

Issue No. 38

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The media situation in Serbia

The state is acting like a competition to the private media and if this trend continues, private media outlets will not survive, while the only remaining survivors in the market will be the media that is financed from the national budget – this is the conclusion reached at the yesterday's presentation of the report on media financing from budgets of local self-governments in Serbia. During the press conference it was noted that media companies in 33 Serbian cities have received slightly less than 850 million dinars in the last year, but that 70 percent of that money went to publicly-owned companies, mostly the electronic media, for the purpose of reporting on activities of these local self-governments. Dragana Zarkovic Obradovic, a representative of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), said that publicly-owned companies were being favored with regard to financing of the media, placing the private media and production at a disadvantage, and that such circumstances were influencing the editorial policy of the media due to the fact that money was going to be paid regardless of the quality of work. She said that the money intended for publicly-owned companies was most often allocated in the form of subsidies and used mostly for salaries, instead for media production. The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV), Dinko Gruhonjic, said that if nothing changes, only the state- and church-owned media would survive in Serbia, as well as the media founded by "paraofficial" national councils.

(Beta, Pregled, NDNV, 22.09.2012)

Opinions about the current media situation in Serbia

Dragan J. Vucicevic says in an article published by the daily newspaper *Informer*: "During the eight years of Tadic's sultanistic regime, a media strategy was made official which does not favor truth. The system of values in Serbian press was not established on the basis of quality, but in accordance of the degree of sycophancy. As we are now finding out, obedient journalists were awarded with millions of dinars from the national budget! Free journalism is a necessary precondition for a democratic and normal society. There can be no free journalism in Serbia while the worst, the most obedient and most corrupted hold the positions of editors and directors."

(Informer, 15.09.2012)

The minister of culture and information, Bratislav Petkovic, said that the new Government of Serbia faced a completely unregulated media scene during the first 40 days of its existence, and that it was not known who were the real owners and rulers of the media. Petkovic said that the Government of Serbia would insist on transparency of ownership over the media, the freedom of the media, and investigation of attacks on and murders of journalists. He confirmed that there was a team within the cabinet of the President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolic that was working on preparation of media laws, but that it was not a formal work group. The head of the Delegation of the European Union to Serbia, Vincent Degert, said that the political pressure against the media in Serbia was not so direct anymore, but that the media were exposed to economic pressure.

(Beta, Danas, Dnevnik, Informer, 21.09.2012, ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

The state and the media

The new government will not control the media and we aim to adopt a set of media laws until March 2013 that would ensure freedom and independence of the media in accordance with European standards, said the minister of culture and information, Bratislav Petkovic. "We will achieve this in cooperation with European organizations. As a minister, I do not want to influence the media. I do not have legal or moral rights to do so", said Petkovic.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, 16.09.2012)

The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, Vukasin Obradovic, said yesterday that he was concerned with the manner in which the government intends to protect the interest of the state in the company *Politika* and whether the state would gain an ownership share in the company. In his words, the state is supposed to withdraw from media ownership, not to acquire new media outlets. Obradovic said that it would not be a good solution to make the company *Politika* completely owned by the state i.e. to let the state purchase the share owned by VAC.

(Beta, Politika, 19.09.2012)

The first deputy prime minister of the Government of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, said that the new Government would guarantee the freedom of the media and that the state should withdraw from media ownership as soon as possible. A press statement issued after a meeting with OSCE representative for the freedom of the media, Dunja Mijatovic, says that it was agreed that Serbia would take all required steps to implement international standards in the media scene.

(Beta, Politika, Blic, Dnevnik, Vecernje novosti, 20.09.2012, Tanjug, Pregled, 21.09.2012, Beta Politika, 22.09.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) is concerned because of the fact that draft media laws are being prepared by an informal work group within the cabinet of the president of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolic, which was publicly confirmed by the president of the National Parliament of Serbia, Nebojsa Stefanovic, and the minister of culture and the media, Bratislav Petkovic. We call on representatives of all state institutions to adhere to the legal procedure and the fundamental principles and deadlines stipulated by the Media Strategy, which means that media laws should be formulated and adopted transparently, says NUNS.

