

**Issue No. 25**

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### Media situation in Serbia

The directive issued by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), which limits the duration of time slots paid by political parties during the election campaign, is an improvement in this area but still allows too much airtime to political parties in the course of the campaign – say media experts. They are of the opinion that paid time slots should be completely banned since in many countries they are not even allowed. A professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Snjezana Milivojevic, points out that during the election campaign in 2008 no less than 75 percent of the aired programme was "produced by participants in the elections, while only the remaining 25 percent was produced by journalists". Such situation is not favorable from the viewpoint of voters, because they want to receive information based on unbiased and analytical media reports, not on promotional videos produced by candidates in the elections – says Milivojevic. Zoran Gavrilovic from the Bureau for Social Research says that it is "of crucial importance to ensure that the media is the mediator between citizens and political parties, and not a mere medium for transfer of information".

(Danas – special supplement, UNS, NUNS, 15.03.2012)

New regulations adopted by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) on television advertising during the election campaign have turned out to be a divisive issue, with the ruling coalition and the political opposition holding the opposing views. While the ruling coalition considers that the stipulated five minutes per day per TV channel is more than enough, their opponents see this as censorship. The Council of the RRA will hold sessions each day and punish broadcasters if necessary within 24 hours. "We have acquired special software that is capable of analyzing broadcasting data during the election campaign. If someone is punished three times, the fourth sanction will entail revoking of the broadcasting license", says Goran Karadzic, the deputy president of the Council of the RRA.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, 15.03.2012, Dnevnik, 16.03.2012)

According to the directive recently adopted by the Republic Broadcasting Agency, the reality show "Survivor" might be taken off-air. The RRA has decided that political functionaries are not allowed to appear in programmes that have not been paid for or aired solely for election purpose. A functionary from the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), Marko Karadzic, who is one of the participants in the "Survivor", says that the programme had been produced before the RRA's decision. "It would be incredible to have business endeavors in Serbia fall through because of the election campaign. I hope no one has such an intention", says Karadzic.

(Alo!, Politika, 16.03.2012)

If the Republic Broadcasting Agency forbids the airing of "Survivor" and all other programmes, films, videos and all other forms of information featuring politicians, Serbian TV audience will have a chance to watch nothing else but the weather forecast, sports news and the president of the Republic", notes the daily newspaper Alo!

(Alo!, 17.03.2012)

The deputy president of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Goran Karadzic, says that the Council has decided that the programme "Survivor" is allowed to stay on-air, despite the fact that one of its participants is a functionary from the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), Marko Karadzic. "Programmes that were recorded and whose airing began before the beginning of the election campaign may remain on-air. Such is the case with 'Survivor'", says Karadzic.

(Alo!, Politika, 17.03.2012 Vecernje Novosti, 17.03.2012)

A new series of the cult programme "The Insider", authored by Brankica Stankovic, whose broadcasting was planned for April 2 on B92, will not be aired. The author says that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has issued a general mandatory directive for radio and television stations during the election campaign which effectively forbids broadcasting of documentary programmes.

(Blic, 17.03.2012)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has clarified its media directive, saying that investigative programmes like "The Insider" are allowed to be broadcast during the election campaign. Regarding the RRA directive related to media reporting during the election campaign, RTV B92 has received the necessary interpretation from the RRA. (B92, Blic, Politika, 17.03.2012)

During the election campaign, the electronic media are obliged to adhere to rules about media presentation of political parties, while the internet has remained unregulated. A member of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Goran Pekovic, said that the RRA was not authorized to control online publication of information about activities of political parties. Pekovic pointed out that the same can be said for all websites, including the websites of TV and radio broadcasters. (Tanjug, Blic, UNS, 20.03.2012)

The directive issued by the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) with the aim to regulate the conduct of broadcasters during the election campaign creates a distinction between privileged and undesirable participants of this process – said a professor from the Faculty of Political Science, Miroljub Radojkovic. Professor Radojkovic pointed out that politicians had influenced the electronic media, and described an example of such abuse involving an 11-minute appearance of the president of Serbia, Boris Tadic, on the evening news broadcast by the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS). The professor said that a snowstorm in Crna Trava was used by the president as an excuse for sending of political messages. The RRA has not responded in any way to such abuses of the public service broadcaster – said Professor Radojkovic. "In the report, President Tadic spoke for seven minutes, while Predrag Maric, the head of the Department of Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was on-air for four minutes", responded Aleksandar Tijanic, the director of the public service broadcaster. The vice president of the Council of the RRA, Goran Karadzic, was not willing to respond to Radojkovic's complaints. (Beta, Politika, 17.03.2012)

Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Miroljub Radojkovic, expanded on the report published by the news agency Beta saying that during a press conference held in the Media Center on March 16, he had described two cases of abuse of the public service broadcaster (RTS). The director of the RTS responded to only one of these two examples, while at the same time ignoring the more drastic case that occurred on February 28, when it was expected that Serbia would become a candidate for EU membership. "The decision was not made on that day. The president appeared live in the evening news from Brussels and spoke on-air for 12 minutes. Since the expected event did not happen, he spoke about the significance of the candidacy, which is the main point of the political platform of the ruling coalition", said Professor Radojkovic. (Politika, NUNS, UNS, 20.03.2012)

Members of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Gordana Susa and Goran Pekovic, said that "The Insider" programme was allowed to be broadcast, since the programme was an investigative journalistic project. The RRA directive applies only to entertainment programmes, and mostly those that are aired live, not on news and documentary programmes. (Blic, Politika, 18.03.2012, Danas – special supplement, Pravda, Kurir, 19.03.2012)

The new directive on presentation of political parties in the programme of electronic media, issued by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), has already had effect – both broadcasters and political parties are now more careful, while certain TV and radio stations have received first warnings from the RRA, which has announced strict control of the published content – says a member of the Council of the RRA, Goran Pekovic. (Tanjug, Politika, 18.03.2012)

Responding to claims that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has banned "The Insider" from being broadcast, the Council of the RRA pointed out that the programme, or any other news programme in Serbia, had not been

banned by the Agency. The official statement issued by the Council demands retraction and apology from everyone whose "arbitrary opinions an unprofessional approach" have caused damage to the Agency.

