

## Issue No. 23

February 17, 2012 – March 02, 2012

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### Media Innovations

Upgrading of the National Geographic Serbia website is announced – *Restart*, published as a part of the daily newspaper *Press*, reports on positive news

### The media situation in Serbia

The Journalists' Building located in the Resavska Street in Belgrade has for a decade been the subject of a dispute between the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), which claims to be the sole owner of the building, and the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), which considers itself the owner of the property due to the fact that NUNS members used to be members of the UNS. The representative of the UNS, Nino Brajovic, is of the opinion that the verdict passed by the Court of Appeals – which has decided that ownership over the building is to be shared between both associations – is illegal because there is no law that stipulates that someone could gain ownership over property in this way. "This verdict is an exception and the Court of Appeals was motivated by political, not legal criteria. The dominant association of journalists has been deprived of its property rights". Jelka Jovanovic from NUNS says: "We have never commented on legal verdicts and we do not intend to comment on this one, despite the fact that it is in our favor. In a sense, the legal process is still ongoing because of the judicial complaint and constitutional appeal filed by UNS. I can say that my colleagues and I consider that law and justice have now been harmonized. The Court of Appeals has accepted testimonies of numerous witnesses who have confirmed that during the nineties a large group of journalists had no choice but to form a new association because they were not able to set higher professional standards within the then-UNS. We have also proved that the management of the UNS had not adhered to their own statute. The only reason for forming of NUNS and its survival until today was our insistence on professionalism."

(Politika, NUNS, 20.02.2012)

The president of NUNS, Vukasin Obradovic, said in a response to Ljiljana Smajlovic, the president of UNS, that despite all circumstances NUNS has no intention to allow the important issue of joint property of Serbian journalists to be marred by politics. "Today, just like during previous years, we believe that disputes should be solved with mutual agreement. We are still offering them the same settlement that had been on the table before we were forced to initiate the legal case. We still think that would be the best solution for members of both associations."

(Danas, UNS, NUNS, NDNV, 20.02.2012)

Several hours after the coming into effect of the court decision ordering the cable provider SBB to continue broadcasting the programme of TV Kanal 9 as a part of its basic analog package, the quality of the signal became so bad that viewers are not able to watch it. The court has also ordered that the level and quality of the distributed signal of TV Kanal 9 must not be lower than the level and quality of the signal of other TV stations broadcast by SBB and its affiliates.

(UNS, NUNS, 23.02.2012)

After repeated legal proceedings, the Commercial Court in Novi Sad has again decided in favor of TV Kanal 9 in a dispute between the station and the cable provider SBB. SBB is again obliged to include the programme of the TV station from Novi Sad in its basic package of analog television programs. In July last year, SBB violated the Law on Public Information and stopped broadcasting of TV Kanal 9 without any substantiated commercial justification. The company that owns SBB has recently bought KDS, meaning that the decision now applies to all users of the network in Novi Sad – which now enjoys a monopolistic position. TV Kanal 9 says that, according to their sources, the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has ordered the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) to oblige SBB to broadcast the programme of the TV station for the purpose of advancing the public interest. TV Kanal 9, formed in 1999, is the first private TV station in Novi Sad.

(Danas, 24.02.2012)

Dr Neda Todorovic, the professor of Theory and Technology of Journalism at the Faculty of Political Science, resigned on Saturday from her membership in the Managing Board and the Publishing Council of Politika. She has informed e-Novine, the Managing Board, as well as the management, stockholders and editors of the company, about her decision. Politika has not published the news about her resignation. In her letter, Neda Todorovic describes

"the inability of the Managing Board to exert influence on the management of Politika". In an informal conversation, several long-time journalists of Politika said to e-Novine that these claims were completely true and well-known, but also of minor importance in comparison with the actual dictatorship of the editor-in-chief, Dragan Bujosevic, who is favoring the staff that used to work in Politika during her darkest era.

(E-novine, UNS, 27.02.2012)

Dramatist Biljana Srbljanovic has decided to lock down its Tweeter account after the daily newspaper Kurir published an article entitled "Biljana Mocks the Disabled". She said that she felt "raped by tabloids". "Since I cannot turn off them, I will turn off myself. Thank you, everyone. Enjoy", she wrote.

(Kurir, 26.02.2012)

The director of Niska Television, Dragana Nikolic, has refused to implement the mandatory decision made by the commissioner for information of public importance and publish all contracts concluded between the TV station and public institutions. Dragana Nikolic, who is the member of the political party United Regions of Serbia (URS), has approved publication of only three contracts – all of them signed with the City of Nis. According to investigation conducted by Juzne Vesti, Niska Television signed contracts with all five municipalities of the city, while its operations were additionally funded by numerous public companies like the Nis Airport and the Heating Plant. The average value of individual contracts – hidden from the taxpayers by the management of NTV – amounts to half a million dinars a year, while their total value is almost five million dinars annually. It should be noted that decisions of the commissioner are mandatory and cannot be appealed. Refusal to implement the commissioner's decisions is a legal violation that for which a responsible person can be punished with a fine.

(Juzne vesti, 27.02.2012)

### **Assessments of the media situation in Serbia**

The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, Vukasin Obradovic, warned that Serbian journalism "has never been in a worse position" and criticized the Government of Serbia for failing to begin implementation of the Media Strategy. In his words, there is no political will to regulate the media scene or to allow the media to assume a significant controlling position, similarly to countries with developed democratic system.

