media in SEE has had its fair share of problems, from struggling with ethical reporting practices during communist rule, to a lack of resources to research. Bulgaria and Hungary are no exceptions and have come a long way since the fall of communism in 1989 and 1990 respectively.

With Hungary's membership of the EU, EU reporting has been a major news item in the local and national media. On 25 April 2005, Bulgaria and Romania signed the Treaty of Accession 2005. The media landscapes in these countries are at the moment especially abundant, as the decision of their being fit to join the EU approaches, based on the Commission's recommendations.

What is EU Reporting?

So what exactly is EU reporting? There is no set definition and it is up to each individual's opinion as to its meaning. Susanna Zolcer, a journalist for the daily newspaper Budapest Sun explains it be anything to do with the EU. "This issue is very current at the moment and so we have been placing a lot of effort on it; it is important for the people."

Zeljka Lekic, coordinator of the Eurovision News Exchange (ERNO) also agrees: "EU reporting is any news-

worthy item linked to the European Union." A journalist for the Bulgarian political weekly Kapital, Ilin Stanev, explains EU reporting as a list of many different topics: "We write updates on the current accession process, the requirements still needed to be fulfilled, whether this is all happening in harmony, how we are going to convince other member states to allow us to join and policy changes that will effect Bulgaria."

EU reporting also focuses on the cultural elements of change. When asked if any changes are expected if Bulgaria joins the EU, Stanev retorts, "Has France or Germany changed since they joined? I do not think so. I think it will be many years before we can notice any differences. I used to live in Budapest, Hungary and did not notice any changes since they joined the EU." Very firm with his opinion, he adds, "Europe will not change in terms of its individual [country] culture and values."

On a more optimistic note, Zolcer believes that Hungary's integration into the EU is definitely a positive in the nation moving forward: "We see ourselves as a country that really is a part of Europe."

More specific than this, EU reporting in each individual country has its own ideas about which news to report, for example political, economic or about the EU in general. But journalists all agree that the stories have to be relevant to their own countries. "We always report from a Bulgarian point of view so it is relevant to our readers," says Constantin Nikolov, a journalist for the Bulgarian business daily Pari. This, in theory, from a journalistic point of view is as clear as day, falling under the news value 'proximity', whereby a story is more valuable when it directly incorporates or affects those reading the story.

g h

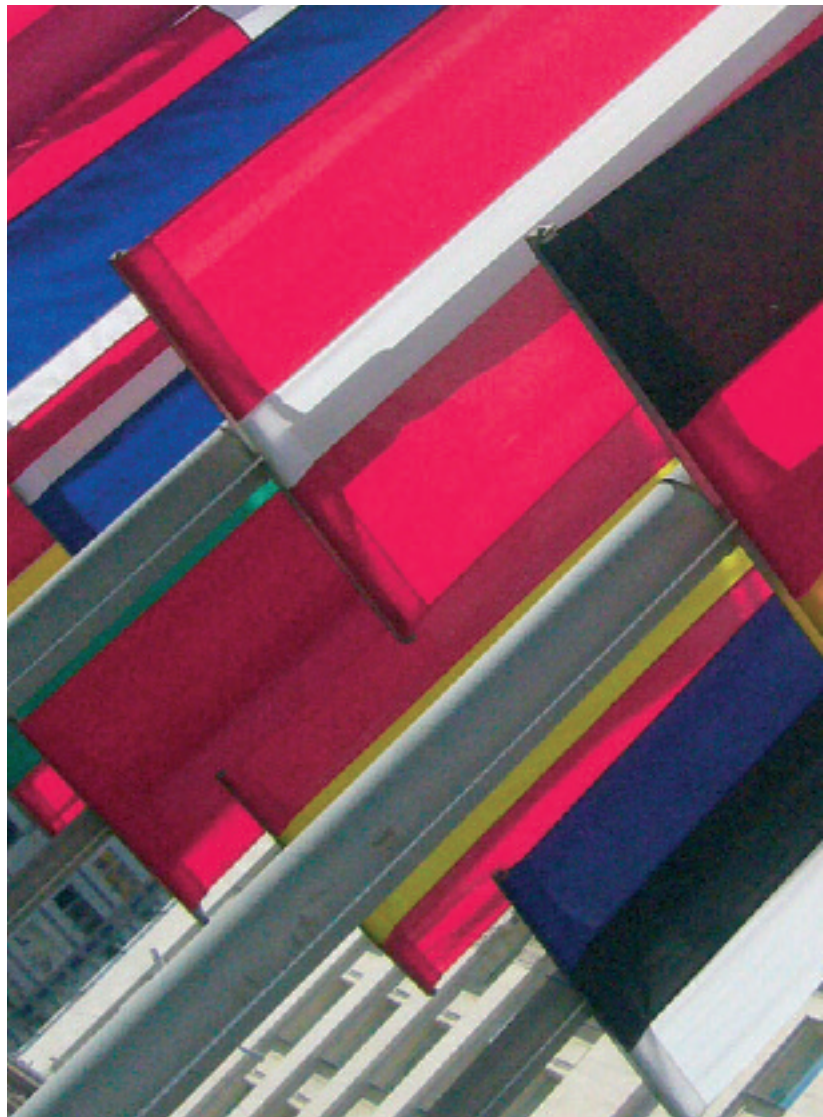
EU Readership

More explicitly, the topics which are deemed relevant and reported are the visa regime, pending economic and financial change and agricultural issues. For the Bulgarian public, there are more varied and pressing issues as the nation works hard to meet the EU criteria in order for them to join on 1 January 2007. It can be assumed that the public should take an interest in news stories relating to EU issues. The media is possibly the only source of information one would receive without too much effort. Whilst an individual can find plenty of material on the internet, putting it all into perspective and into the vicinity of their respective country, the majority of the citizens would rather accept what the media is informing them of.

ERNO, a news organisation which has members from 12 television broadcasters in 11 different countries across SEE, was established in late 2000. It is part of the wider Eurovision News Exchange, in conjunction with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). Based in Sarajevo, they have their own production crew and produce five news stories lasting 15-minutes each, everyday. These are then broadcasted on the member channels. The reason for the establishment of this organisation is that previously all news stories about the region were produced either in New York or London, indirectly taking the focus out of the immediate region. ERNO holds a strict editorial policy to “serve all sides equally and cover all sides of life.” According to ERNO coordinator Zeljka Lekic, EU reporting falls under the categories politics, economy or SEE. In March 2006 there was a total of 43 EU-related news stories and in April 38, produced and broadcasted across the region.