(Blic, 19.03.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) regrets the decision of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) to reject agreement on division of property on the basis of the verdict of the Court of Appeals in Belgrade.

(NUNS, NDNV, 20.03.2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) regrets the decision of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) to reject negotiations about creation of a joint journalistic organization and appeals on the management of NUNS not to refuse the proposal a priori.

(UNS, 20.03.2012, B92, Danas, 21.03.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) said that the proposal on creation of a joint journalistic association was an attempt "to buy some time" and avoid a fair agreement on usage of the property that had been a legacy of all journalists of Serbia. "Since there exists an effective court decision, we will be forced to implement it, in accordance with law, if no agreement can be reached. We have already warned our colleagues from the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) during previous meetings", says the press statement issued by NUNS.

(Beta, B92 online, UNS, NUNS, 20.03.2012, Pravda, UNS, 21.03.2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) informed its colleagues and the public that the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) had incorrectly claimed that its proposal to divide the Journalists' Building located at 28 Resavska Street using a 50-50 ratio amounted to "implementation of the court verdict" passed by the Court of Appeals in Belgrade. The truth is that the Court of Appeals in Belgrade has passed a verdict declaring the building at 28 Resavska Street a joint property, but without specifying the specific shares of the property belonging to each association.

(UNS, 21.03.2012, Fonet, Politika, 22.03.2012)

The political party United Regions of Serbia (URS) complained to the Republic Broadcasting Agency for alleged violation of the Mandatory Directive on Conduct of the Media During Election Campaign and the favored position of the president, Boris Tadic. URS says that President Tadic is campaigning like a leader of the Democratic Party while "hiding behind the position of the president of Serbia", which means that such media reports are being aired within news segments of television programmes instead of within paid marketing time slots. In this way, claims URS, the leader of an electoral list has appeared more frequently in news programmes, which has put at a disadvantage all other political parties and electoral lists.

(Politika, Danas, Kurir, Dnevnik, Pravda, 24.03.2012, Blic, UNS, 25.03.2012)

According to the report by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) about the election campaign, the main news programme "Dnevnik" has dedicated the following percentages of its media reports to these political parties: SNS (21%); DS (15%); URS (15%). SNS has also been dominant on TV B92, followed by DSS, URS and LDP, while DS holds the fifth position. TV Prva has given most of its airtime to URS, followed by SNS, SRS and DS. SPS, despite the fact that it is a part of the ruling coalition, has been given the smallest percentage of media reports compared to other ruling parties. Yesterday, the SNS rejected the RRA report, claiming it was incorrect and "far removed from reality".

(Blic, 24.03.2012)

The political party United Regions of Serbia (URS) began promoting the program "United for Agriculture". The party claims that its election campaign videos have been prepared in accordance with regulations and that they have not violated the Law on Advertising in any way. The statement came in response to the warning, issued by the Republic Broadcasting Agency, that broadcasting of the URS' video could be banned because it showed trademarks of well-

known international companies. A member of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Goran Pekovic, had previously said that "the video obviously violates the Law on Advertising since viewers are under impression that these companies support the campaign of the URS".

(Dnevnik, Vecernje Novosti, 25.03.2012)

The Council examined today a report made by the Monitoring Service. The report, which analyzed political marketing aired by several broadcasters during the election campaign, described the advertisement of the United Regions of Serbia (URS) as possibly controversial. The Council needs to collect necessary documentation before making any decisions on this content.

(Council of the RRA, 26.03.2012)

After analyzing complaints filed by the United Regions of Serbia (URS) and the bulletin of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) decided to announce that none of the broadcasters has violated the General Mandatory Directive while reporting on the activities of state institutions. The Council examined the part of the complaint filed by the URS, as well as similar complaints submitted by regional and local broadcasters, related to broadcasting of footage about regular activities of officials within paid pre-election time slots or TV advertisements. The Council considers that such cases do not constitute violation of regulations by broadcasters.

(Savet RRA, 26.03.2012, Danas, UNS, Alo!., Blic, Alo, Press, NUNS, Politika, Večernje Novosti, Kurir, 27.03.2012)

Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) has also submitted a complaint to the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) because of alleged unequal treatment of electoral lists during the election campaign and in news programmes. SNS claims that the leader of the Democratic Party (DS) has abused his position as the President of the Republic so as to achieve a privileged position of the DS in the media during the election campaign.

(Dnevnik, 27.03.2012)

On April 2, the Republic Broadcasting Agency will present the first results of media monitoring during the election campaign.