(Beta, Fonet, Politika, Blic, 21.09.2012)

The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), Vukasin Obradovic, says that it is "not a good news", if true, that a work group was formed within the cabinet of the president of Serbia that would work on the media strategy. "It is not a good news that people around the president are working on this kind of legislation, this is a dangerous precedent", says Obradovic.

(Tanjug Politika, Blic, 22.09.2012, Alo!, 23.09.2012)

No one from the president's cabinet is working on draft laws on information, sources from Nikolic's cabinet told the media, and added that they cooperate with the media.

(Press, 22.09.2012)

A working group for the media strategy has been formed within the cabinet of the president of Serbia, it was confirmed to the daily newspaper *Blic* in the cabinet of Tomislav Nikolic and explained that "the draft version of the reformed law is worked on by a group of experts in media laws under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture".

(Blic, 23.09.2012)

Public service broadcasters

The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), Vukasin Obradovic, said yesterday that the statement issued by the deputy prime minister, Aleksandar Vucic, about state financing of the public service broadcaster under certain conditions, could be interpreted as a form of pressure on the editorial policy of Radio-Television Serbia (RTS).

(Beta, Danas, Politika, 15.09.2012)

A new programme schedule of Radio-Television Vojvodina (RTV) began on Thursday, and in the following period the two channels of RTV will broadcast a range of new programmes and various new content and topics. One of the novelties is that the First Channel of RTV will broadcast the best programmes of national minorities, subtitled in Serbian language.

(Danas - Vikend, 15.09.2012)

The minister of culture, Bratislav Petkovic, said that the issue of financing of the public service broadcaster had to be solved before spring next year and that survival of the RTS would probably have to be ensured by using money from the national budget.

(Tanjug, Press, E-kapija, Vecernje novosti, 21.09.2012)

The president of the Executive Board of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Petar Jeremic, says that the TV subscription in Croatia is called a "TV set fee" and payed in a form of a tax obligation. "Three percent of the money collected in this way is used to finance non-commercial content on private television stations. At the same time, the Croatian state television is not allowed to use this money to purchase commercial content, like the League of Champions or something similar. Instead, it can buy such content only using its advertising revenue", says Jeremic. Therefore, if Serbia were to introduce a TV set fee like in Croatia, non-payers could be held criminally accountable, explains Jeremic.

(Politika, 21.09.2012)

The percentage of people who are paying the TV fee to RTS is getting lower each month. At the moment, no less than 70 percent of citizens is not paying the fee that is legally stipulated by a law adopted in 2002. This fact is emphasized by the general director of RTS, Aleksandar Tijanic, as well as by trade unions of the public service broadcaster, who warn that the financing is insufficient for normal functioning of the system. "It is not acceptable that in Croatia the percentage of payment is more than 90 percent and that their public service broadcaster has the annual budget of 200 million euros, while we have only 70 million euros, including the advertising revenue, which amounts to around 20 million euros. A normal country should have a powerful public service broadcaster with many viewers and with a sufficient and stable source of financing. At the same time, the public service broadcaster should not be burdened with any demands regarding its personnel or in other areas", says Tijanic.

(Politika, 21.09.2012, Alo!, 22.09.2012)

Threats, attacks and legal proceedings against journalists; media-related trials

The legal process against the former director of RTS, Dragoljub Milanovic, who is charged with abuse of authority with regard to allocation of housing to RTS employees, is set to continue. Milanovic will defend himself while free, after serving a 10-year prison sentence for his role in the death of 16 employees of the public service broadcaster during NATO bombing.

(Blic, Danas, 16.09.2012, Informer, 17.09.2012)

The vice president of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Milutin Mrkonjic, said that Dragoljub Milanovic "did not deserve to go prison" while commenting on the 10 years that the former director of RTS had spent in prison for his crime against public safety with lethal consequences.

(Alo!, 20.09.2012)

"I wish I had died. At least my family would not have had to go through all this... I don't know what else I could say, because I did everything I could to protect them. I feel that my only guilt is that I stayed alive", said Dragoljub Milanovic. He also said that he had asked Slobodan Milosevic, the then president of the country, to launch an investigation of the bombing of the RTS building.