The idea of ERNO is optimal in terms of moving forward positively in the media landscape of SEE. This is really important for citizens to have a clear and objective message through the media in regards to the EU. Hungary’s media ride into the EU was not so smooth. Hungary’s main EU information machine was the Public Foundation Communicating the EU (EUKK). Instead of using effec-

tive methods to inform the Hungarian public about the important issues concerning their accession to the EU, campaigns using propaganda were employed. The campaigns raised questions such as: “Will I be able to work in Berlin?” or “Can I still buy ‘Makos guba’?” (a Hungarian sweet made with poppy seeds). It was questions like this that left a hole in the Hungarian media, creating a tabloid-like ‘us versus them’ debate. Nevertheless, the end result was clear. After the national referen-



dum in April 2003, Hungary accepted its accession into the EU, even though only 46% of its citizens chose to vote. After this historical point in the nation's history, the EUKK was dissolved, after spending close to 3 billion Forint (EUR 11 million) in public funds since its inception.

The Eurosceptics

Of course, the opposition is never far away. There are anti-EU groups around, known as the Eurosceptics. They have been floating around Europe, most predominantly in the northern countries of the continent, but also in SEE. There is, for example, a Bulgarian-based website (eurosceptic.info) that reports anti-EU news. Bulgarian journalists approximate that 10% of publications are anti-EU but say that they are not in anyway threatening the Bulgarian accession to the EU.

"I do not think that the anti-EU groups are dangerous or threatening in anyway – we are well on our way to becoming a member," says Stanev confidently. There are also Eurosceptics floating around in Hungary, including one of the larger-scale daily newspapers, although they are often disregarded as Hungary is already a Member State.

Information Overload

It is not hard to imagine the amount of information that one can be exposed to as a journalist, especially in the realm of the EU. With the history of media in SEE, one would assume that the pressures of reporting such complex issues may be a struggle, particularly on topics related to the EU. Some of the issues, previously identified as problems in the SEE media industry, in general, were untrained and inexperienced journalists, few reliable resources, external pressures (government, political parties) and internal pressures (editors, owner of the publication).

This appears not to be the issue for Hungary or Bulgaria, which is gearing up to join the EU. "We have pretty good resources in our country and a wonderful EU Commission office," says Nikolov. "There are many resources, not just from the EU, for example on the internet and from other publications." Fellow Bulgarian, Stanev, takes another point of view: "...it depends on your professionalism, the field and the people you know," hinting that information may be harder to come by.

However, all journalists acknowledge that the problem is not the lack of information, but sorting through the abundance of it. "The easiest part is to do the research; it is sorting through it that is tough," says Zolcer.

The EU Commission offices that these journalists speak so fondly of are all located in Brussels. Operated under the Directorate General Communication, it is the official media machine behind the EU. They provide press materials and endeavour to inform national and regional media of EU activities and hold press meetings everyday at midday. ■

Europe Wastel

A post-war country like Croatia is always in the spotlight. Different organisations, among them the European Union, are monitoring the integration and observing the media reports, even more so since Croatia should be joining the European family as an equal member soon.

The media plurality and the freedom and quality of the press are important and questionable issues. Wake up and smell the coffee - most publishing houses in Croatia, but also in the region of South East Europe - are owned by European companies.

Almost all of the panellists who worked on the Freedom House Press Report 2006, both local and international, agreed that journalism in Croatia is more professional and sophisticated compared to other countries in the region.

Professional opinions, such as those coming from Stjepan Malovic, a well know media professor and expert from Croatia, are discussing 'trivialisation' as a new and devastating trend on the media scene. In his point of view, Croatian media are under the strong influence of market economy and success.

Profit is the major driving force. Publishers and owners are not interested in developing an environment, which would create quality media. At the same time, the education level of the media consumers is very poor: only 7.9% of citizens have a faculty diploma and almost 50% are semi-literate (Freedom House Press Report 2006). Malovic also claims that media consumers do not have enough money to buy newspapers and all together, there is no market for quality journalism.

Nevertheless, Malovic recognises that this trend is characteristic for most transitional countries as media migrates to a market-based approach and since new investors, foreign and domestic, enter the market. The

an and?

Cro plur t track to o But still, m
 eedo f the press in Cro tia are m
 co er T or a o v
 m o tia for w progress.
 Yet, there is a fact that sho be forgo
 Mo Cro e owned by
 EU- om *By Ema Kaiser*

media in Croatia, which managed to survive repression in the 1990s and has reached higher professional standards, are now facing a new and very different challenge: Commercial media are interested first and foremost in profit and are seizing an ever bigger market share.

As a direct consequence, most of the ‘serious’ and more professional media are having commercial difficulties and have lost a part of their audience. Some of them have found a solution in lowering their own professional level, offering more trivial and pure commercial content.

The growth of low-quality commercial media has significantly contributed to the offensive, subjective, and sensationalistic type of journalism. Pressure to be ‘more commercial’ also discourages good investigative reporting or checking information with multiple sources.

Editors all too often do not want to allow journalists the additional time needed for checking information or for conducting an in-depth investigation. They want to be ahead of the competition — to be the first on the market — even to the expense of the facts. Since 97% of the circulation of Croatian papers is sold on newsstands, the practice of ‘screaming headlines’ is seen as a necessary sales tool. Even the European publishing companies, such as Styria AG from Austria, are not using different strategies, says Malovic.

He adds: “Low quality is giving market results. Two of Styria’s products, the daily newspapers Vecernji list and 24 sata, are among the three best selling daily newspapers on the Croatian market. Why should they spend money for quality? Quality requires better paid journalists, more editorial independence, less sensationalism and tabloid style journalism.”

Technical facilities for most of the national media outlets are modern and efficient. Some of the local media are under equipped, but these are more marginal examples. Also, the variety of media outlets in Croatia shows that all

the market niches are covered at least in number of editions, if not necessarily in the quality of reporting. According to Malovic, there is not a lot of hope to change the current situation immediately.

This can happen “only by developing a better media environment, ensuring editorial independence and encouraging public media. Education is one of the driving forces and that might take years and years,” says Malovic. He comes to the conclusion: “Till then, the European companies will take advantage of the situation in Croatia and will continue to make as much profit as possible, leaving behind only the mess they produced.”