(Blic Online, ABC Newsletter, 21.02.2012)

Stanko Crnobrnja writes: "Some time ago, suddenly and without goodbye, TV Fox left the Serbian media market. The Serbian Fox network with a national frequency was sold to Greek buyers for one dollar. Previously, according to media experts' estimates, Fox had invested more than 50 million euros in its Serbian branch, but was unable to return even half of this money. They have been followed by Greeks, who now operate under the name of Prva Srpska TV. The new station now ranks at the third position of most-watched TV stations, behind RTS and TV Pink, and has a good chance of winning a large part of the advertising market as well as achieving a strong influence on the public opinion in Serbia. Greeks have also bought a renowned Serbian TV station B92, which is one of the rare Serbian brands that are well-known abroad. Some observers hint at an ambitious return of the German RTL to the Serbian media market after purchasing of Prva Srpska TV and TV B92. That would certainly be the desired outcome for Germans, after a disgraceful (for them) way they were excluded from the first legal contest for national frequencies in Serbia. Actually, Germans were wronged at the time. Instead of them, TV Avala became one of the stations with nation-wide frequencies. TV Avala is a project organized by the domestic competition and supported by influential political players with the aim to prevent the Germans from entering the Serbian TV market. German competition in the market (as has been demonstrated in Croatia) would not be welcomed by media tycoons or politicians.

(Politika, 25.02.2012)

### **The state and the media**

The Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has adopted the report on consolidation of the newspaper

and publishing company "Dnevnik Holding AD". The provincial secretary for labor, employment and gender equality, Miroslav Vasin, explained that after four extremely difficult years, it was now possible to see first positive effects in "Dnevnik Holding". The first phase of stabilization of the company has been completed, mostly thanks to the steps taken by the Government of Vojvodina and the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

(Dnevnik, 15.02.2012)

The most communicative state and political officials in Serbia in 2011 were Rasim Ljajic, who is a convincing winner, followed by Ivica Dacic, Dragan Djilas, the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance Rodoljub Sabic, and the former Vice President of the Government for European Integration, Bozidar Djelic – this is the result of the traditional research entitled "Journalists – Your Friends" and conducted by the PR agency Pragma. Among the state and political institutions, the Anti-Corruption Agency and the Office of the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance had the best relations with the media. In the category of for-profit (commercial) organizations, the winners are Prva Srpska Television, Delta Holding, TV Pink and VIP Mobile. Among non-profit organizations, journalists praised the Tourist Organization of Serbia, as well as the Volleyball, Handball and Tennis Associations of Serbia.

(Pregled, 28.02.2012)

### **Threats, attacks and legal processes against journalists; media-related trials and disputes**

The former editor-in-chief of TV Avala, Robert Nemecek, filed a lawsuit against his former employer for "damage to reputation, honor and individual rights". A statement issued by Nemecek's legal representative says that the lawsuit was brought because Nemecek had been "dismissed from his position without prior notice due to alleged bad business results". One of the co-owners of TV Avala, Zeljko Mitrovic, responded immediately, saying that he intended to sue Nemecek for libel.

(Blic, Politika, 15.02.2012)

All 65 employees in the regional TV Novi Pazar, except the director of the station, filed a lawsuit before the local Primary Court against the city and their company. They demand to be paid their benefits for meals and refunds for the last year. Similarly to other employees in public companies in the city, their salaries are two months late.

(Danas, 15.02.2012)

A TV Studio B crew consisting of a journalist and two cameramen, was attacked in downtown Belgrade. The attacker, Dejan S. (35), suspected of violent behavior, was arrested and held in police custody. Dejan S. admitted that he had attacked the television crew, saying that "people in Serbia have difficulty surviving, while they are filming commercials".

(Beta, NDNV, 22.02.2012, Blic, UNS, Alo!, Pravda, 23.02.2012)

The First Primary Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade asked the court to begin investigation and hold in custody Dejan Zitic, the attacker on the television crew of TV Studio B.

(B92, 23.02.2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) condemns the physical attack on and threats against the crew of TV Studio B. UNS considers that the characterization made by the police, that the committed act amounts to "violent behavior", is not satisfactory. This attack should be treated as a threat to safety of persons that perform activities of public importance, says UNS.

(UNS, 23.02.2012 Danas, NUNS, 25.02.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) strongly condemns the physical attack on the TV Studio B journalistic team and praises the efficient reaction of the police, which arrested the attacker, and the demand by the First Primary Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade to begin investigation against the attacker, Dejan Zitic.

(NUNS, 24.02.2012, Danas, NUNS, 25.02.2012)

After another attack on journalists, many of us wonder whether enough has been done to protect media professionals, writes newspaper Politika. The solution offered last year by the minister of internal affairs – that journalists should be given the status of official persons – has not survived the test of reality.

(Politika, 25.02.2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) condemns the threats made by the director of the Public Water Systems Company (KJP Vodovod), Radoslav Milenkovic, against the correspondent of RTS in Prokuplje, Nebojsa Djordjevic. UNS reminds that the public company is obliged to give journalists access to information of public importance. The incident took place on Tuesday, 21 February, when Nebojsa Djordjevic called the director of the public company to verify the Beta agency news about possible interruptions in service.