(Svedok, Alo!, UNS, NUNS, 25.09.2012)

The president of the High Judicial Council, Nata Mesarovic, finally admitted that her monthly income amounted to no less than 504,815 dinars. At the same time, she threatened to sue the daily newspaper *Informer* because of "incitement to lynching", since for several months we had insisted on reporting the exact amount of her income!

(Informer, 19.09.2012)

Ljubomir Bradic, a deputy in the local assembly and a member of the group of citizens "Victory for Valjevo" ("*Pobeda za Valjevo*"), sent an SMS to Milan Milinovic, the director and editor of the local regional TV Vujic, warning him that his station is not allowed to continue broadcasting the sessions of the assembly and that it would not receive any money from the city budget. Later, the deputy Bradic said at a press conference that he did not want nor was allowed to influence the editorial policy of TV Vujic, but that in his opinion the TV station was not unbiased. The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) warns that according to the Law, no one is allowed to limit the freedom of information, especially by abusing official authority.

(Politika, Vecernje novosti, 19.09.2012)

The Democratic Party in Valjevo called on all members of the ruling coalition to respond to allegedly unprecedented attacks on the local media. "The main mouthpiece of the new city policy towards the media, a deputy in the local assembly, Ljubomir Bradic, is the one who says in public and implements the wishes of the local regime in order to discipline the journalists and editors of the local media", says the party.

(Vecernje novosti – Serbia, 20.09.2012)

The case of the threatening SMS sent by a deputy in the local assembly to the director and editor of the private television station TV Vujic (VTV) will have its epilogue in court. Journalist Milan Milinovic has filed a lawsuit against the member of the group of citizens "Victory", Ljubomir Bradic.

(Blic - Srbija, UNS, NUNS, 25.09.2012)

The police station in Loznica has submitted to the Primary Public Prosecutor's Office in Loznica a report on the new verbal attack and attempt at physical attack on the correspondent of the daily newspaper *Vecernje Novosti* from Loznica, Vladimir Mitric.

(Vecernje novosti, 19.09.2012)

The president of the Municipal Assembly of Aleksinac, Grujica Veljkovic, suspended the live broadcasting of the session of the Assembly. The stated reason was the sudden malfunction of the second camera in the studio of ALT during the recording of a media report on the epidemic of infectious hepatitis in Aleksinac. According to opposition assembly deputies, the reason for withdrawal of the team of cameramen was the controversial subject on the agenda of the assembly – the budget of the municipality of Aleksinac.

(aleksinacnews.com, 20.09.2012)

The Association of Journalists of Nis strongly protests against the statement made during the last session of the parliament by a deputy from the United Regions of Serbia (URS), Branislav Jovanovic, who threatened with closure all media outlets that had reported on candidates for new directors of public companies in the city of Nis.

(Blic – Serbia, Vecernje novosti – Serbia, 20.09.2012)

The head of the parliamentary group of the United Regions of Serbia (URS) in the Assembly of the City of Nis, Branislav Jovanovic, denied yesterday that he had demanded the closing down of any media outlet during the last parliamentary session. He said that he had only "reacted to the fact that certain web portals made public inappropriate insinuations and untruth about the acting directors of public companies and institutions".

(Danas, 21.09.2012)

The Commercial Court in Belgrade rejected as unfounded the appeal submitted by SOKOJ against the verdict by the Commercial Court in Subotica. SOKOJ, the collective organization for protection of the rights of composers, had demanded a percentage of the revenue of Radio Subotica resulting from subsidies and donations from the local self-government. The Court confirmed that the total revenue of Radio Subotica cannot serve as the basis for calculation of SOKOJ's fees, but only the revenue resulting from the usage of music works.

(Tanjug, Vecernje novosti – Vojvodina, Blic – Vojvodina, 22.09.2012)

The Highest Court in Cacak decided that the owner of TV Galaksija 32, Milojko Petrovic, is obliged to pay 70,000 dinars to citizen Stojan Markovic as damages for emotional pain and harm to reputation and honor. Markovic had sued Petrovic because the leader of the political party New Serbia, Velimir Ilic, said during his appearance in the programme of the station that he had been "stealing gasoline and selling it to farmers".