It seems that all the countries in South East Europe are used by foreign companies merely as territories where profit can be made. This often ends up in the use of these countries as wastelands and flea markets, where Europe is selling things nobody wants to buy any more.

Not only does the media market serve as an outlet store, but also other aspects of the economy. However, it seems that only the consumers themselves, be it in the media sector or in any other one, will be able to stop this trend by changing their buying behaviour and by screaming for the real news and checked informatio. ■

Access Denied!

The EU's Visa Policy as Presented by Macedonian Media

eg represents one of the very basic citizens' interests but
 What is the role of m this sensitive issue?
Filip Nelkovski is reporting from Skopje*

Who could believe that a small village in Luxemburg called Schenghen would hold such meaning to so many people? Probably not even the inhabitants of Schenghen are aware how often this toponym is mentioned in Macedonia. Regretfully, it is usually with a negative connotation because the first association with Schenghen is - the visa regime. Hence, for some 15 years, primarily young people, have been denied the freedom of movement due to the EU's visa policy. The role of the media in covering this issue is enormous. The responsibility they have maybe even bigger. The media did not produce a critical public audience. So, it is not therefore just the state institutions that need to be blamed.

Political Agendas

Despite all the political statements coming from national (but also European) politicians, it seems like citizens will not travel without a visa in the near future.

The so called 'visa problem' should be one of the topics treated by the media with high point of interest. But is it really like that?

"The media in Macedonia are doing absolutely nothing concerning the need of facilitation of the visa regime for the citizens of this country," an editor and former lecturer at the Macedonian Institute for Media, Zoran Bojarovski says. What they do (the media) is work on agendas for the political and business power centres. In their agenda there is no place for this sensitive issue. That makes them blind to the unalienable needs of the citizens," Bojarovski says.

On the ground, the queues in front of the EU countries'

embassies in Skopje are still long. "I do not know if this is the case in other countries but this is absolutely wrong. The visa regime introduced by the EU Member Countries is a real humiliation of the citizens. Is that the aim that should have been achieved?" asks Boris Lazov while queuing in line in front of one of the embassies in Skopje.

Very often the citizens who apply for visas for professional reasons are the victims of the Schenghen visa policy. Many still remember the incident in front of the British Embassy in Skopje when a folk dance group which was supposed to attend a festival in England was humiliated after an Embassy officer made them dance in front of the Embassy in order to prove that they are really folk dancers and the aim of their visit was really the festival. The group did not travel to England.

Eurocrats

"The media normally should play a crucial role in the process of visa liberalisation. Unfortunately, their performance is on a low level," says Borjan Jovanovski, an editor and anchor of Eurozoom, a specialised TV programme on EU issues. "On the visa problem, which is one of the topics of greatest interests of the citizens, they report in waves, following the activities and protocols of the politicians and this usually comes down to 'we can only ask for the liberalisation'. The repeating of these reports makes the issue banal," says Jovanovski.

On the other hand, the technical criteria (asked by the European Commission) and their realistic basis become questionable if we take into consideration the opening of

the borders for the Bulgarian and Romanian citizens and the fact that an enormous number of people left their countries. Macedonia has less than 2.1 million inhabitants, out of which many due to their own businesses or good jobs maybe do not feel the need to leave the country. Still, a recent survey shows that 38% of the population would “move abroad to an EU country”, but some of the media are quite straight when explaining the problem. “All the members of the Balkan organised crime already have multi entry Schengen visas, so the question is, for whom is this visa regime for?” wrote Milenko Nedelkovski, a well known journalist and columnist in one of his articles explaining the visa regime.

Then again, there have been serious remarks to all the Macedonian Governments so far, since they have failed to fulfil the EU requirements regardless whether they are really the condition for alleviating the visa regime.

Commercialisation

“The media have failed to fulfil their job mostly because they have almost never reported about the violation of human rights by the consular officers at the embassies. This also places the diplomats in a comfortable position since without the pressure by the public they do not feel the need to make this issue a top priority on their agendas,” Jovanovski comments.

“In general, the media have not produced any critical pub-

lic audience able to create pressure on the Eurocrats and the Macedonian institutions,” he adds.

The media have a part (not a small part either) of the responsibility concerning the situation Macedonian citizens are facing. “I am sure that the media can do much, but they need to be prepared and able to see the essential importance of liberalising the regime, such as the conditions for the free movement of people which is one of the very basic human rights and one of the greatest civilisation achievements in the contemporary societies,” Bojarovski stated.

Thus, the interest of the media is more commercial than it is public. Or should we say, it is always commercial, very closely related to the political and business outlines. Is the visa regime contrary to the efforts of the European institutions for integration? As one of my collocutors stated: “The Schengen visa regime is our Berlin Wall. The latter was a physical and the former represents a bureaucratic barrier.” The media failed to make a top priority out of this touchy issue. It is part of their job to cover the national, not just political and business interests. ■

* The author is a journalist for Forum Plus weekly magazine and editor of Forum Analitica. He holds a BA in journalism from the Skopje University. Prior to his employment at Forum group, he has worked as a journalist at several Macedonian media (print and electronic) covering economy and business issues.

People queuing up for a visa in front of the Italian Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia; Photo by F. Nelkovski



“SEE Countries Second Class”

Danko Plevnik, this year's recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek - SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in SEE on the Relationship Between the European Union and South East European Countries.

By Kristina Benkotic

Danko Plevnik, Croatian columnist and writer, is this year's recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe. The sponsor of the award, Dr. Erhard Busek, is the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Coordinator of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), President of the European Forum Alpbach, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe and former Vice-Chancellor of Austria.

The EUR 2 000 award is given annually to a journalist, editor, media executive or person educating journalists in South East Europe. This person will have, through the media, promoted a climate of

better understanding among peoples in the region and worked towards ending minority problems, ethnic divisions, racism, and xenophobia, among others. DeScripto met Plevnik in Zagreb and used this opportunity to talk to him about his views of media in this part of Europe, but also about the meaning of the European Union.

deScripto: Mr. Plevnik, you are this year's recipient of the Dr. Erhard Busek – SEEMO Award for Better Understanding in South East Europe. What does this award mean to you and how is it going to influence your future work?

Danko Plevnik: I perceive this award as an acknowledgment of my whole journalistic activity in these areas, because I have always tried to put forward the Croatian

perspective correctly in international relations, and at the same time be fair to all other countries in the region. Namely to follow a balanced approach with an aspiration for a general aim, admission into the European Union.