(UNS, 23.02.2012)

### **Investigations of murders of journalists**

According to the statistics by Serbia's Ministry of Interior, attacks on journalists in the country have decreased in the past two years. In 2010, there were seven recorded attacks against journalists. In 2011, three cases of threats to journalists' safety were recorded. The police had solved all of the above-mentioned cases, Serbia's Minister of the Interior, Ivica Dacic, said during a recent meeting with a delegation of the Vienna-based South East Europe Media Organisation (SEEMO), headed by Oliver Vujovic, SEEMO Secretary General. SEEMO reminded Dacic that the murders of three journalists – Dada Vujasinovic in 1994, Slavko Curuvija in 1999 and Milan Pantic in 2001 – were still unsolved. Neither the perpetrators nor the masterminds have been arrested. Dacic assured the delegation that the police would re-examine these cases and determine whether there have been any new developments that need to be considered. He said that all the material related to these cases had been delivered to the prosecution, but "it does not mean that the material suffices to press charges." In other words, there may not be enough conclusive evidence. Currently, five journalists in Serbia, all specialised in reporting on corruption, have been given 24-hour police protection by the Ministry of the Interior.

(SEEMO, 22.02.2012)

### **The Media Strategy**

Representatives of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) demand that the government begin implementation of the Media Strategy and point out the difficult position of journalists in Serbia and the pressure they are exposed to. The president of the Association, Ljiljana Smajlovic, said in Kraljevo that "neither the society nor journalists who care about professionalism and the freedom of expression can be satisfied before fundamental issues are solved – like transparency of ownership over the media".

(Blic, 26.02.2012, B92, NUNS, UNS, 27.02.2012)

The Media Strategy prepared by the National Council of Hungarians specifies measures intended to ensure recovery of the media in Hungarian language, formation of the Hungarian Media Network and reporting that is in accordance with "Hungarian tradition" with the aim to preserve the identity of Hungarians in Vojvodina. "The Strategy constitutes a guideline for creation of a sensible and functional media system of Vojvodina Hungarians encompassing all parts of Vojvodina, while at the same time being connected with the Hungarian media network of the Carpathian region", says the document. The Strategy also defines specific measures aimed at increasing the number of viewers and readers of the media in Hungarian language, including strengthening of public service broadcasting-type of mass communication in accordance with "Hungarian tradition" which would build, maintain and develop the community. Expectations formulated by the Strategy are mandatory for media outlets – like public service broadcasters – that were founded or co-founded by the National Council of Hungarians, while directors and editors-in-chief are responsible for published content and adherence to and implementation of the guidelines defined by the Media Strategy. It is also envisioned that adherence to the stipulated guidelines would be monitored by an expert body founded by the National Council of Hungarians. According to the document, Hungarian language media outlets in Vojvodina would be required, among other things, to efficiently contribute to strengthening of the awareness of

identity of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, mutual solidarity, and cohesion of the community. The media is also supposed to promote family values and creation of families with children, says the Strategy. The media is also suggested to "appropriately celebrate, present in news and report on" holidays of the Hungarian nation and the Hungarian community in Vojvodina, including significant days and events aimed to preserve tradition, and are "obliged" to publish information about Hungarians in diaspora and "enclaves". In addition to this, the media is expected to preserve and strengthen the religious identity as an "organic part of the identity of the Hungarian community in Vojvodina".

(RTV, NDNV, 28.02.2012)

### **Minority media**

Dragan Jurakic, a member of the provincial assembly, has strongly protested against the annulment of the legitimacy of the opinion of the Croatian national minority at the regional public service broadcaster Radio-Televizija Vojvodina. In his words, the public contest for the position of the editor-in-chief of television programme in Croatian language has been ignored in a legal sense, while the procedure for election of the editor has been redefined as a "discretionary right of the general director of RTV, Sinisa Isakov". The editor-in-chief has been appointed without the approval of the Croatian National Council.

(NUNS, Autonomija, 20.02.2012)

The news and publishing company "Magyar Szo" is about to get a new managing board. Its founder, the National Council of Hungarians, is expected to make the decision at its next session.

(Magyar Szo, NUNS, 23.02.2012)

Istvan Bodzoni, the director of RTV Panon in Hungarian language, has announced the beginning of creation of the television network of Vojvodina Hungarians within the company. So far, contracts with six local self-governments and three RTV centers have been signed. One of the goals is to create a content-rich programme with reports and items from Serbian-language TV stations translated into Hungarian language. At the same time, the possibility of subtitling the certain programmes of Hungarian TV stations into Serbian language is being negotiated. It is also planned to create a capable team of correspondents from Belgrade, as well as to increase cooperation with editorial offices of other media outlets in Hungarian language – Magyar Szo, Het Nap and Radio Subotica. One of the plans – aimed at making the programme of TV Panon available to as wide an audience in Vojvodina as possible – envisions increased cooperation with cable providers. The programme of RTV Panon is already available via the IPTV network in Serbia, as well as on the Internet.

(eKapija, ABC Newsletter, 21.02.2012)

Whether by accident or not, while the media are reporting on Romanian objections to Serbian candidacy for membership in the EU caused by the allegedly unsolved problems of the Vlachs in Serbia, the regional TV Bor is the first station in Serbia to begin subtitling programmes into Vlach language, using the Cyrillic alphabet. The Vlach writing system was adopted at the end of January of this year. While the National Council of the Vlach National Minority welcomes this decision, the strongest political party of the Vlach says that the project launched by TV Bor is a huge disgrace and mockery of the Vlach language.