(Fonet, Press, Vecernje novosti – Serbia, 22.09.2012)

The Higher Court in Negotin issued a verdict in favor of the news agency Beta in a litigation initiated against the news agency by a politician from Majdanpek. The verdict cites European documents on protection of the media and the principle that politicians are obliged to demonstrate a higher level of tolerance with regard to public criticism. The Court has rejected as unfounded the lawsuit filed by a member of the Municipal Council of Majdanpek, Predrag Djordjevic, who had demanded 250,000 dinars in damages because of the article entitled "Member of the City Council in Majdanpek Grants Himself a Scholarship". The Court of Appeals in Belgrade has confirmed the first-instance verdict.

(Blic, UNS, 24.09.2012)

The family of the TV B92 journalist Tanja Jankovic was brutally beaten last Saturday at the wedding of their cousin by members of the police of the city of Vranje, reports the daily newspaper *Alo!*. The journalist ended up with bruises, her father Zoran's jaw was fractured in two places and his nose broken, while her sister Bojana's nose is cracked and had to be immediately operated. In the journalist's words, the Jankovic family was attacked because she had publicly asked why no one had ever been held accountable for the crime taking place in the city of Vranje – from the mayor's car being set on fire to the fire that occurred in the Theatre of Vranje. Using her sources, Tanja Jankovic managed to acquire the police report, which is full of illogical claims. "I demand that the government support me and my family because we are feeling threatened. My father and mother have moved to Belgrade because we are afraid for their lives." The spokesman of the Vranje police department, Dragan Stamenkovic, confirmed that, as far as he knew, the police inspector Nenad Jovanovic was still on duty,

but he could not specify whether disciplinary proceedings would be initiated against the inspector.

(Alo!, UNS, NUNS, 27.09.2012)

Investigations of murders of journalists

The Government of Serbia has decided to form an international committee for investigation of murders of journalists in Serbia, said the director of TV B92, Veran Matic. During an OSCE event dedicated to challenges facing the media in the South East Europe, Matic said that the initiative for formation of the committee, which would include international investigators, had come from the organization Balkan Freedom Media Network. The Government of Serbia adopted yesterday the decision on formation of the committee.

(Fonet, Politika, Press, Vecernje novosti, Blic, Danas, Tanjug, Dnevnik, 22.09.2012)

The Media Strategy

The Media Coalition will organize a campaign aimed at pointing out the most important media-related issues covered by the Media Strategy of the Government of Serbia adopted in September 2011.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

Professional standards

The 14th International Conference SEMPL, dedicated to the latest trends in the field of media usage, will take place in Portoroz, Slovenia, on 29-30 November 2012. The educational event will offer insight into the best practice of media strategies and present the latest media and communication trends in the Adriatic region and the world.

(E-kapija, 19.09.2012)

The traditional October regional Press Media Summit will also be held this year in Belgrade on 31 October in the Metropol Palace Hotel. The theme of the Summit will be regional informing. Additional information about the event is available here: www.abcsrbija.com.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

This year's media conference and Legal Leaks Training, organized by the Network for Reporting on Eastern Europe (n-ost), will take place in Belgrade on 27-30 September under the title "Between Former Yugoslavia and the European Union – The New Interpretation of the Broken Region". The Conference will be attended by around a hundred journalists from the West Balkans, Germany and other European countries. The conferences have been held in Prague, Sofia, Bucharest, Rostov, Pecuj and Minsk.

(Danas - Vikend, 22.09.2012)

The European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) invites journalists and other media professionals from all parts of Europe and the world to join the Stand Up For Journalism campaign on 5 November and express their solidarity with journalists. It is necessary to remind the public of the killed journalists and support free journalism.

(NUNS 27.09.2012)

Ear-pearcing commercials, series which have a record number of viewers only because they have been broadcast for decades, the lack of educational programmes and endless reruns of films – these are only some of the characteristics of the programme aired by domestic television stations that annoy the average Serbian viewer, who hold the record regarding the time spent in front of the TV screen, reports the daily newspaper *Novosti*. The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), which is tasked with controlling the content offered to TV viewers, says that the broadcasters have improved their conduct and that they are now committing much less violations.