In a way I think that this award came at a right time since it should also be seen as a sign for Croatian government to start taking care about the media quality since this pre-election campaign, which has started in Croatia, can be perceived as a big pressure at press freedom, as the recent events have shown.

Since we have opened the door for foreigners, the whole region has been 'wazised', it got into the hands of the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) conglomerate.

You were SEEMO Coordinator for Croatia in the past and you are a member of the organisation. How do you see the role of SEEMO in the region?

I think that SEEMO is the most serious organisation in the region, especially since SEEMO has a positive tendency to constantly redefine this region.

First, this region might have been connected only to the countries of the Former Yugoslavia, but then it spread to other countries, thus becoming a cohesive factor for the journalism in South East Europe, which in a way always dodges the experiment of the Brussel's bodies.

I realise that this organisation is a very important para political factor, because it always tries to be a journalistic conscience of the region. Its constant appeals to governments, presidents and prime ministers about gaffes in their countries is proof that SEEMO really acts as a protector of media ethics in this part of the world.

Feeling

You have written many books, which among other things deal with journalism and ethics. What is the situation of journalism in Croatia today and in how far are these ethical principles and standards respected? Also, in how far does the commercialisation of media have an influence on the quality of reporting?

Croatia had several transitions in the area of ownership. Firstly, the media were owned by the state, and then they were transferred in a kind of a social ownership, in order to become again owned by the Croatian State, which then sold them. But only journalists from Rijeka-based daily Novi list were lucky, because they became the owners of the paper themselves. All other media unluckily changed their titular so there has been much compromise about it. And of course, those who have bought certain papers from media houses under better conditions, are in better relations with the salespersons, namely the team which sold them. So we cannot expect objective informing in connection to those brokers who sold them, because in a way these are certain politicians. It is difficult to expect objectivity towards the main advertisers. On the other hand, since we have opened the door for foreigners, the whole region has been 'wazised', it got into the hands of the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ) conglomerate, which has bought a big part of media in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Croatia. WAZ has brought a tendency of rough tabloidisation so that unfortunately almost all dailies and weeklies became entertainment journalism and we cannot any more talk about quality press. Everything became popular and populist press so that our ideals that we should strive for Neue Zürcher



Zeitung, FAZ, Süddeutsche Zeitung or other European papers are gone because everybody grew enthusiastic for some tabloid journalism, as if it would be the only one surviving on the market. But we see on European examples that there are normal and honest newspapers which did not prostitute themselves in this accidental and 'by the way' journalism.

All countries in the region have the aspiration to enter the European Union, although one can often find negative opinions about the EU among the people. In how far do the media influence the public opinion and how do they report about the EU?

Since the most media are owned by companies from the European Union, it would be logical that they do a positive campaign for accession of these countries into EU. Of course all governments in the region have the entry into EU and NATO as their strategic task. However, I do not think that the problem is the popularisation of the accession and

the explanation since people are quite well informed about its meaning, but I think that the problem of the public opinion comes from the actions of the EU itself, because it is suffering of 'eurosclerosis'. This is a more important tendency than our internal euro-optimists and euro-pessimists, because EU simply did not learn anything from its own history. It got the Marshall Plan after the WWII as help and this plan prepared it for the accession to the normal free economy market. However, the way in which it was formed, as a pacification union and economic community between Germany and France, first for coal and steel, later as a defence from the Cold War and USSR. So it had a clear plan in its development. EU made a mistake for not making any structures of help to the countries of its South

East, in the sense the Marshall Plan had for Western Europe. EU has much stricter criteria for the accession of new countries than those countries had had, namely the first six members and some other countries. It is very elastic with the most powerful European countries, for example France, United Kingdom and Germany, which do not have to pay much attention to the Stability Pact. Not to our Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, that is something else. Thus these countries feel as second class countries, especially because a tendency is being made within the EU that it has more time to make arrangements with countries of Mahgreb, Mashreq, Levant, than with this part of Europe. If Greece is a respectful member of the

EU, then how is it possible to question that countries south of Slovenia belong to whatever. It is a big geopolitical problem of the EU that it did not develop a geo-strategical and geopolitical eroticism in the sense that it shows itself as a continental world power, which wants to prepare this continent for the global race. Thus EU cannot stall the accession of these countries. It should take in all these countries of South East Europe as soon as possible and in that way it would prevent their recidivism. If Croatia should get into EU in 2014, Serbia maybe in 2030, this politics nationalism is going to return. In Bosnia there will again be war, because these nations see that they have to rely on themselves and that EU is treating these states as a stepmother.



This book is published within the EU - Project "GRUNDTVIG - MEDIA: Blended Learning in the Euro-Cultural Adult Education".

Values for Europe - Europe for Values

edited by Thomas A. Bauer and Gerhard E. Ortner

Chapter 1: Democracy - Media as Place of Reflection and Self-Organisation

Chapter 2: Dialogue - Understanding Differences

Chapter 3: Diversity - Identity as a Trans-Cultural Project

Chapter 4: Sustainability - Learning Society Europe

The articles in this book are written by highly recognized scientists and experts from institutions such as the University of Vienna, the Distance University of Hagen, the University of Amsterdam, the University of Maribor, the Society of Pedagogy and Information, etc.

For further information please contact:

Univ. Prof. Dr. Thomas A. Bauer

(email to: thomas.bauer@univie.ac.at)

And that is the biggest problem in media reporting and not the surveys. The poles in the surveys change rapidly. The strategy of the EU is in question and not of these countries. Rules need to be set up because even in box not everybody boxes in the same category. There need to be rules for the countries that are not so developed and for the most developed countries. USA had that geopolitical Eros, because it took Texas into the union when it still had slavery. So the strategy of its own idea should be more important to the EU than to rigorously torture these developed countries. One says: beggars cannot be choosers. These countries were destroyed in war. The Marshall Plan also did not ask from destroyed Germany and France to have open market economy and success.

One of the conditions for the EU-entry for some countries in South East Europe, such as Serbia and Croatia, is to first reconcile with their past. How is this process developing in the counties of the Former Yugoslavia and where are its obstacles?