(NDNV, 27.03.2012)

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

Nedim Sejdinovic writes: "Numerous international documents precisely define the role of the media and information in election campaigns, and there are many publications that thoroughly and systematically describe professional, unbiased and objective journalism in election campaign and how it can be achieved. Free elections are not possible without providing citizens high-quality information; otherwise, elections would not constitute an expression of the political will of citizens, but only its distorted image. It seems that the media and journalists in Serbia are not aware of or ignore these documents and publications, as much as it seems that they are not interested in the Code of Conduct of Serbian Journalists. Unfortunately, online media does not offer a genuine alternative – they are either not influential enough or mimic the traditional media. The political struggle in Serbia is almost fully taking place in the media. The form is more important than the substance, while spin doctors have their positions in the leadership of political parties. Political abuse of the media has become commonplace."

(www.mediamonitor.rs, Autonomija, NDNV, 22.03.2012)

Dinko Gruhonjic writes: "Accurate, honest, balanced and unbiased journalistic reporting about elections is a fundamental indicator of democracy in countries in transition. Unskilled journalists are often unaware of being manipulated. On the other hand, skilled journalists are more difficult to manipulate. Existing analyses of media reporting during the pre-election period cite numerous cases of unprofessional behavior and bias. Unfortunately, a research that I conducted with students of journalism at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad between the end of November and the beginning of December gave the expected results: our media suffer from disguised political

marketing. They favor their owners and those who exert influence over them. This is a preliminary and clear result of the research. There is no difference between the media in Serbian language and the most influential media in minority languages. We should admit it to ourselves: as years are passing by since 5 October 2000, we have increasingly less room for free expression and publication. This is especially the case during election campaigns." (NDNV, 22.03.2012)

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

Media associations and organizations have expressed their concern about the quiet obstruction by the authorities of independent institutions and bodies active in the area of protection of civil rights and freedoms. (Beta, Danas, NUNS, 15.03.2012)

### **Public service broadcasters**

Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) and China Central Television signed an agreement on cooperation entailing exchange of content and mutual support and assistance. RTS will exchange its content with the China Central Television (CCTV). Viewers of the Serbian public service broadcaster will have a chance to watch documentary films about natural beauty, culture, history and heritage of the most populous country in the world. The annual budget amounting to 30 billion dollars has allowed CCTV to broadcast highest-quality programme on its 42 channels. (RTS online, UNS, 22.03.2012)

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

Jelena Karleusa declared on the social network Twitter its intention to sue and shut down the daily newspaper Press, which it described as an evil poisoning the nation. Because of threats and insults against the newspaper, the editorial board of Press consulted its legal team and decided to file a lawsuit against Karleusa. (Press, 15.03.2012)

Jelena Karleusa demands that TV Prva pay her one million euros in damages to compensate her for insults against her told by Ivan Ivanovic in his shows aired by the TV station. (Kurir, 16.03.2012)

"I told the RTV correspondent, Nenad Jovicevic, that due to his lack of professionalism and his media reports that depict a distorted image of the army of volunteers in Becej I did not want to cooperate with him anymore and that I would not invite to press conferences that I organize" – this is an excerpt from an open letter authored by Peter Knezi, the president of the Municipality of Becej, and addressed to the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), the Provincial Ombudsman, as well as news agencies Beta, Tanjug and Fonet.

(Dnevnik, 15.03.2012)

In the last few days, several attacks on journalists by officials and local powerful figures took place. The last attack occurred on March 9 during a public meeting of citizens. It was committed by the president of the Municipality of Zagubica, Dragi Damjanovic, who is a member of the political party G17 Plus. He physically and verbally attacked a journalist with TV AS from Krepoljina, Aleksandra Djordjevic, while she was reporting on the event. The case was reported to the police, which advises the journalist to visit the hospital in Pozarevac.

(Danas - Branicevo, 16.03.2012)

The president of the Municipality of Zagubica, Dragi Damjanovic, who attacked journalist Aleksandra Djordjevic at a public meeting held in the village of Krupaja on March 10, has again been nominated as a candidate of the political party United Regions of Serbia (URS) for the position of the president of the Municipality. The general secretary of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Nino Brajevoc, says that nomination of Damjanovic after the scandal and the physical attack on journalist is a "moral glitch" of URS.

(Pravda, NUNS, 20.03.2012)

Popular singer Vlado Georgiev yesterday rudely insulted journalist with daily newspaper Kurir when she questioned him about his health.

(Kurir, 18.03.2012, Kurir, 19.03.2012)

The mayor of the City of Zajecar, Bosko Nacic, who is a high-ranking functionary of the political party United Regions of Serbia (URS), said that the party would demand that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) conduct 24-hour monitoring over RTV Timocka. "This TV station violates the rules of journalism and has rudely, inappropriately and vulgarly insulted numerous people. The station is continually spreading lies and unverified information", claims Nacic.

(Press, 19.03.2012)

RTV Timocka, which is the only regional TV station in the Zajecar County, has been ordered by the city administration to leave its business premises in 30 days. The mayor of the City of Zajecar, Bosko Nacic, who is one of the leaders of the political party United Regions of Serbia (URS), intends to close down the private television station TV Timocka, claim the journalists and the editorial board of TTV.

(Kurir, NUNS, 23.03.2012, Pravda - Serbia, Press, UNS, Kurir, 24.03.2012, Kurir, 26.03.2012)

Cable distributor SBB warns that court distrainers who would attempt to restore the signal of TV Kanal 9 might interrupt signals in Novi Sad during the weekend. Several hours after SBB returned the programme of TV Kanal 9 in its base analog package in accordance with the court order, the quality of the station's signal became so bad that viewers are unable to watch it.

(Danas, UNS, 16.03.2012)

The execution of a temporary measure passed by the Commercial Court in Novi Sad has been postponed until further notice at the initiative of TV Kanal 9. The signal of the station's programme within the analog package broadcast by SBB in Novi Sad was improved yesterday.