(Tanjug, Politika, Danas, UNS, Blic, NUNS, 29.02.2012)



### Professional standards

Dusko Bogdanovic writes in the newspaper *Danas*: "Ljubica Gojgic, Natasa Odalovic and Jugoslav Cosic (B92) have maintained a consistently high quality of their television interviews and programmes, despite occasional variations in their professional performance. Just like in tango, it takes two to create engaging, educational and interesting interviews. The aforementioned three authors are still holding top positions with regard to their quality, which is simply unreachable for their competitors (RTS)".

(Danas, 17.02.2012)

### Awards, training courses and competitions

*Juzne Vesti* and Media Center Nis have announced a public contest for participation in the school of agency, web, photo and video journalism. During a three-month training, candidates will have a chance to learn how to write content for news agencies and online publishing, as well as how to make photographs and record and edit video content.

(Juzne vesti, 20.02.2012)

The Ministry of Health will organize an educational course for journalists reporting on HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The project is financed by the Global Fund in cooperation with the Public Health Institute.

(Vecernje Novosti - Srbija, 25.02.2012)

In cooperation with USAID and IREX, ABC Serbia will organize a series of regional seminars under the title "Serbia Online Advertising Tour". Taking into account the fact that the internet constitutes the fastest-growing advertising media, the main aim of these seminars is to contribute to development of the digital advertising market by offering high-quality education to all relevant stakeholders. Applications can be submitted

here: <http://bizdialog.wufoo.com/forms/serbia-online-advertising-tour>

(ABC Newsletter, 21. 02. 2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) is enrolling a new generation of students of the school of online journalism *WebNovinar*. The school has a mission to achieve professional advancement of journalists, students of journalism, PR and marketing professionals and others who are interested in working in the field of the new media. Additional information is available here: [dragana.bjelica@uns.rs](mailto:dragana.bjelica@uns.rs), telephone numbers 011 32 36 337, 062 530 337.

(UNS, 23.02.2012)

Media Center offers a training course to organizations, companies and the media, aimed at improving the quality of photographs published on web platforms and the print media. The training course will take place on Tuesday, 6 March 2012.

(MC, 26.02.2012)

Media Center Belgrade will organize on 14 March 2012 a seminar for journalists entitled "Reporting on the Roma Population". The seminar is a part of the project "PR Workshops for Roma Non-Governmental Organizations" which is financed by the Fund for an Open Society and the Open Society Foundations. All interested journalists are welcome to apply as of 13 March via email [milic@mc.rs](mailto:milic@mc.rs)

(MC, 29.02.2012)

### Media visits

At the beginning of the business year, the Media Associations was visited by Branko Radujko, the general director of Telecom Serbia a.d., Vladimir Lucic, the director of the Department for Commercial Affairs of Telecom Serbia, and Milica Markovic, the director of the PR Department.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, februar 2012)

### The media audience

After more than a year, IFABC has completed a global research of the circulation of the print media. ABC Serbia is the first in the region to bring this results. Here is the overview of circulation of audited daily newspapers in Serbia.

						Total circulation	Trend	09/10
Daily newspaper	Country	IFABC member	2008	2009	2010	2011 (Q1)	copies	%
<b>Vecernje novosti</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	143,892	136,426	130,278	125,511	-6,148	-4.5%
<b>Blic</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	167,705	152,237	146,231	145,469	-6,007	-3.9%
<b>Alo</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	86,233	78,830	113,666	128,183	34,836	44.2%
<b>Politika</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	73,949	69,883	63,355	61,829	-6,528	-9.3%
<b>Pravda</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	N/A	N/A	19,235	15,380	n.a	n.a
<b>Press</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	124,175	99,555	94,158	87,103	-5,398	-5.4%
<b>Sportski zurnal</b>	Serbia	ABC Serbia	24,378	23,875	21,841	18,837	-2,034	-8.5%

(ABC Newsletter, 21. 02. 2012)

### Anniversaries

For the first time, media employees in Pozarevac have celebrated their day. February 12 will be celebrated as the Day of Media Employees in Pozarevac. The first president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia, Laza Kostic, was born on this day.

(Danas - Branicevo, 17.02.2012)

On the occasion of the Journalists' Day, Mladen Bulut, the president of the Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, presented the award for most successful journalistic achievements in the last year. The Jasa Tomic Award was given to Aleksandar Veljic for his contribution to historical truth about the genocide committed by Hungarian fascists in Southern Backa during the Second World War, while the Petar Drezgic Award was given to the journalist of TV Panonija, Jovan Stefanovic, for a series of reports on agriculture. The Svetozar Miletic Life Achievement Award was given to Slobodan Jakovljevic, the editor of *Dnevnik*.

(Pravda - Srbija, Dnevnik, 24.02.2012)

### In Memoriam

Journalist Radoljub Stojkovic passed away in Leskovac at the age of 71. Although disabled, he spent his entire career in Radio Leskovac, where he worked as a journalist and long-time editor of numerous news and other programmes.

(UNS, 20 February 2012)



Journalist and writer Scepán Vukovic passed away suddenly in Podgorica. Between 1984 and 2002 he worked for *Pobjeda*. He was the editor-in-chief and long-time columnist of the newspaper. During the recent years, he had worked as a contributor to magazines *Biznis* and *Ekonometar*.