Some countries did not have a problem with that because they have always been turned towards the future. By that I mean Slovenia, which during communism had a campaign "Europe Now". Even in communism they wanted to be Europe. In Croatia, since it got the candidate status, one is turned towards the future, but politicians use certain moments from the past, especially from the recent past and the war, to constantly use these things for political fights so that everything in relation to Serbia constantly needs to be under a magnifying glass. And the normalisation of relations needs to get some imprimatur from defending services of all these victims of that war. In my opinion this is nonsense, because one big European politician, Charles de Gaulle, said in 1945 that blood dries very fast, so one needs to move

forward. So since in Croatia pro-European powers did win, it is used only in internal political fights and is not an important political factor regarding the EU and the accession process. But in Serbia it is more developed since Serbia is still not in this accession phase and also because of Kosovo. In Bosnia it is a problem because of Republika Srpska. In Montenegro for example there are no complexes, since Djukanovic has forgotten very fast that he has been the right hand to Milosevic in the revolution which has brought down the legal communist government in then Montenegro. They have already introduced Euro, they have abolished military service, and they act as if they would already be in the European Union, which is a posi-

tive example. Resignation of the Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic was a big step.

How do media influence the reconciliation process?

Media are interested enough in recidivism of a calculated nationalism. They easily get dragged into discussions about nationalistic topics and they hunt everything that is not nationalistic or national enough, but they never say anything against the non-national or other-national newspaper owner. For example, Vecernji list daily from Zagreb is very national, but it never questions its owner which is not Croatian, than the Austrian company Styria AG.

And at the end, how do you see the future of this region in general?

The general prognosis is that we need EU help. In the war it was shown that this region cannot get out of its crises without the US

help, because Europe plays with matches, because there is a persistence of the Treaty of Versailles, which says that nations are the main factors of development. EU cannot understand that it needs to be a political union and political federation such as USA, and that it cannot return again to concepts of power, to be balance of power between big forces such as Germany, France, UK, Spain, Italy, and so on. In that sense if Europeans need to show a stronger organisational and political union, only with that they will be able to help these parts, because South East Europe is a part of the European Union. If we will have to face, in economical sense, the worst forms of neo-liberalism which ignore the tradition of European capitalistic model, it would be a horror. If the whole Croatian ownership is given to foreigners, what are the people going to do, but a revolution, wars, because they would not be able to get ownership and prosperity in any other way. If the American ultra-liberal neo-model

Media easily get dragged into discussions about nationalistic topics and they hunt everything that is not nationalistic or national enough

If we will have to face, in economical sense, the worst forms of neo-liberalism which ignore the tradition of European capitalistic model, it would be a horror.

of individual concept of a society or a French-German-Swedish model of a social state and well-fare for most citizens wins, then there will be success.

But this radicalisation of acquisition and division of national goods and this antagonism in ownership and holding does not bring any good in the future. Accession into the EU is a bureaucratic and administrative process, in which certain principles need to be shown and applied. But they themselves do not bring progress without a working, intellectual, scientific and economic engagement of the citizens themselves. That is the most important thing which journalists should transmit to its own people and to the people in the EU. ■

COUNTRY FOCUS MONTENEGRO

Disputed Independence Discordant Media

Print and Broadcasting Media in Montenegro –
and Their Role for the Country's Way to Independence

By Kathrin Honauer and Karin Schneck

Montenegro has now been an independent state for some months and it seems as if it would have found its right way regardless of the fact that it still faces difficulties and barriers. Although Montenegro had been part of the Union of Serbia and Montenegro for several years, there has always been some kind of diversity to Serbia which, for example, was expressed in the use of different currencies or the different legal systems. This is also reflected in the media landscape, as Montenegro has its own newspapers, radio and TV stations.

At present there are 57 print media, 18 television stations and 54 radio stations in the country. Relative to its population of 620 000 people, the media sector is oversaturated according to Claire O'Riordan, Chief of Department at the USAID/ORT (United States Agency for International Development/ Organization for Educational Resources and Technological Training) Advocacy Program in Montenegro.

Print Media

There are four daily newspapers in the country, namely *Vijesti*, *Pobjeda*, *Dan* and *Republika*. *Vijesti* seems to be the most balanced and commercially oriented newspaper with the highest circulation and it could establish itself as a mid-market paper, explains Filip Radunovic, Communication Scientist from Montenegro. He adds that nowadays this newspaper tries to increase its quality and wants to establish a more critical style of journalism.

As with the other dailies, *Vijesti* is privately owned and the WAZ (Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung) owns a 50% share in the business.

Radunovic adds that *Dan* is a pro-Serbian and for that rea-

son government critical newspaper, which tends to be more sensational and distinctly political in orientation. It published some scandalous stories over the last years, for example about the smuggling of cigarettes and blamed politicians for being involved in this affair. In 2004 its editor-in-chief Dusko Jovanovic was killed, which may have been a result of publishing many investigative stories and uncovering political scandals.

Pobjeda, the oldest daily newspaper in Montenegro was founded in 1944. In former times it was a state-owned newspaper but has changed into a joint-stock company, which is a first step towards privatisation, O'Riordan explains. According to her, this newspaper follows the government line and is not regarded as independent-minded or original.

Republika, formerly *Publika*, also follows the government line and was sold to the Russian company Hadiflake Ltd. in 2004, which arranged a new team for the newspaper and renamed it into *Republika*.

In 2003, the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) evaluated that most citizens put greatest trust in the daily newspaper *Vijesti*, followed by *Dan*, *Pobjeda*, and *Publika*. What is remarkable is that according to this evaluation, people in Montenegro also put great trust in the reporting of the Belgrade daily newspaper *Vecernje Novosti*. However, although there are media from Serbia available in Montenegro, people prefer reading national papers.

Beside these four daily newspapers there are 11 weekly and five biweekly magazines, such as *Monitor*, which was founded in 1990 and was one of the first independent media in former Yugoslavia. Together with the magazine

pendence, edia

Polje it is one of the magazines which publishes investigative articles and in-depth articles. According to O'Riordan, however, their circulation figures are very low with about 5000 to 6000 copies sold. Nevertheless, Monitor has won a good reputation in well-informed circles, but also on an international level due to its investigative reporting about the war crimes in former Yugoslavia, problems of ethnic minorities and human rights.