(Vecernje novosti, 17.09.2012)

Almost all of the TV stations with national coverage broadcast commercials that are up to 30 percent louder than the rest of their programme, which is why the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has ordered them to rectify such irregularities. Their measurement involved both RTS channels, TV Avala, TV Prva, TV B92, TV Pink, TV Happy, TV Studio B and TV Metropolis. The measurement in the technical center of the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) was performed at the request of RRA, to whom numerous citizens had complained about excessively loud commercials.

(Blic, Danas, 20.09.2012)

"Mr. Cannibal, how does the human flesh taste like?", asks the TV host. "It's delicious!", says the guest and explains that he had eaten corpses in the war zone, but also some 'fresh people'. This bizarre and disturbing content was broadcast on TV Happy on Thursday evening at 23.00. Asked whether they feel responsible for the content they had aired and if they expect to be punished by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), representatives of TV Happy sent us a letter in which they deny that the guest had talked about eating human flesh, claiming instead that he "made jokes about cannibalism".

(Blic, 22.09.2012)

"I will sue TV Happy because they abused my mentally ill father", says D. J., the daughter of the man who appeared in the programme "Mad House" ("*Luda Kuca*") on Thursday at 23.00 and claimed that he had eaten human flesh.

(Blic, NUNS, 25.09.2012)

During the one year of its existence, the Press Council has solved 30 complaints, out of which in six it was decided that the media had violated the journalistic code of conduct. "In around 20 percent of the cases, the media violated the journalistic code of conduct, which is quite a large percentage and it shows that we, the journalists, have not been adhering to our code

of conduct. This is bad, very bad, for us and for the society", said the president of the Council, Dragan Bujosevic. He pointed out his dissatisfaction with the number of cases reviewed by the Council, noting that this was a consequence of the fact that the Council does not have authority over all of the media.

(B92, UNS, NUNS, 25.09.2012)

The Novi Sad School of Journalism and the Bureau of Social Research (BIRODI) have presented the results of the monitoring of this year's election campaign. The results indicate a small number of issues discussed by politicians and uniformity in media reporting. It is interesting to note that some of the media outlets were reporting up to 90 percent of their content without any criticism. The research also showed that most of the media had not reported in an unbiased manner on all political issues.

(RTV, UNS, NUNS, 25.09.2012)

Awards, training courses and competitions

In the beginning of September, the daily newspaper *Vecernje Novosti* announced a public competition for the Jovan Hadzi Kostic Award. The competition is open until 7 October of this year.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

The RTS Gallery is hosting the exhibition of photographs of the longtime editor of NIN, Branko Belic, entitled "Faces". At the same time, Belic's photographic monograph of the same title, published by The Official Gazette, will be presented to the public.

(Blic, 17.09.2012)

The media audience

According to the report, research and analysis performed by the press auditing company, ABC, the daily newspaper *Vecernje Novosti* is the first-ranked newspaper in Serbia regarding both its printed and sold number of copies, among the serious daily newspapers which regularly audit their circulation. The total average daily circulation of *Vecernje Novosti* in June and July amounted to 116,901 copies.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

Auditing of the circulation of daily newspapers and magazines in July 2012 shows that their ranking has remained almost unchanged. When it comes to magazines, the list of the magazines with largest circulation is similar to the June results: out of 20 magazines with the largest number of sold copies, no less than 15 are published by Color Press Group, while the biggest increase in sales as compared with June was achieved by the CPG magazines: *Scandal!* (from 87,456 to 100,545) and *Beauty and Health (Lepota i zdravlje)* (from 33,663 to 37,660).

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

After a successfully performed initial revision, members of ABC now have access to information about the sales of the daily newspaper *Informer* as of 10 May 2012. The information will be published in regular monthly reports.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

Media transfers

A former member of the music band "Models", Anastasija Budjic, now works as a television host for TV Happy. The *Playboy's* model will make TV reports about the most interesting people in our media scene.