(UNS, 20. 02.2012)

Journalist Natalija Djuric passed away at the age of 86. She began working in the field of journalism in 1947 in Radio Belgrade and the newspaper *20 Oktobar*. She spent most of her professional career in *Borba*, where she worked in the city, economy and internal affairs sections.

(UNS, 29. 02. 2012)

### Media business operations

A letter by the Bureau for Radio Advertising (RAB) says that "after the coming into force of SOKOJ tariffs, a huge number of radio stations from all parts of Serbia has contacted us, asking us to represent them and ask you to reconsider the new tariffs that threaten the financial survival of the media, especially during the crisis that has hit hard the local radio stations in Serbia. Obligations, including the minimal monthly fee, have increased by 300%-700%, depending on the station. We call on you to reconsider the tariffs and fees and to change their amount in accordance with today's conditions and the practice of other countries similar to ours."

(RAB, 10.02.2012)

After the scheduling of elections, around 200 observers of the Anti-Corruption Agency will begin monitoring all expenses made by political parties during the election campaign – in the field and in the media. "We will check the price of each paid time slot on TV stations and whether political parties have paid for more billboards than they claim", says Zoran Stojiljkovic, the president of the Board of the Agency.

(Blic, 21.02.2012)

Media Center is offering a 10% discount on press conferences (in all three halls) until the end of February 2012.

(MC, 23.02.2012)

The Ringier Axel Springer Serbia company has purchased *MojAuto.rs*, the second most-visited auto ads website in Serbia. Previously, the company took over in February Media Swiss d.o.o., which runs the website *Nekretnine.rs*, one of the most visited real estate portals in Serbia. The purchase of the *MojAuto.rs* website has to be approved by the regulatory body.

(Ringier Axel Springer, ABC Newsletter, 21.02.2012, ASMEDI Newsletter, February 2012)

In the last year in Serbia, revenue from advertising in the media fell slightly in comparison with the previous year. AGB Nielsen data shows that in 2011 the media earned 172 million euros in total from advertising, which is 1.7% less than in 2010. The biggest share – more than 55% i.e. 95 million euros in total (which is 3 million less than in 2010) – was earned by TV stations. The share of online advertisements increased during the year, as well as radio advertising, which is now 5.2% (4% in 2010). With regard to the press and external advertising, the distribution of revenue from marketing in 2011 did not change in comparison with previous years – more than 23% of the advertising money was spent on advertising in the press, while advertisements on billboards and other public places has a share of 11.3%.

(Danas, E kapija 25.02.2012)

The Managing Board of the Public Company Radio-Television Bor (BRT) has removed from position Miloljub Milosevic, the editor-in-chief. Three members of the Managing Board, who are also employees of the station, left the session of the Board. "Milosevic has been dismissed because of failure to implement the editorial policy. He allowed broadcasting of a video that violates the Law on Broadcasting", said Zvonko Marovic, the president of the Managing Board. The position will be temporarily filled by the editor of the news programme. The dismissal of Milosevic was supported by municipal branches of the Democratic Party (DS) and the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), which are members of the ruling coalition in the Municipal Assembly of Bor together with the United Regions of Serbia (URS).

(Vecernje Novosti - Srbija, 25.02.2012)

Robert Nemecek, the former editor-in-chief of TV Avala, publicly asked at a press conference held in Belgrade how it was possible for a station with such a short history to incur debt in the amount of 30 million euros. He asked how the money was spent and pointed out that it was not used to pay for employees' salaries. Nikola Vukomanovic, the president of the trade union of the employees of the station, said that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) and

the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) became disinterested in further involvement after they received the remaining unpaid fees from TV Avala, while the Ministry of Culture had ignored the whole case during the two months of striking, claiming that it was outside their competence.

(Politika, Danas, Pravda, 15.02.2012)

Employees of TV Avala will try today, "precisely at noon", to enter the building and reach their workplaces. They call on the owners of the station to pay the remaining salaries in the best interest of employees and survival of the station.

(24 sata, Danas, 17.02.2012)

Contributors working for TV Avala, including those whose contracts have expired, were informed via SMS that their entry in the premises of the media company would not be allowed as of 20 February.

(Tanjug, B92, Politika, 17.02.2012)

Employees of TV Avala, who have been striking for 57 days already, were unsuccessful in their attempt to enter the building of the station because its door was locked.

(Alo!, Blic, Danas, 18.02.2012)

The Labor Inspectorate has filed charges against the owners of TV Avala because of their failure to pay the remaining salaries to employees, who have been on strike for 57 days.

(Politika, NUNS, Pravda, 18.02.2012)

Following their unsuccessful attempt on Friday, the employees of TV Avala will gather today at 10.30 in front of the building of the station and attempt to enter their workplace, together with the station's contributors.

(Danas, UNS, NUNS, 20.02.2012)

Yesterday, the security personnel of TV Avala prevented the temporary employed workers from entering the building. The employees demanded via SMS that the owners of the station, Zeljko Mitrovic and Danko Djunic, pay their salaries and contributions. Permanently employed workers were allowed to enter the building. At the moment, the owners of TV Avala owe four salaries and four monthly author fees to their employees.