Television and Radio in Montenegro

Beside these print media, the state radio and television station RTV Crne Gore is the most important electronic medium. TV Crne Gore runs two channels and is in process of becoming a public service. There are also 15 private TV stations in the country, such as TV-IN which was founded in 2002, TV MBC (Montenegro Broadcasting Company) founded in 1995, TV Elmag and TV Boin, which is the first private TV station in Montenegro broadcasting in the Albanian language. 39 radio stations of the total 54 broadcasting in Montenegro, are private ones. The most important private stations are Radio Antena M and Radio Elmag.

Quality of Reporting

Media in Montenegro are generally biased along the major political fault lines and have arranged themselves either on the pro-independence side or against it in the last ten years, explains O'Riordan. Due to this she describes reporting as quite selective. However, it serves an individual editorial policy, which is quite tied to the main political stream in Montenegro. In fact, journalists hardly can break away from the unofficial party line of the newspaper or TV out-

let which may be a barrier for a higher quality of reporting. In general, states Radunovic, media in Montenegro are very focused on national politics, such as the referendum. He adds that it would be a good development if Montenegrin media would now start to focus on different themes too, such as social or economic topics which have been suppressed for a long time.

O'Riordan sees another reason for the rather low quality of

Media in Montenegro are generally biased along the major political fault lines and have arranged themselves either on the pro-independence side or against it.

journalism: the sources. All newspapers get their information from a rather narrow range of sources and often the same stories with slightly different political angles are printed. Furthermore, a low level of education and training within the journalists' community and the increasing competition on the domestic media scene are reasons for that. In the past year and a half more and more outlets are trying out sensational journalism in order to attract readers and viewers, which has also lowered the quality of journalism.

Ethnic Minorities

Montenegro is a country of ethnic diversity. Only about 43% of its inhabitants are Montenegrin. Beside 32% of Serbs, the rest of the country is made up of Bosniaks, Albanians, Roma or Croats. For that reason it seems to be



Journalists' Education and Training in Croatia (JETiC) is an Institutional Building Joint European Project endowed with 470.356,00 Euro by the European Union and with 25.626,00 Euro by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of Republic of Croatia. JETiC is one of the two TEMPUS projects approved by the European Commission in the category of Institutional Building in the year 2003.

JETiC is initiating sustainable high quality media staff training in Croatia. Goal of the project is to build a very democratic and decentralized institution of "JETiC Seminars", a school for journalists and media staff that consists of various work-shops. To reach this goal 25 persons from various positions in Croatian media will be trained into "JETiC Trainers" who will, beyond the end of the project (August 2007), carry out "JETiC Seminars".

JETiC is also preparing the general public, especially public authorities and their decision-makers, on the new quality in Croatian media. "Media Thursdays at 7pm" aims to increase the demand for quality in Croatian media from the side of its consumers, namely the general public, by inviting international and Croatian experts on media to debate with the audience on current media topics.

For more information on the project please visit the JETIC website at: www.jetic-tempus.net

Project Partners:

The University of Vienna (Universität Wien)
International Center for Education of Journalists (ICEJ)
High School of Journalism in Lille (L'école supérieure de journalisme de Lille, ESJ Lille)
The University of Zagreb (Sveučilište u Zagrebu)
Kaltenbrunner Media Consulting (Kaltenbrunner Medienberatung)

obvious that there is a need for a special media for these groups, but there are only a few offered such as the Albanian weekly newspaper *Koha Javore* or *Hrvatski glasnik*, a Croatian bimonthly print media.

On Radio Crne Gore in 2004 a 30-minute radio show in the Romani language was launched called “The Voice of Roma in Montenegro”. The only private TV station which broadcasts in Albanian is TV Boin.

Media and the Referendum

The media always plays an important role when it comes to elections or making opinions on different topics. Thus, media in Montenegro surely did influence people in making a decision to vote either for or against the independence.

To ensure fair and balanced campaigns and reporting of media in the country, public and private media had to adopt regulations and a code of conduct before and during the referendum, which was prepared by the Association of Independent Electronic Media of Montenegro (UNEM). Through this conduct media were obliged to respect the principles of independence, impartiality, fairness and balance in their campaigns. It was signed by all important private Montenegrin media and eight Serbian-based media available in Montenegro. The abidance to these regulations was monitored by a parliamentary committee with representatives of both blocs, pro-independence and pro-union ones, and by members of OSCE/ODIHR (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights).

O’Riordan mentions that both sides, pro-independence and pro-union, were allowed to spend EUR 1 million on their media campaigns. The pro-independence block tried to convince people with slogans like “For the Montenegro we love” and with securing a pro-Western, pro-European future for the country, whereas the pro-union block tried to link independence with corruption of the current political regime and played on traditional fears, stressing the historical and cultural links to Serbia.

According to Radunovic, this campaign had been the most balanced one for Montenegrin standards in the last ten years, although it surely could have been better. There were also couple of complaints, for example about the daily *Dan* because it has contravened the signed conduct in some of its articles.

The Referendum - So What is Next?

The referendum on Montenegro’s independence was a very special one. There was an immense observation about all political, media or social procedures and for the first time there had to be more than 51% voting for or against the

independence in order to get a clear decision. The European Union decided that there would have to be more than 55% of votes for a final result. This barrier was built due to the scepticism of the EU concerning Montenegro’s independence, says Radunovic. The Union was frightened that this would cause a domino effect and may lead to unrests in Kosovo or Bosnia-Herzegovina, too. Nevertheless, Montenegro’s inhabitants voted for an independent country but as the outcome of the referendum was very tight, with 55.5% for independence, O’Riordan regards media as being responsible to unite the two sides of society in Montenegro and public broadcasting as the one to lead the way in demonstrating to the rest of the media sector how the interests of all citizens should be presented, not only of those who ‘won’ the referendum.

Unfortunately some media do not see themselves responsible for uniting the country but do write articles against ethnic minorities and blame them for ‘stealing’ the results of the referendum. Such statements are hate speech and do not help at all to unify both sides of inhabitants, O’Riordan stresses.

She also states that resolving the statehood issue was only the simplest step since the most significant steps still lie ahead of Montenegro, like economic and social reforms to improve the living standards of its citizens and since Serbia will inherit UN membership, the country has to apply for the membership to the UN, NATO and EU separately.