(Press, 19.09.2012)

Media business operations

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) has announced that it has signed a Protocol with the Organization of Music Authors of Serbia (SOKOJ) which ensures significant discounts and benefits for payment of the minimal fee for usage of music works in 2012. The Protocol also regulates the issue of payment of debts from the previous period.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

The Association of Journalists of Nis (DNN) demands that the newly appointed director of TV Nis immediately "respond" to the dismissal of two journalists from the station. The president of DNN, Dragana Kocic, pointed out that a week had passed after the appointment of the new management and that their response was expected. "We expect NTV to reconsider the legality of these dismissals and to announce their position about the journalists' status", says Dragana Kocic. In its press statement, DNN warns NTV and its founder, the city of Nis, that the failure to rectify possible legal violations related to the dismissal of their colleagues might result in payment of large damages and legal costs – all of which would be paid by the citizens of Nis. Around the end of March, the then director of NTV, Dragana Nikolic (URS), [fired the longtime journalist, Milena Vidojkovic](#). Ten days ago, [the recent editor-in-chief, Dragan Miljkovic, was also dismissed](#).

(Juzne vesti , 26.09.2012)

Privatization and the state-owned media

Veselin Jevrosimovic's company "Internet Group", which owns the web portal Telegraf.rs, has become the owner of 50 percent of the shares of the Macedonian company "*Graficki Centar*", which publishes three Macedonian daily newspapers – *Dnevnik*, *Vesti* and *Utrinski vesnik*.

(ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

Serbian authorities have launched pre-investigative proceedings related to the true identity of the owner of 62 percent of the daily newspaper *Vecernje Novosti*. Although official data says that the owners are phantom companies headquartered in Lichtenstein, Dresden and Rotterdam, it is suspected that the true owner is a private company from Sabac, which is owned by one of the well-known financiers of the Democratic Party, reports the daily newspaper *Alo!*.

(Alo!, 16.09.2012)

The deputy prime minister of the Government of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, said yesterday that the director of the company Farmakom, Miroslav Bogicevic, was behind the purchase of 50 percent of the daily newspaper *Politika*. Bogicevic did this as a favor to the Democratic Party. Vucic said that the case of *Politika* is connected with the case of *Agrobanka*, since the missing money for purchase had been taken as a loan from *Nova Agrobanka* and *Privredna Banka Beograd*. In his words, the loaned money was used to buy *Politika*, *Novosti* and *Dnevnik*.

(Alo!, Blic, Informer, Politika, RTS, E-kapija, 18.09.2012, Danas, 19.09.2012)

The first deputy prime minister of the Government of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, did not want to reveal who forced the owner of *Farmakom*, Miroslav Bogicevic, to buy 50 percent of the daily newspaper *Politika*, although his statement clearly points to the Democratic Party (DS). A member of the DS, Dragoljub Micunovic, responded immediately, saying that none of the bodies of the DS had ever mentioned the issue of purchase of any newspaper. The president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Ljiljana Smajlovic, said to the RTS that the former president of the Managing Board, Sonja Liht, and the former prime minister, Mirko Cvetkovic, had been tasked with protection of the state property in *Politika*. She said that instead of fighting against non-transparent media ownership, the state had been encouraging it. Sonja Liht said that the management of the company, "including Ljiljana Smajlovic, were receiving huge salaries and bonuses, while the debt was growing continually".

(Tanjug, Politika, Blic, Dnevnik, Informer, 19.09.2012)

The president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Ljiljana Smajlovic, said yesterday that if the claims made by Aleksandar Vucic about the purchase of *Politika* were true, that would mean that the owner of *Farmakom*, Miroslav Bogicevic, lied when he said that he was not the buyer, and that the Democratic Party (DS) lied when it said that it did not know who the buyer was. Smajlovic told the news agency Beta that the overtaking of *Politika* and *Novosti* had begun already

in January of this year, before the DS lost the elections, with the aim to consolidate its control over the media.

(Pregled, 19.09.2012)

During his visit to the Military Technological Institute (VTI), Aleksandar Vucic said that he would persist in his fight against corruption and that no one would be able to defeat the state in this struggle, regardless of the fate of the individual participants. Vucic did not want to reveal his findings about the identity of the person who had forced the owner of *Farmakom* to buy 50 percent of the daily newspaper *Politika*. He told journalists that they should ask that question to Miroslav Bogicevic. "If you believe that he was interested in buying *Dnevnik* because the reporting of the reputable newspaper was of utter importance to his business, you will have difficulty trying to convince me in that story", said Vucic.