(Beta, Politika, B92, UNS, NUNS, 20.02.2012, Dnevnik, Pravda, 24 sata, Press, 21.02.2012)

TV Avala is likely to get a new owner soon, one who is willing to invest money and improve the position of the media company. The candidate for the role is Veselin Jevrosimovic, the owner of Comtrade, reports newspaper Alo!.

(Alo!, E-kapija, 21.02.2012)

The director of the media company Pink, Zeljko Mitrovic, has announced the completion of the reform of his TV station. He told the daily newspaper *Blic* that the issue of debt would be solved soon, and that all salaries will be paid to employees. Asked about the future of TV Avala, where he is one of the owners, Mitrovic said that investments will continue and that the station would not be sold. All parts of the Pink company will continue to be controlled from Belgrade. "I will bring two top-class experts to serve as executives. The first one comes from London and will be appointed as the director of operations of the Pink Group. Previously, he worked for Time Warner and Turner Group, which is behind CNN. A financial expert from Merrill Lynch Group will control the finance, announced Mitrovic.

(Blic, Press, UNS, 28.02.2012)

After a meeting with the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), the employees of TV Avala, who have been striking for two months, said that they would begin working immediately if the owners of the TV station offer them written guarantees that the remaining two salaries would be paid until April 1. The vice president of the Council of RRA, Goran Karadzic, pointed out that the Agency would take another step and attempt to talk again to owners of TV Avala about the demands of its employees.

(FoNet, Danas, Dnevnik, NUNS, Pravda, 22.02.2012)

The striking board of TV Avala announced yesterday that the employees of the station had decided to end the strike and begin working again. The striking board also said that the owners of TV Avala had failed to honor the written guarantees about the schedule of payment of the remaining salaries, which was agreed with the members of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA). Despite this, the employees, who were striking for 65 days, have decided to end the strike in accordance with the previous agreement and because of good relations between the employees and the director and editor-in-chief, Dusan Pancic.

(Blic, Politika, Dnevnik, Danas, UNS, NUNS, 23.02.2012)

The two-month strike of employees of TV Avala has finally ended. The employees of the TV station are to begin broadcasting their regular programme today.

(Vecernje novosti, UNS, NUNS, 27.02.2012)

Funding of the news agency Tanjug from the national budget is a direct threat to other two news agencies, Fonet and Beta, that are exposed to market forces, says the president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), Vukasin Obradovic. "The government should allocate the money that is intended for information using public contests, not by obsolete methods which are the main reason for financing of Tanjug from the national budget", says Obradovic.

(Pravda, NDNV, 25.02.2012)

Together with the German company VAC, Politika AD is the owner of a half of the joint company *Politika Novine i Magazini (PNM)*. On 17 February, a single share of Politika AD on the Belgrade Stock Market was worth 49 dinars, while the total value of Politika AD amount to slightly more than three million euros. The same share was worth more than 2,500 dinars in April 2007, but its value has been on the decrease since then. Politika AD is in majority ownership of Serbia and her public companies, while PNM is jointly owned by the same company and German VAC.

(Danas - Biznis, 20.02.2012)

Daily newspaper Danas reports: "Newspaper *Suboticke Novine*, whose bank account has been blocked for more than a year, might undergo bankruptcy. The newspaper was first bought by a three-member consortium whose capital was of suspicious origin, a consortium whose members had no previous experience in publishing and who ran the newspaper without any professional knowledge or plans. Employees received no salaries, while the bank account of the company was used for various financial transactions in favor of other companies. The valuable building owned by the newspaper was mortgaged and the loan was used for the benefit of a completely different company. The sale contract was later annulled, after employees' protest. The newspaper was then bought by the consortium Vojvodina Info. The position of journalists and their salaries remained uncertain. As of 2010, the building was burdened by three mortgages owned by three banks – the Findomestic Bank, Erste Bank and Unicredit Bank. The banks are now searching for a buyer for the building in order to collect the debt. The bank account of the newspaper has been blocked for more than a year because of the debt amounting to 2.68 million dinars. Journalists have not been paid a year's worth of salaries, while their pension benefits have not been paid since as far back as 2008, according to some sources."

(Danas, UNS, NUNS, 28.02.2012)

The situation in the weekly newspaper *Svetlost* from Kragujevac is alarming and the possibility of entering bankruptcy or related proceedings is increasing, said yesterday the president of the Journalists' Union of Serbia, Dragana Cabarkapa. The value of property of the company amounts to 31 million dinars, while the total debt is 50 million dinars. The employer owes the employees around 8 million dinars in salaries and nine million dinars in pension contributions. Cabarkapa added that the situation was very difficult and that lawyers in Belgrade would try to find a solution. The Privatization Agency has annulled the contract on privatization because the owners failed to pay the fifth installment of the purchase price.

(Beta, Pregled, NUNS, UNS, 28.02.2012)

### The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

The Laguna Lux hotel in Nis is offering a 15% discount on the regular prices of accommodation to members of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS). Additional information is available on the website [www.lagunalux-prenociste.rs](http://www.lagunalux-prenociste.rs).

(NUNS, 20.02.2012)

The tourist association "Zvezda" from Brus is offering a 25% discount on services in the Mountaineering Home "Bela Reka" in Brzece on Kopaonik and the hotel "Zvezda" in Brus. Additional information is available on the website [www.tudzvezda.com](http://www.tudzvezda.com).