(Kanal 9, UNS, 16.03.2012)

The Court of Appeals in Novi Sad has confirmed the verdict passed by the Higher Court in Zrenjanin, which rejected the lawsuit filed by the editor-in-chief of the newspaper Zrenjanin and a member of the Managing Board of Radio-Television Vojvodina, Dalibor Bubnjevic, against the daily newspaper Blic and journalist with the correspondent's office of the newspaper in Novi Sad, Ana Lalic. The subject of the dispute is an article in which the journalist with the correspondent's office of Blic in Novi Sad, Ana Lalic, reported on the response of the coalition of non-governmental organizations Civic Vojvodina to appointment of Bubnjevic as a member of the Managing Board of RTV. The organization described Bubnjevic as a "helper" of the organization Nacionalni Stroj.

(NDNV, RTV B92, 27.03.2012)

Correspondent of the daily newspaper Dnevnik from Sombor, Milic Miljenovic, has submitted a criminal report to the Sombor police because of threats to his security originating from the deputy Zika Gojkovic. Several days ago, the journalist received a threatening SMS from the mobile number of Gojkovic, who is also the vice president of the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO). SPO issued a press statement with an apology to the journalist.

(Alo!, 28.03.2012)

Journalists' Associations of Serbia and Vojvodina have strongly condemned "serious threats" made by the parliamentary deputy Zika Gojkovic against the correspondent of the daily newspaper Dnevnik from Sombor, Milic Miljenovic.

(UNS, 27.03.2012, Pravda, 28.03.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) strongly protest against the threats made by the people's deputy Zika Gojkovic against the correspondent of Dnevnik from Sombor, Milic Miljenovic. NUNS and NDNV will report this case to international

organizations and ask them to assist in protection of journalists and the media in Serbia.

(NUNS i NDNV, 27.03.2012)

Zika Gojkovic told to daily newspaper Pravda that he had not threatened anyone, including Miljenovic, and pointed out that he was very surprised by the conduct of Dnevnik.

(Pravda, NUNS, Politika, UNS, 28.03.2012)

Journalists of the former TV Fox, which is called TV Prva today, denied before the Primary Court in Novi Sad that they were guilty of libel and insult against the former director of the Institute of Pulmonary Disease in Sremska Kamenica, Aleksandar Milovancev. Milovancev had sued the editors and journalists because they broadcast media reports in 2008 related to a criminal lawsuit against him.

(Beta, NDNV, 28.03.2012)

### **Investigation of murders of journalists**

Minister of Justice Snezana Malovic said that it was a malicious and hypocritical attempt to discredit the president of the Supreme Court of Cassation and the High Judicial Council, Nata Mesarovic, by spreading false information that she was a member of the criminal tribunal that convicted journalist Slavko Curuvija. Nata Mesarovic has denied allegations that she was a member of the tribunal that in May 1990 confirmed the verdict against journalist Slavko Curuvija, who was murdered on April 11, 1999.

(Kurir, 24.03.2012)

The former assistant to the editor-in-chief of then Dnevni Telegraph, Petar Popovic, said that several weeks before his murder Slavko Curuvija had been sentenced to five months of prison for libel. The first-instance verdict was signed by Krsto Bobot, while the verdict was confirmed by judge Nata Mesarovic, who is now the vice president of the High Judicial Council. "I believe these are the circumstances that should be investigated in an attempt to solve the murder of Slavko Curuvija", said Popovic. He said that he was convinced that freedom of expression and journalism in Serbia cannot be achieved before the organizers and perpetrators of Curuvija's murder were found.

(Tanjug, Dnevnik, NUNS, UNS, 21. 03.2012 Radio Slobodna Evropa, UNS, 26.03.2012)

Nata Mesarovic denies accusations: "Slavko Curuvija was murdered on 1 April 1999. The First Municipal Court decided on 16 April 1999 to end the criminal proceedings against him. On 20 April 1999, appeals were submitted to the District Court in Belgrade. On 15 May 1999, the District Court in Belgrade and the judicial tribunal comprised of the president of the tribunal, judge Sinisa Vazic, and members of the tribunal, judges Nata Mesarovic and Nada Zec, decided to reject the appeals as unfounded. Therefore the District Court case Kž 828/99 was not related to Slavko Curuvija."

(UNS, 22.03.2012)

"We did not hold legal proceedings against Slavko Curuvija. The process was terminated. I intend to request the file from the First Primary Court to examine the details. I don't understand why that case is being discussed now", said Nata Mesarovic, the president of the Supreme Court of Cassation. She added that she had already delivered to the media her response to the issue.

(Danas, RTV B92, NUNS, 28.03.2012)

Slavko Curuvija was murdered exactly 13 years ago in April, and the organizers of the political assassination have not been brought to justice. Curuvija's wife, Branka Prpa, claims that the ruling coalition lacks the will to solve the case. "The Democratic Party bears most of the responsibility for this because it was the leader on October 5. They cannot rehabilitate the Socialist Party without bringing to the fore the history that resulted in the uprising of October 5". The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) protested against the shameful verdict against Curuvija and his colleagues already in 1999. Mid-last year, NUNS demanded that the Higher Court rehabilitate them.



However, the "reformed" judiciary "has remained silent". "We have not received any information on whether any legal proceedings were initiated", says the secretary general of NUNS, Sveta Rakovic.