(Tanjug, Politika, Beta, Pregled, Press, 19.09.2012, ASMEI Newsletter, September 2012)

"Commenting on the sale of the majority share of the company *Dnevnik Vojvodina Pres*, the first vice president of the Government of Serbia, Aleksandar Vucic, made several insults against the newspaper *Dnevnik* and its employees. In a free society, it is completely unacceptable that highest-ranking officials would insult a company, especially a media company. Therefore we strongly protest against the political pressure exerted by the minister of defense, Aleksandar Vucic, who is also the first vice president of the Government of Serbia in charge of the fight against corruption, as well as the secretary of the National Security Council and the head of the Bureau for Coordination of the Security Services", says the editorial team of *Dnevnik*.

(Dnevnik, 19.09.2012)

The minister of defense, Aleksandar Vucic, publicly apologized to the editorial team, journalists and all employees of the daily *Dnevnik* because of the "rude and stupid mistake of unintentionally belittling the newspaper".

(Tanjug, Press, Alo!, Informer, 09.20.2012, ASMEI Newsletter, September 2012)

A member of parliament (Liberal-Democratic Party – LDP), Bojan Djuric, said yesterday that it would be difficult for him to comment on the specifics of the purchase of shares in *Politika*, *Vecernje Novosti* and *Dnevnik* revealed by the deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic. Djuric said that it should be investigated why the state had failed to use its right of first purchase and that possible legal or criminal accountability should be dealt with authorities, in accordance with the law, while the issue of the relationship between the state and the media should be analyzed separately.

(Danas, 19.09.2012)

The owner of the company *Farmakom*, Miroslav Bogicevic, told the authorities that he had bought 50 percent of the shares of the daily newspaper *Politika*, reported RTS yesterday.

(Tanjug, E-kapija, 19.09.2012)

Until the role of the state in the media is changed, there will be no freedom of the media. State subsidies have to be made in accordance with the Law on Control Over the State Assistance, said yesterday Vukasin Obradovic, the president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), at a regional OSCE media conference. "Perhaps the most drastic violation of the Law is the fact that the state news agency Tanjug is being financed directly from the national budget. This will result in closure of news agencies that are suffering from unfair competition", says Obradovic. He is of the opinion that this issue will be a test for the new government which, however, "in its revised budget still holds on to the previous solution that entails state financing of Tanjug".

(Vecernje novosti, 22.09.2012)

The editor-in-chief and director of the Smederevo weekly magazine *Nas Glas*, Goro Redzic, was arrested because of illegal business operations of the magazine. He was arrested after receiving marked bills amounting to 350 euros and 10,000 dinars for the lease of business premises located in the city center of Smederevo which belong to the newspaper company *Nas Glas*. The weekly magazine was privatized on 27 March 2009, but in July 2012 the Agency informed the newspaper's management about the cancellation of the privatization due to unpaid obligations. The weekly magazine also had certain obligations related to a social program which the majority owner had failed to fulfil.

(B92, Beta, UNS, Press, NUNS, 27.09.2012)

The local newspaper *Suboticke Novine* has lost their business premises which were sold at yesterday's auction held in the Primary Court in Subotica. The premises were bought by the company "Pedja Komerc". It can be said that the new owner of

the real estate is the man who had caused its sale, since the owner of "Pedja Komerc" is Predrag Malisanovic. He is a part of the consortium "Vojvodina Info", which owns *Suboticke Novine* and its property. As one of the co-owners, he had used *Suboticke Novine* as a guarantee for the 250,000 euros loan he took from the Findomestic Bank for the need of his other companies, "Azotara" and "Azohema". Since the loan has not been repaid, the bank activated the mortgage. After the auction, Malisanovic has become the only owner of the real estate for the price that is lower than the amount of the mortgage of two years ago.

(Politika, UNS, NUNS, 27.09.2012)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) is concerned because of the increasing number of articles in the Serbian media that are dramatically eroding the reputation of journalism and continuing the practice of abuse of the media. NUNS warns that certain tabloids, under the mask of fighting corruption, have not refrained from even making a list of people that should end up in prison, in their opinion. Tabloid journalism is legitimate, but it must not result in lynching and campaigns. By taking over the role of the judge and the jury, tabloids have been violating fundamental journalistic and ethical standards, creating an atmosphere of hysteria and hatred.