(NUNS, 20.02.2012)

### Journalistic trade unions

The Center for Development of Trade Unions and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation will present today the results of the research "Trade Unions in the Media", conducted on the sample of media reports during nine months in 2010 and 2011. The analysis covers nine daily newspapers and four weekly magazines.

(Pregled, 27.02.2012)

During the previous period, the daily *Danas* was the newspaper that paid most attention to trade unions and related issues – more than any other print media outlet in Serbia. This is the result of the research conducted by the Center for Development of Trade Unions in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. According to the results, almost a fifth (18%) of all articles on trade unions have been published by *Danas*. Topics related to trade unions and rights of media employees in Serbia were mostly presented in the form of daily news, reports from specific events or publication of press statements. Only a few media outlets deal with this topic in an analytical or investigative manner. The research shows that reports, news and interviews comprise 75 percent of all content dedicated to trade union issues, while analytical forms like articles and comments comprise the remaining 25 percent.

(Danas, UNS, 27.02.2012, Danas, Pregled, UNS, 28.02.2012)

### The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)

1.

Issuance of a broadcasting license to politically biased TV Kopernikus 3 (Svet Plus) is only one in a series of oversights committed by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), whose decisions are often controversial, writes the daily newspaper *Blic*. Appointment of Dalibor Bubnjevic – the promoter of the book authored by Goran Davidovic Firer – as a member of the Managing Board of Radio-Television Vojvodina; failure to punish obvious hate speech on television stations and excessively long advertising blocks; allowing TV stations to sell time slots to political parties in violation of the law – these cases prove that RRA has not been doing its job. RRA did not adequately react after the host of the programme "Evening with Ivan Ivanovic" insulted the Croatian community in Serbia.

(Blic, 07.02.2012)

2.

Employees of TV Avala demand to know for how long the authorities will tolerate broadcasting of a programme that deviates from the programme requirements specified at the issuance of the broadcasting license for the station. Representatives of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) say that at the moment there is no danger that TV Avala might lose its license, but that problems related to the strike should be solved as soon as possible.

(Blic, 08.02.2012)

3.

The daily newspaper *Blic* chose Porfirije Peric, the president of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), as "the loser of the day" because of the lack of response of RRA to the strike in TV Avala: "For how long will the TV station continue airing programme that differs from the requirements specified its broadcasting license?"

(Blic, 09.02.2012)

4.

Unsurprisingly, the issuance of broadcasting license to the cable TV station Svet Plus 3 has rocked the Serbian media scene. In the words of the spokesman of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Srboj Bogdanovic, there is no reason to doubt that any violation of regulations after the issuance of a license will be punished. The program director of Transparency Serbia, Nemanja Nenadic, has no doubts either: he says that the RRA is now less forgiving towards broadcasters than previously. Srboj Bogdanovic told Tanjug that the Agency had never refused to issue a license for cable broadcasting, upholding the principle that everyone should be allowed to operate if they adhere to regulations and punished if the opposite was true.

(Politika, NUNS, UNS, 13.02.2012)

*(Please note: News items 1-4 were mistakenly left out of the previous issue)*

The Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency has established that since January 2010 – when the Agency began submitting charges related to violations of the Law on Advertising – the number of violations in the electronic media has dropped tenfold. The statement issued by the Council said that a procedure had been initiated to punish broadcasters who had failed to properly label programmes unsuitable for persons under 18.

(Press, NUNS, 23.02.2012)

Radoslav Plavsic, a representative of small shareholders of AD Jedinstvo, received a notification from the legal department of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) informing him that the Council of RRA had decided at a session held on 3 February of this year to "annul the license no. 39/2007 (issued on 17 December 2007 to the company Jedinstvo in Novi Pazar for the purpose of broadcasting programme in the broadcasting region 2) as of 15 December 2011". TV Jedinstvo broadcasts its programme in the areas of Novi Pazar, Tutin and Sjenica. The decision was made because AD Jedinstvo had been closed down after the completion of its bankruptcy proceedings in mid-August. The company was removed from the Serbian Business Register on 15 December of the last year. At the same session, the Council of the RRA decided to send to the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) a demand that RATEL should investigate whether the TV station was still airing its programme. The director of TV Jedinstvo, Serif Marukic, says that his company has not received any document from RRA, but that he has received unofficial information about the decision.

(Danas, 25.02.2012)

Members of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency held a meeting with representatives of broadcasters from the Western Serbia and discussed the problems of illegal airing of programme. Representatives of broadcasters pointed out their extremely difficult financial position that was caused by the large number of stations that air their programme without any license. It was decided that during the following week a meeting with other authorities should be organized. Since 2008, RRA has made 258 decisions on banning of illegal airing of programme, 123 requests for initiation of legal proceedings, and submitted 167 criminal charges.

(Danas, 25.02.2012)

During the second half of the last year, national broadcasters made almost eight times less violations of the Law on Advertising than in the same period of 2010, says the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA). The Agency points out that between June and December of the last year, there was 804 registered violations related to advertising on TV stations with national frequencies, while during the same period in 2010 there was no less than 6,183 violations. According to RRA, the largest number of violations of the Law on Advertising in the second half of the last year was committed by TV B92 – 276 violations in total. TV B92 is followed by TV Pink (222), TV Prva (91), TV Avala (88), RTS2 (61), RTS1 (30), TV Happy (32), and TV Happy Kids (4). Radio stations with national coverage committed much less violations of the Law on Advertising between 1 June and 31 December 2011 – 676 violations in total, while in the same period in 2010 the total number of violations on national radio stations amounted to 3,220.