(Radio Slobodna Evropa, UNS, 22.03.2012)

The president of the German foundation "Kasseler Friedensforum", Birgit Malzahn, paid a visit to Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) and met the children and spouses of the workers killed by the bombardment of 1999. Since 1999, the "Kasseler Friedensforum" foundation has been paying for schooling of the children of the killed RTS employees.

(RTS, NUNS, 23.03.2012)

The Prosecutor's Office for Organized Crime might launch a new investigation of those responsible for the death of 16 employees of Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) during the NATO bombardment in 1999. Zanka Stojanovic, mother of Nebojsa Simeunovic, who was killed during the attack, met with one of the deputy prosecutors for organized crime in the Special Court in Ustanicka Street. The prosecutor informed her that it had been decided to begin new investigation of the death of RTS employees.

(Danas, B92, NUNS, 28.03.2012)

### **Rights of journalists**

Long-time sport journalist Risto Kubura suffers from the bone marrow cancer and is currently lying in hospital, almost unable to move. The renowned Serbian journalist and long-time sport journalist with Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) is gravely ill and impoverished, which has prompted his friends to initiate an internal campaign among journalists aimed at collecting funds that would allow him to at least pay his medical expenses.

(Press, UNS, 23.03.2012, UNS, 28.03.2012)

### **Minority media**

At the last regular session of the Municipal Assembly of Backa Topola, a proposal was adopted to make the National Council of Hungarians a co-founder of Radio Regija in Backa Topola. Aside from representatives of the political opposition, even some members of the ruling coalition expressed their dissatisfaction with this proposal because Radio Regija broadcasts programme in Hungarian, Serbian, Ruthenian, Slovak and German languages, which means that in this regard other national councils should also become co-founders. Now it is possible that the National Council of Hungarians and representatives of the municipality would sign a contract on the transfer of a part of founding rights to the National Council of Hungarians.

(Vajdasag ma, NDNV, 23.03.2012)

The secretary of culture and information of the Province of Vojvodina, Milorad Djuric, is of the opinion that RTV should consider the possibility of subtitling the programme in languages of national minorities to Serbian language, which would improve the communication between different communities in Vojvodina.

(Pravda, 24.03.2012)

### Professional standards

Coalition for Access to Justice condemned the article written by the editor of the daily newspaper *Politika* about the stealing of copper cables, calling it openly racist. The organization demands that the newspaper apologize to the Roma population and remove the article from its website. The Coalition says that the journalist, Ozren Milanovic, described the Roma population as engaged exclusively in stealing, and that it is scandalous that the newspaper *Politika*, which is in majority ownership of the state, published an article that incites hatred and discrimination against the Roma. The Coalition for Access to Justice is comprised of: the Center for Advancement of Legal Study, Civil Rights Defenders, CHRIS – the Network of Committees for Human Rights in Serbia, the Humanitarian Law Centre, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NUNS), the Sandzak Committee for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, and Praxis. (Beta, NUNS, NDNV, 19.03.2012)

Of all the print media outlets in Serbia, the daily newspaper *Danas* has published the largest number of reports on the forthcoming local, provincial and parliamentary elections during the first five days of the election campaign – this is the result of media monitoring conducted by the agency *Kliping*. The agency's analysis shows that the Democratic Party (DS) was most frequently mentioned in the press and on television among all political parties, while it was also the most frequent topic on Twitter as well. The second place is held by the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS). With regard to individuals, Boris Tadic was most frequently mentioned in all three media forms. On Twitter, he is followed by Vojislav Seselj, while the second most frequently mentioned individual in the traditional media is Ivica Dacic. "Parliamentary parties are mostly equally represented in the media, with the exception of DS, which had up to 30 percent more media space than the political parties SNS, SPS, LDP, URS, SRS and DSS", explains a political analyst with the agency *Kliping*, Ilija Vucicevic.

(*Danas* – special supplement, UNS, NUNS, 21.03.2012)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency ordered TV B92 to stop broadcasting the popular TV series "Spartacus: Blood and Sand" at 20.00 and broadcast it much later, at 23.45, because of "graphic scenes of violence and sex".

(Press, 25.03.2012)

In comparison with the year of 2010, the reporting of domestic media outlets about Serbian integration with the EU in 2011 was more balanced and offered more EU-related topics, but they were mostly result of protocolary motives instead of interest of citizens, shows the research conducted by BBC Media Action. In this period, the number of media reports about the EU increased by 44 percent, but they mostly featured government officials, while only eight percent of media reports offered popular opinion.

(*Danas* - Vikend, 17.03.2012)

Ivan Medenica writes: "Before Spaic's reform, the magazine *NIN* had a section dedicated to critique in various artistic fields – novels, poetry, essays, classical music, film, rock music, theater, ballet/dancing, visual arts, architecture, comics – unlike all other domestic print or electronic media outlets. What is the situation today? Articles are still being published about most of these fields, but texts are placed below huge photographs from concerts or performances and colored boxes with numerical ratings. The tendency to shorten art critiques and consequently change its essence is not only evident in *NIN* and the Serbian media in general, but has unfortunately become a global media phenomenon in today's anti-intellectual world."

(*Politika*, 17.03.2012)

Documentary film created by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, "Women Who Killed Their Tormentors", will have its premiere today at a screening for journalist in the Media Center Belgrade.

(*Danas*, 21.03.2012)

## Estimates, awards, training courses and competitions

The Center for Training of Ground Forces in Pozarevac was visited by a group of 15 journalists. The visit was organized by the Belgrade Center for Security Policy, as a part of the two-day training entitled "Responsible Reporting for More Equal Security".