One More Goal

EU Accession is a special goal for most of the citizens of Montenegro and its pro-European government. As mentioned above, the pro-independence campaign was built upon looking towards a European Montenegro which would be easier to reach by being independent from Serbia, remarks O’Riordan. But before thinking of becoming a member of the European Union, Montenegro still has much work to do within the country and has to make its way as an independent country. ■

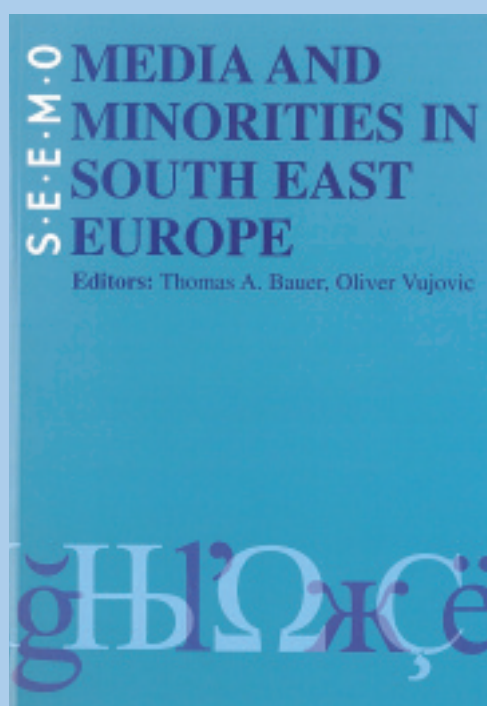
The South East Europe Media Organisation

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 per cent 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 *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".



Media and Minorities in South East Europe

...is a publication realised by South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO). Its aim is to enhance better understanding of the minorities' situation in South East Europe and to serve as a source of information concerning their media. Next to detailed country reports, the publication contains a database of all important minority media in the region. You can order "Media and Minorities in South East Europe" for EUR 40,- excl. postage fee.

Contact:
SEEMO - IPI, South East Europe Media
Organisation
Spiegelgasse 2/29, 1010 Vienna, Austria
Tel: +43 1 513 39 40, Fax: +43 1 512 90 15,
e-mail: info@seemo.org

Your Excellencies!

Recent SEEMO Protests and Press Releases

Press Release Serbia, 9 August

SEEMO welcomes Serbian President Boris Tadic's refusal to promulgate legislative amendments to the Broadcasting Law passed by the Serbian Assembly on 19 July 2006.

SEEMO also fully supports the views expressed by the OSCE Mission to Serbia, which "called upon the Serbian Assembly to reconsider the urgent procedure of adopting amendments to the broadcasting law and allow time for public discussion."

SEEMO believes that, if these amendments are signed into law, they will make the Republic Broadcasting Agency financially dependent on the government in clear violation of the regulatory body's need for independence. In addition, although broadcasters may appeal, they are obliged to execute the regulatory body's decision without delay; the failure to do so leads to a compulsory enforcement procedure of the Council's decision.

Commenting on the situation, SEEMO Secretary-General, Oliver Vujovic said, "The proposed amendments to the Broadcasting Law jeopardize freedom of expression and seriously limit the right to fair proceedings and the use of legal remedies, particularly the right to appeal against a decision of the Republic Broadcasting Agency."

"For these reasons I welcome the decision of the Serbian President Boris Tadic to exercise his Constitutional right and refuse to sign these amendments into the Broadcasting law. I also hope that in the next parliamentary session, in September or October 2006, Parliament will once again debate these amendments and take into consideration all domestic and international reactions by professional media organisations."

Press Release Serbia & Croatia, 30 August

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists in South East Europe and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about the worsening situation for journalists in Serbia and Croatia.

In Serbia, SEEMO has registered the following attacks and threats against journalists, prison sentences given to journalists, as well as restrictions on the free access to information:

On 13 July, Jelena Antic, Ruma correspondent for the daily Dnevnik, was prevented from attending a press conference at the Ruma City Hall by security officers, who were acting

on the orders of the President of the Municipality, Srdjan Nikolic.

- On 25 July, Jahja Fehratovic, editor of the weekly Glas Sandjaka, received anonymous death threats over the phone.

- At the beginning of August, Slavko Savic, director of the local TV Kursumlija, was given a four-month conditional prison sentence for libel, although the information broadcast by his station was correct.

- On 13 August, Nikola Rumenic, journalist for the weekly Svet, was physically attacked and injured by two perpetrators in front of the hotel Jugoslavija in Belgrade.

- On 13 August, Dusanka Novkovic, Pozarevac correspondent for the daily Kurir, received threats over the phone by a priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church, who was dissatisfied with her writing in an article titled, "Priest Has Beaten Up a Priest".

- On 17 August, Dragan Zaric, journalist for Radio Stari Milanovac, was physically attacked while moderating a radio show. A masked perpetrator entered the studio and attacked Zaric with a knife.

In Croatia, SEEMO has registered the following cases:

- On 23 June, Ad Van Denderen, a Dutch photographer, was beaten up by five unknown men on a beach near Split while taking photographs. He was seriously injured and had to seek medical treatment in a hospital. Afterwards, he went to a local police station in Split where he was not allowed to file an official complaint.

- On 12 July, Ladislav Tomicic, a journalist for Novi list daily, received an anonymous letter containing death threats directed at him and his family.

- In July, Vitomir Peric, Sinj correspondent for Jutarnji list daily and Croatian Radio, was insulted and threatened in a restaurant by Velibor Milosevic, a local politician. Peric had already received anonymous death threats over the phone.

- On 25 July, Kristina Tesija, a journalist for Nova TV, was verbally and physically attacked by Ivan Dabo, mayor of the town of Novalja, from where the journalist was reporting about water shortages for the evening news.

Speaking about these incidents, Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General said, "SEEMO strongly condemns these threats and attacks on journalists, as well as all activities which restrict free journalistic work and movement. I am very concerned about the worsening of the working conditions of journalists in Croatia and Serbia, in particular because in many cases it is clear that the pressure was exert-

ed by political representatives. Furthermore, in several cases, the police did not react properly.”

Vujovic added, “If both countries would like to become members of the European Union, the local politicians and courts, as well as police, must do everything in their power to provide safe working conditions for journalists.”

Protest Serbia, 13 September

SEEMO is alarmed at the recent death threats received by a journalist in Serbia and the dismissive reaction of the police. According to information before SEEMO, on the night of 18 August, Slavica Jovanovic, a journalist from Macvanski Prnjavor, received death threats by telephone from an anonymous male voice telling her that she will die and that she should move away. This was not the first time that Jovanovic has been threatened, and in the past, her family members have been physically attacked.