(NUNS, 25.09.2012Beta, Politika, 26.09.2012)

Journalistic trade unions

Four trade unions of RTS sent a letter yesterday to the Government, the Managing Board and the general director, demanding that they ensure that "the lost revenue from the TV fee be compensated from the national budget", since the TV fee is being paid by only 30 percent of households because of the economic crisis. The trade unions also demand "legally regulated, sufficient and stable financing of the Public Service Broadcaster in accordance with European practice and regulations", as well as extension of the deadlines for payment of taxes to the state until it fulfills its obligations towards RTS.

(Beta, Politika, 19.09.2012)

The president of the Trade Union of Journalists of *Novosti*, Dragana Cabarkapa, demands that it be clarified whether the owner of "Farmakom", Miroslav Bogicevic, has bought the majority share of the company *Novosti* and, if he has, how he acquired it and from whom. Cabarkapa said that the trade union was satisfied with the results of the investigation into the case of *Politika*, but that the *Novosti* case was being neglected for some reason.

(Beta, Politika, Blic, 20.09.2012)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) claims that TV station KTV from Zrenjanin does not have a broadcasting license and that the Agency inspectors were forcefully prevented from implementing the valid legal verdict on suspension of illegal broadcast of its programme. The inspectors were prevented by a group of citizens who identified themselves as "the station's viewers" and were led by the owner of KTV, Dana Radic.

(Politika, 18.09.2012)

South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO)

SEEMO observes with preoccupation the continuous threats against the journalist Vladimir Mitric, correspondent of the Belgrade-based daily *Vecernje Novosti* in Loznica, western Serbia. Vladimir Mitric was threatened again in spite of having 24-hour police protection. The veteran journalist specialises in uncovering corruption in western Serbia and Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been under police protection since October 2005, after being severely beaten by a former policeman. The latest threat against Mitric occurred on 15 September 2012. While SEEMO welcomes the decision to provide Vladimir Mitric with police protection, SEEMO believes that protection should cover the whole of Serbia, rather than only one county.

(SEEMO, 24.09.2012NDNV, 23.09.2012)

Media-related news

The weekly magazine NIN is now available on social networks Twitter and Facebook. The Facebook page of NIN is available here: www.facebook.com/ninonline, while its Twitter page is located here: www.Twitter.com/nedeljnikNIN (ASMEDI Newsletter, September 2012)

Grand Production and its top management – Sasa Popovic, Brena and Boba Zivojinovic – have been negotiating for two months on the takeover of TV Avala from its present owners: Danko Djunic, Johannes Werner Krauss and Zeljko Mitrovic. The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has extended the broadcasting license of TV Avala until the end of October. If the TV station does not pay the remaining debt to RRA, as well as the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) and ET, it might lose its broadcasting license and become available for sale as of April next year, when the RRA will again allocate frequencies to national broadcasters.

(Blic, 19.09.2012, E-kapija, 20.09.2012)

The newly appointed acting director of the public company Radio Sid, Nikola Vidic, says that the company, which has a regional frequency, plans to increase the number of channels in its cable distribution system, offer internet services and launch its own TV programme. In order to achieve these plans, it is necessary to take a loan in the amount of around 10 million dinars. The Municipal Council was asked to increase the KDS monthly fee from 603 dinars to 750 dinars. The council will decide on this issue on Tuesday. Vidic points out that the current price results in a loss of around 110 dinars per subscriber.

(Vecernje novosti – Vojvodina, 22.09.2012)

Instead of the channel C37, citizens will be able to watch the programme of the media company at the channel S30 and the frequency of 375.25 MHz, NTV has announced. Frequencies with other cable providers have not been changed.

(Juzne vesti, 25.09.2012)

Digitalization

The governor of the National Bank of Serbia (NBS), Jorgovanka Tabakovic, and the general director of the Public Company "The Official Gazette" ("*Sluzbeni Glasnik*"), Slobodan Gavrilovic, will sign on September 20 a contract on cooperation on the project of digitalization of the Serbian official bulletin, announced NBS on Tuesday.

(Tanjug, E-kapija, 18.09.2012)

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- Abbreviations - www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations.2317.html#104230
- Sections - www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations-and-sections.2317.html
- Archive - www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-archive.2381.html
- Media News Bulletin home - 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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