(Danas - Branicevo, 16.03.2012)

Hungarian journalistic award "Mihalj Tancic" was given by a Hungarian minister, Miklos Rethelji, to the retired bishop of Zrenjanin, Laslo Huzvar, the founder and editor of the religious magazine "Hitelet". Similarly, during the ceremony marking the Day of Hungarian Press, the vice president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, Zoltan Devavari, gave the annual journalistic award – established by the Devavary family – to Jene Fiser, publicist and journalist with the newspaper *Magyar Szo*.

(Magyar szo, NDNV, 16.03.2012)

As part of the BETA Photograph of the Year competition, SEEMO, calls for the submission of entries for its 2012 SEEMO Human Rights Photo Award. All professional photojournalists working and taking photographs in South East and Central Europe are eligible to participate. The closing date for submissions is 22 April 2012. All awards will be presented during the inaugural exhibition of selected works, which will take place in the New Moment Gallery in Belgrade, Serbia, on 17 May 2012, at 6 p.m. The terms of the competition are posted at [www.betafotokonkurs.com](http://www.betafotokonkurs.com).

(SEEMO, 19.03.2012)

Retired journalist with the newspaper *Nedeljne Novine* from Backa Palanka and long-time contributor working for the news agency Tanjug, Pera Dosen, received yesterday the lifetime achievement award "Svetozar Miletic" from the president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) – the Association of Journalists of Vojvodina, Petar Curcija. The "Jasa Tomic" award was given to the long-time journalists from Odzak, Slobodan Miric, who now works as a correspondent for newspaper *Vecernje Novosti* from the same municipality, while the award "Dimitrije Frusic" was delivered to journalist from Radio Novi Sad, Ljubenko Zvzdic. The award named after one of the founders of *Novine Serbske* was given to the founder of "Ars Akademija", Zeljko Savic. The jury selected the editor of the social-economic section of the biweekly magazine *Poljoprivrednik* from Novi Sad, Kosta Rajevic, as the recipient of the award "Dr Peter Drezgic".

(Dnevnik, 24.03.2012)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) has invited interested journalists from the local media, as well as freelance journalists, to attend the school of video journalism. Applications should be sent to email address [videonovinar@uns.org.rs](mailto:videonovinar@uns.org.rs), not later than Thursday, 29 March.

(UNS, 26.03.2012)

A Reuters agency photojournalist, Goran Tomasevic, is this year's winner of the UNS award for journalism without borders. The award is given to mark March 27, the Day of Serbian Journalists, and was established to celebrate the publication of first Serbian language newspaper in Vienna on 27 March 1791. Goran Tomasevic was the photojournalist of the year of the Reuters agency in 2003, 2005 and 2011. In 2008, he won the agency's award for the best photograph. He also received the Chinese award for international journalistic photography in 2004, as well as the award of the American National Association of Photojournalists for best photojournalism in the category of portraits and personalities. He is a three-time winner of the YU Press Photo award. In 2009, the Society of Publishers in Asia, located in Hong Kong, gave him the award for excellence in photojournalism.

(UNS, 26.03.2012, Beta, Politika, 24 sata, 27.03.2012)

*Canal France International*, in cooperation with with the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Embassy of France in Serbia, will organize an international seminar in Belgrade on 3-4 March 2012. The seminar is dedicated to the role of the new media in the Southeast Europe. The seminar will focus on the perspective of future integration of the region in the EU. The program of the Belgrade conference includes six round tables about

information on the Internet, models of economic independence of the media, investigative journalism, web documentaries, legislation and the ethics of the new media, as well as citizens as source of information.  
(e – Novine, NUNS, 22.03.2012)

The first recipient of the recently-established award, to be given each April 16 to celebrate the Day of the Municipality of Osecina, is Dragan Savic, a former contributor to *Vecernje Novosti* and correspondent of the Valjevo newspaper *Napred* and Radio Valjevo.

(*Vecernje Novosti*, 22.03.2012)

### **Media visits**

The Minister of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning, Oliver Dulic, visited the headquarters of the Media Association as a guest of editors-in-chief and directors of media companies that are members of the Association.

(ASMEDI NEWSLETTER, Mart 2012)

### **The media audience**

60 percent of citizens are aware of the existence of the Law on Consumer Protection – this is the result of the research entitled "Consumer Awareness", presented on the Consumers' Day. No less than 75 percent of interviewed consumers cited Internet as their main source of information. When searching for information, they mostly use the Internet and visit web pages of organizations for protection of consumers.

(Danas, NUNS, 16.03.2012)

Info Local Media Group has applied eight of its publications to be audited: *Zrenjaninac*, *NS Reporter*, *Suboticke Novine*, *Backopalanački Nedeljnik*, *Kikindske Novine*, *Vrsacka Kula*, *Nova Slobodna Rec (Vranjske novine)* and *Somborske Novine*. All the publications will be audited as of September 2011.

(ABC Serbia Newsletter, 20.03.2012)

The management of the daily newspaper *Politika* announced on March 17 that it would withdraw two of its newspapers, *Politika* and *Sportski Zurnal*, from ABC auditing. *Politika* delivered its last report on the number of sold copies in the end of January 2012 – for December 2011.