SEEMO was also informed that the local police refused to allow Jovanovic to file an official complaint. Indeed, it was only after the Journalists’ Association of Serbia (UNS) intervened on her behalf that the police agreed to give her proper protection. SEEMO views these threats as a very serious violation of press freedom and journalists’ rights. We ask Your Excellency to do everything in your power to protect the life of the journalist and her family members, as well as to investigate why the local police failed to react immediately. As SEEMO noted in its press release of 30 August, the situation in Serbia is very alarming because the number of threats and attacks on journalists has risen in recent months. SEEMO would also like to remind Your Excellency that an open media environment allowing for the free flow of information is a fundamental principle of any democratic society.

Protest Moldova, 20 September

The Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), a network of editors, media executives and leading journalists from South East Europe, and an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), is deeply concerned about the recent arrest of the sales director at PRO TV Chisinau.

According to information before SEEMO, Ghenadie Braghis, sales director at PRO TV Chisinau, was arrested on 7 September on suspicion of demanding a bribe of US\$ 1,000 from a private Moldovan transport company. The bribe was allegedly in exchange for a prime time commercial on PRO TV Chisinau. During his detention, Braghis was denied access to legal counsel.

SEEMO condemns this treatment of an innocent individual who has not been found guilty of any wrongdoing. There is also considerable concern that Braghis’ arrest may

be related to the critical reporting of the TV station. With this in mind, we would ask Your Excellency to use your influence on Moldovan officials and institutions to encourage them to respect the legal procedures in police investigations.

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

Protest Kosovo, 26 September

SEEMO expresses its deep concern over the attack on a journalist working for the Prishtina-based Lajm daily.

According to information before SEEMO, on 14 September reporter Enis Velju from the Kosovo daily Lajm was allegedly assaulted by Muhamet Berisha, a security member of the Kosovo Assembly. The incident happened while Velju was waiting to meet the member of the parliament Bajrush Xhemali at the Assembly’s restaurant. Prior to the meeting, Velju had presented a valid regular journalists visitors ID.

SEEMO was further informed that Velju wanted to report the incident to the police, but at the police station he was advised to forgive the perpetrator.

SEEMO strongly condemns this attack on the journalist and urges Your Excellency to do everything in your power to investigate this case, as well as to prevent such incidents from happening in the future. We would like to remind Your Excellency that it is crucial for journalists to do their job freely and that independent media are vital for the democratic development of any society.

Protest Serbia, 27 September

SEEMO strongly condemns the suspended jail sentence given to a Serbian journalist for criminal defamation.

According to information before SEEMO, Snezana Nikolic, a journalist for the daily Dnevnik from Novi Sad, was given a six-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, because of her article about a lawyer. Published in Dnevnik four years ago, the article concerned conflicts over construction sites in Vojvodina. The District Court’s judgement in Novi Sad was affirmed on 21 September 2006 by the Trial Court of Novi Sad.

SEEMO, as well as local journalists’ associations in Serbia, are deeply concerned that many journalists are still facing criminal defamation actions in the country. Another concern is the District Court’s explanation in Nikolic’s case that a suspended sentence is less harsh than a fine.

SEEMO strongly believes that comparisons between fines and suspended sentences are redundant. Both are forms of criminal punishment and both leave the journalist with the

stigma of a criminal record. Although preferable to a jail sentence, a suspended sentence encourages self-censorship and is another method of preventing journalists from practicing their profession.

SEEMO would also ask Your Excellencies to do everything in your power to reverse the decision in Nikolic's case in the event that this decision is not overturned by the higher court.

SEEMO asks as well to start the process of decriminalisa-

tion of defamation according to international standards. Journalists should not be punished for defamation under criminal law and all defamation actions should be heard in the civil courts.

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. ■

Preview

Upcoming Events

SEEMO Human Rights Award 2006

10 December 2006, to Abdulhalim Dede, Greece

SEEMO Investigative Reporting Seminar

15-17 December 2006, Belgrade, Serbia

SEEMO Meeting

of Editors-in-Chief and Media Executives of Roma and other Minority Media from South East / Central Europe
12-14 April 2007, Belgrade, Serbia

Media Award for Excellence in Sustainable Energy Reporting

Central and Eastern European print, broadcast and online journalists have until March 15 to submit their reports on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The Hungary-based Regional Environmental Center (REEP) organizes the Media Award for Excellence in Sustainable Energy Reporting in Central and Eastern Europe annually, in the hopes of improving the quality and quantity of articles that cover sustainable energy alternatives. The award carries cash prizes. For first place: EUR 1500; second place: EUR 750; and third place: EUR 500.

Eligible reports must have been published or broadcast between August 1, 2006, and February 28, 2007. Applications may be sent by post to the REEEP Regional Secretariat for CEE Ady Endre ut 9-11, Szentendre 2000, Hungary, or by e-mail to Judit Balint at jbalint@rec.org. For more information, or to download an application, visit http://media.rec.org/media_award.html.

British Council International Radio Playwriting Competition

The British Council is once again joining with the BBC World Service to launch the International Radio Playwriting Competition 2007. Applicants are invited to write a radio play of about sixty minutes on any subject of their choice. The play must be the original, unpublished work of the person or persons submitting it. The contest is open to any writer who is not normally a resident of the United Kingdom. The play must be written in English but can be translated by a third party, although there is no financial assistance available to help with any translation costs. Translated work must be identified as such, and the translators name given.

There are two main prizes given: to the best play written in English as a first language and to the best play written in English as a second language. The two prize winners will each receive £2500

Application forms are available for download on www.britishcouncil.org/arts from 30 October 2006 onwards. Submissions and application forms can be emailed to intradioplaycomp@bbc.co.uk.

World Press Photo 2007

For Details please visit www.worldpressphoto.nl

On the fast track to Europe

The WAZ Media Group publishes more than 500 titles in nine European countries – hereof 38 daily newspapers and 108 magazines between Essen and Sofia.

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

The WAZ Group builds on professional journalism: free, independent, non-party oriented. In respect of the freedom of media, it sets signals and thus gains the “trust” of the readers as well as the of the advertising businesses.

It offers companies a credible platform to show their presence, create markets and generate demand and growth.

It works the switches towards future.

This is the way.
This is the aim.

WAZ
»»» MEDIEN
GRUPPE

www.waz-mediengruppe.de

Germany
Austria
Hungary
Bulgaria
Croatia
Romania
Serbia
Macedonia
Montenegro