(Danas, Blic, Dnevnik, Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 29.02.2012)

Six years after the adoption of the Law on Broadcasting and Advertising, citizens are still unprotected from arrogant behavior of national broadcasters who are bombarding them with excessively long and often too loud advertising blocks, writes daily newspaper *Blic*. TV stations with national coverage – and there is five of them – find it more



profitable to pay fines in the amount of 30,000 euros a month than to act in accordance with the law. Although the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) is authorized to annul their broadcasting licenses, it prefers to make them pay fines. National TV stations violated the Law on Advertising 2,472 times in 2011. The vice president of the Council of RRA, Goran Karadzic, sees no problem in this fact. As he told *Blic*, "this is a good result because the number of violations is much smaller than in the previous years". The most frequent violator is TV Prva with 611 violations of the Law during the year, followed by B92 (452), RTS1 (412), RTS2 (398), Pink (389). TV Avala and TV Happy committed much less violations: 130 and 106, respectively. A professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Rade Veljanovski, is of the opinion that national broadcasters must not be allowed to continually violate the law and that RRA should react forcefully. "Commercial broadcasters are allowed to have 20 percent of advertising space, while RTS is allowed to have 10 percent. They have been exceeding this limit for a long time, while the RRA has failed to respond adequately. RRA informs us about all the registered violations, which means that RRA tolerates breaking of the law", said Veljanovski to *Blic* and added that "here we have a situation where someone breaks the law several dozen times, and the problem does not lie in the law but in its implementation". Snjezana Milivojevic, a professor and a former member of the RRA, has a similar opinion. She believes that broadcasters would act differently if RRA had reacted properly.

(*Blic*, NUNS, 28.02.2012, RTV 29.02.2012)

### **The Republic Agency for Electronic Communication**

Using a mobile measuring unit, the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) registered several instances of illegal broadcasting and identified the perpetrators. They had already been warned several times by RATEL and their operations banned. Apatin is ranked at the top of list of places with highest number of illegal broadcasters per capita in Europe.

(*Večernje Novosti - Vojvodina*, NUNS, 27.02.2012)

### **South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO)**

SEEMO, an affiliate of the International Press Institute (IPI), condemns the alleged assault against a Studio B TV crew. SEEMO joins the Association of Serbian Journalists (UNS) in demanding more significant sanctions in such cases. "I applaud any prompt police action, but I also call on the authorities to guarantee the safety of journalists," said SEEMO Secretary General Oliver Vujovic. "Sentences for this type of offense are often very light, and courts take a long time to deliberate and implement them."

(SEEMO, 23.02.2012)

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number of attacks on journalists in Serbia has been on the increase during the last two years, warns the South East Media Organization (SEEMO). Since 2010, ten journalist have been attacked or threatened, while five of them – specialized in reporting on corruption – have been given police protection. Representatives of SEEMO met with the minister of internal affairs, Ivica Dacic, who pointed out problems related to the journalists' trips abroad, where police protection teams cannot follow them. For this reason, international police cooperation will be initiated that would resulting in protection of journalists in the country of arrival as well as in the country of departure.

(*Vecernje Novosti*, 24.02.2012)

SEEMO will, in cooperation with different partners, expand a number of press freedom websites dedicated to monitoring media developments in specific countries. Currently, SEEMO runs websites on press freedom issues in Belarus, Hungary, Macedonia and Turkey. SEEMO will create press freedom websites dedicated to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Greece, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia and Ukraine. The web project is expected to be completed by September 2012. Country-specific websites contain an array of information sources in English: news, exclusive monthly reports, legal and political analyses, and local and international initiatives in support of press freedom.

(SEEMO, 27.02.2012)

### Media-related news

National Geographic Serbia intends to bring its internet presence to a completely new level. Adria Media Serbia has acquired rights for authorized digital edition of the National Geographic brand for Serbia. By the end of March, the public will be presented with a new edition of the website. The portal will offer rich, attractive and interactive NG content like thematic photo and video galleries, educational content, interesting games, maps, quizzes and many other offerings.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, February 2012)

Slavisa Pavlovic, a writer and editor of the magazine *Restart*, which has been published within the daily newspaper Press since the last month, says that *Restart* offers good news and promotes positive events. "We believe that our people have run out of optimism during all these years and that we have given too much attention to irrelevant things that are of no use to us", says Pavlovic.

(Press, 26.02.2012)

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- Abbreviations - [www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations.2317.html#104230](http://www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations.2317.html#104230)
- Sections - [www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations-and-sections.2317.html](http://www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations-and-sections.2317.html)
- Archive - [www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-archive.2381.html](http://www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-archive.2381.html)
- Media News Bulletin home - [www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin.2298.html](http://www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin.2298.html)

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Media News Bulletin is a short account of media reports on the situation in the media. It has been created with the aim to register the information about the media published in the previous 14 days in Serbia, shortened to reflect the basic message of media reports and grouped in thematic subsections. The editors convey the news without changing the essential meaning of media reports on the media. For the readers interested in the complete published article, its source and date of publishing are given.

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