(ABC Serbia Newsletter, 20.03.2012)

New rules for the election campaign of political parties have left the internet completely unregulated, which means that pre-election silence does not apply to it. The executive director of the Bureau of Social Research (BIRODI), Pavle Dimitrijevic, said that despite the fact that there are no rules that control the content published on web portals, BIRODI intends to analyze five web portals during the election campaign: B92, Press, Kurir, Mondo and S Media. BIRODI will monitor violations of the code of journalism, media laws, electoral laws, and the pre-election silence. The second issue relates to official websites of political parties which will, like billboards, remain open to political propaganda during the election. According to the research conducted by the web portal *E-Izbori*, the website of the Democratic Party (DS) has the largest number of visitors, but holds only the 586th position. DS is followed by the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) (810), the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) (1282) and the United Regions of Serbia (URS) (2229), while other parties have a much smaller number of visitors. Social networks offer much more possibilities to communicate with voters, resulting in much wider influence. However, it is important to note that media laws do not apply to social networks, which means that activism is allowed without any limitations. The URS has the largest number of "friends" on Facebook – almost 11,000. The URS is closely followed by DS, while other parties are far below these numbers. On the other side, DS, LDP and SNS are most active on Twitter.

(Tanjug, Dnevnik, 21.03.2012)

According to research conducted by the agency *Kliping*, the print media and television stations report on Dragan Djilas slightly more than about his main rival, Aleksandar Vucic. In the online media, on all monitored websites,

Aleksandar Vucic has had almost 20 percent more posts than Dragan Djilas, while the difference was even bigger on Twitter: there have been 77 percent more posts about Vucic than about the current mayor. Regarding the electronic media, state-owned TV stations – RTS1 and Studio B – were the ones that dedicated most content to Dragan Djilas, while Aleksandar Vucic had most media content about him on private TV stations like B92 and RTV Pink, says the agency *Kliping*.

(Pravda, 23.03.2012)

During the first five days of the election campaign, the most often-mentioned terms on the Twitter network were the President of Serbia, Boris Tadic, the leader of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Vojislav Seselj, and the movement "Dveri, says the agency *Kliping*. Political parties PUPS, SPO, JS, SPS and NS had the smallest number of tweets mentioning them.

(Vecernje Novosti, 23.03.2012)

### **Anniversaries**

Theodore Kyriakou, the owner of the Greek company "Antenna Group" and Serbian TV Prva, welcomed the attendees of the celebration organized in the Hyatt Regency Hotel to mark the two-year anniversary of successful operations in Serbia. The celebration was attended by the Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic, the Minister of Internal Affairs Ivica Dacic, the Minister of External Affairs Vuk Jeremic, and the Minister of Culture and Information Predrag Markovic. President Boris Tadic praised the success of "Antenna Group" in the Serbian market in his message: "You can count on my support and support of the government in your future investment".

(Kurir, NUNS, Politika, UNS, 15.03.2012)

The weekly magazine *Kikindske* celebrates today the publication of its 700th issue by organizing workshops about investigative and web journalism intended for young people from Kikinda, Novi Sad and Belgrade. During the rule of Slobodan Milosevic and while the oppressive Law on Information was in force, the newspaper was the most often punished local media outlet in Serbia, while its editor-in-chief, Zeljko Bodrozic, was the most drastically punished journalist and editor in Serbia.

(NDNV, 16.03.2012)

### **In Memoriam**

NUNS says that Verica Barac, the president of the Anti-Corruption Council and honorary member of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), who has passed away, was one of the symbols of the fight against corruption in Serbia. "Verica Barac made an enormous contribution to democratization of the society, fighting relentlessly for the freedom of expression and information. At all times, the media and journalists had a reliable and courageous partner in Verica Barac", says the NUNS statement.

(NUNS, MC,19.03.2012)

### Media business operations

Employees in TV Cacak have decided to demand that the owners of the television station and Radio Cacak make one-time payment of all late salaries, or otherwise they will begin a strike. The employees in the regional TV station held a meeting yesterday and pointed out that they had received last salary in October. Before their privatization, these media outlets functioned as a public service broadcasters of the city. The new owner was obliged to invest 1.7 million and 6.1 million dinars in TV Cacak and Radio Cacak, respectively. Only four out of 25 employees remained in Radio Cacak after the privatization. Bojovic family also owns the weekly magazine *Cacanski Glas*, which was founded 80 years ago.

(B92 online, NUNS, UNS, 16.03.2012)

The strike in Radio Cacak conforms to the demand for minimal fulfillment of responsibilities and the programme of the station contains music and advertisements, while all other programmes are not being broadcast. The trade union of the radio station demanded that the Privatization Agency terminate the privatization of the station, but during the last auditing the Agency gave the owner the period of 60 days to pay the late salaries, which he has failed to do.

(B92 online, UNS, 26.03.2012, Beta, Danas, Pravda, Večernje Novosti, NUNS, 27.03.2012)

Stockholder company *Politika* from Belgrade, which operates under the management of the state, has suffered major losses in the previous year. *Politika* achieved business revenue in the amount 1.1 billion dinars in the previous year, which is 37.6% less than in 2010. The lowered volume of business operations increased the losses of the company, which grew from 206.9 million dinars in 2010 to 313.9 million dinars in the last year. Unlike in 2010, when a positive financial result was achieved, in the last year *Politika* suffered a large net loss amounting to 202.8 million dinars.

(Sinteza Invest Group, E-kapija, 22.03.2012)

Judicial expert in the field of finance and economy has established that TV channel SOS, which is in dispute with the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) and the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) regarding the allocation of broadcasting frequency, has suffered damages in the amount of 650 million dinars. If the court passes verdict in favor of the TV station, the two regulatory bodies would have to pay damages in this amount. The signal of the SOS channel on the frequency intended for the territory of Belgrade has been suffering from interference originating from the state television of Romania for almost six years. At the same time, the TV station has been broadcasting programme despite the RRA's decision to revoke its license before its expiration. TV SOS won three Belgrade broadcasting frequencies at the public contest organized by RRA in 2006. As soon as the transmitter began operating, "huge interference from the signal of the state television of Romania" became obvious on the channel 36, which covers more than 80 percent of the planned territory. RATEL rejected the possibility of out-of-court settlement offered by SOS.

(Danas, UNS, NUNS, 23.03.2012)

In its response to the article published by the daily newspaper *Danas*, which claimed that TV SOS suffered damage in the amount of more than six million euros, the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) pointed out that the legal case was ongoing, that the first-degree verdict had not been passed yet, and that "in this way one of the parties in the dispute is exerting pressure on the court which is adjudicating the case".

(Danas, 24.03.2012)

The Democratic Party (DS) i.e. the electoral list "Choice for Better Life – Boris Tadic" projects that it will spend around three million euros during the election campaign, while the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) estimate that their expenses will amount to around million euros for each party. According to analyses, political parties need to invest million euros in the campaign in order to enter the parliament, while bigger ambitions require up to three million. The head of the electoral campaign of DSS, points out that the largest expense involves

electronic media, especially TV stations with national coverage. SRS plans to spend "100 million dinars in total" until May 6.

(Danas, 20.03.2012)

TV Pink offers the most expensive seconds of airtime for advertising of political parties during the election campaign, while the most expensive paid time slots are offered by B92. Seconds are cheapest on TV Happy. The Democratic Party (DS) will spend 250-300 million dinars on advertising in the media and billboards, while the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) will spend 100 million dinars "out of which a small sum will be spent on the media". The Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) say that they have not yet allocated funds for the purpose.

(Danas – special supplement, 28.03.2012)

### **Privatization and state-owned media**

Municipal Radio-Television Homolje was launched at a ceremony held in the Cultural and Educational Center "Jovan Serbanovic" in Zagubica. In this way, Radio Homolje, which has been airing its programme for 15 years, has grown into a news center. The new media outlet, which will operate under the auspices of the Cultural and Educational Center, was opened by the president of the Municipality of Zagubica, Dragi Damjanovic.

(Pravda – Serbia, UNS, 28.03.2012)

Annulment of the quite bizarre privatization of Radio Sombor has not saved the station, reports daily newspaper *Dnevnik* from Novi Sad. The remaining five employees want to know what happened with the eight-point agreement reached with the representatives of the Government of the Province and the public service broadcaster of Vojvodina, RTV, and why no one wants to comment on the public petition signed by 6,000 citizens of Sombor who have expressed their desire that Radio Sombor should survive.

(Dnevnik, UNS, 28.03.2012)

### **The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)**

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), the French Cultural Center and the Association of Francophone Journalists of Serbia will continue to offer a course of French language at a low price of 2,000 dinars per attendee. Additional information is available from the email address [dragana.pusara@uns.rs](mailto:dragana.pusara@uns.rs) and applications can be submitted until April 5, 2012.

(UNS, 23.03.2012)

On the occasion of March 27, the Day of Serbian Journalists, the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) demands that the Government of Serbia consider the Report on the Pressure and Control Over the Media in Serbia at the following session of the Government. The Report was prepared in September of the last year by Verica Barac, the president of the Anti-Corruption Council of the Government of Serbia, who has recently passed away.

(UNS, 27.03.2012)



### Media-related news

The first regional talk show, "Okruzenje" will begin airing on Monday, April 2 in the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia. The 5-part series will deal with the following topics: Prejudices; The Economic Crisis; The Media; Youth in the Balkans; Great Powers and the Balkans. The programme will be broadcast as of April 2 by the following stations every Monday evening: Studio B, RT Vranje, TV Vijesti in Podgorica, ALSAT-M TV in Skoplje, BHTV in Sarajevo and Capital Network in Zagreb. "The episodes are one hour long and will set new standards in its genre because of its pace, attractiveness, the manner of reporting on the issues, and, of course, its regional approach", says a statement issued by the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe (CDRSEE), which has produced the programme in cooperation with the European Fund for the Balkans.

(Beta, Danas, 28.03.2012)

Traditional media like newspapers, television and radio are still the most efficient way to communicate with the public in comparison with communication via social networks on the internet like Facebook and Twitter – this is the result of the research conducted in 12 countries by the leading international public relations company "Ketchum". This result proves that, despite the incredible expansion of social networks during recent years, people still react best to traditional ways of communication and perceive them as more natural and more accessible.

(Blic, UNS, NUNS, 28.03.2012)

### Digitalization

The Minister of Culture, Media and Information Society, Predrag Markovic, launched the Initial Network for Testing of the Digital TV Signal at the Avala Tower. The digital signal will be available to around 40% of Serbian population. Serbia has received 137 million euros from the EU pre-accession funds, out of which 10.5 million euros was allocated to preparation of digitalization and the transition to the digital signal for citizens of Serbia. The Public Company "Emisiona Tehnika i Veze" has constructed a network of 13 transmitters and two repeaters operating on the same frequency as the base transmitter, which means that it is now possible to begin digital broadcasting in Serbia.

(RTV, Tanjug, Politika, Danas, E-kapija, B92, NUNS, Blic, Pravda, UNS, 21.03.2012, Alo!, Politika, 24 sata, Kurir, 22.03.2012)

The digital television signal in Serbia will be available only to owners of TV sets with DVB-T2 tuners. Everyone else will have to buy set-top boxes costing between 6,000 and 11,000 dinars.

(21.03.2012)

- 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)
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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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