



Issue No. 11, August 20 – September 02, 2011

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Media situation in Serbia

A cable sent from the Embassy of the US in 2009, about the adoption of the controversial Law on Information on 3 September 2009, entitled "Serbia Adopts Controversial Media Law", is available at the internet address www.uns.rs. The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) translated the cable that was downloaded from the Wikileaks web site. (*Dnevnik*, 30. 08. 2011)

The president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Ljiljana Smajlovic, was asked by the *Danas* daily newspaper to comment on the estimates from the American cables. She said that the estimates were realistic. "The cables have created an impression that the social and political elite in Serbia is bending over backwards to share their own and others' secrets with the Embassy. At the same time, the cables contain information that is contrary to previously sent analyses, which means that, although biased, these reports, intended to inform Washington, were quite balanced", said Smajlovic. (*Danas*, UNS, 31. 08. 2011)

The president of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Sonja Biserko, is of the opinion that the cables are highly professional and that they prove that the Embassy of the USA in Belgrade has good communication with and insight into the atmosphere and attitudes of our political elite. The cables demonstrate a highly visible immaturity of our elite, the lack of awareness about reality and the general interest of the country, says Biserko. (*Danas*, UNS, 31. 08. 2011)

The Serbian Progressive Party is not satisfied with reporting of certain media outlets from Zrenjanin. The vice president of the Zrenjanin branch of the party, Darko Badjok, said at a press conference that many irregularities were being ignored. "We are asking the local media outlets to help us ask the mayor some questions. Absurdly, at the moment, the *Vecernje Novosti* daily newspaper from Belgrade and *Dnevnik* from Novi Sad are publishing more reports about the activities of members of the Progressive Party from Zrenjanin than the local media. Radio Zrenjanin is the only exception", said Badjok. (*Dnevnik*, NUNS, UNS, 25.08.2011)

A former politician and journalist, Miodrag Isakov, said that he was dissatisfied with the freedom of the media in Serbia. "Today in Serbia there are no independent media outlets and there is no critical analysis of the situation in the society. At the same, with few exceptions, there are no independent journalists in Serbia", said Isakov at a press conference held in the Media Center Vojvodina, at which a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the "Prozor" protest was announced. (*Beta*, 31. 08. 2011)

Media-related legal proceedings

The Court of Appeals in Belgrade has annulled the verdict against the priest from the city of Sabac, Bogdan Simanic, who had been convicted because of his threats against a journalist from newspaper *Vecernje Novosti*, and ordered a retrial. The Primary Court in Sabac sentenced Simanic to two years of imprisonment on 21 March. The process before the Court of Appeals was initiated by Simanic's legal representative. (*Tanjug*, *Dnevnik*, *Press*, NUNS, UNS, ANEM, 26.08.2011)

The editor-in-chief of the local newspaper *Borske Novine*, Miroslav Radulovic, will have to prove his innocence three times because of two published articles. The representative of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) for Eastern Serbia, Sasa Trifunovic, said: "The NUNS was asked to establish whether the journalist

from *Borske Novine* adhered to ethical norms and the code of journalism. Most likely, the Court of Honor will issue its opinion".

(Vecernje Novosti, UNS, NUNS, 25.08.11)

The Media Strategy

The Media Department of the Ministry of Culture has completed the Draft Media Strategy and its content will be made public after the first public hearing before the representatives of the National Parliament of Serbia. The Minister of Culture, Predrag Markovic, informed the Prime Minister of Serbia, Mirko Cvetkovic, about the performed activities and asked him to form a committee that would offer comments on the Draft. The Ministry of Culture announced that the committee would include representatives of the Ministry's Media Department, the Ministry of Finance, the Republic Secretariat for Legislation, the Office for EU Integration, European Committee experts, the working group which made the first draft of the Media Strategy, and the Agency for Protection of Competition, which will give its opinion on the completed document. The president of the Independent Journalistic Association of Serbia (NUNS), Vukasin Obradovic, emphasized that none of the five media and journalistic associations (The Journalistic Association of Serbia – UNS, The Independent Journalistic Association of Serbia – NUNS, The Association of Independent Electronic Media – ANEM, The Independent Journalistic Association of Vojvodina – NDNV, and Local Press) has been informed about the content of the document. This creates the impression that the Ministry of Culture is trying to find accomplices for adoption of the Strategy by forming the committee, because it did not have courage to do it on its own, said Obradovic.

(Politika, Vecernje Novosti, 18.08.2011, ASMEDI NEWSLETTER, August, 2011. No.158)

The Draft Media Strategy is not available to journalists

(Politika, ANEM, UNS, 18. 08. 2011)

The proposed Media Strategy prepared by the Ministry of Culture is completely unacceptable to the Independent Journalistic Association of Serbia (NUNS) since it is not based on the principles proposed by the working group of the competent Ministry and media associations, said the president of the Association, Vukasin Obradovic. He added that he was not able to discuss any specific provisions of the proposal because it had been made secret.

(Beta, NUNS, Politika, Press, UNS, ANEM 25.08.2011)

The president of the Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS), Ljiljana Smajlovic, points out that the Strategy proposed by the Ministry of Culture actually "constitutes a proposal not to change anything and to maintain the status quo until 2016". She also emphasizes that such proposal is unacceptable to UNS because it was made in accordance with the interest of political parties. "At the moment, the media situation in Serbia is very bad and only a proposal that envisions major changes in this area would be acceptable to UNS", says Smajlovic.

(Danas, 25.08.2011)

The Minister of Culture, Informing and Information Society, Predrag Markovic, said that a committee of experts would offer its opinion on the Draft Media Strategy until September 5 and that it would be presented to the National Parliament before the Government makes any decision on the strategy.

(Tanjug, ANEM, 24. 08. 2011, Blic, 25.08.2011)

The state will not own any media outlets, and the Media Strategy should offer a procedure and deadlines for ownership transformation, said the vice president of the Democratic Party, Jelena Trivan.

(Novi magazin, Kurir, B92, ANEM, 25.08.2011)

Provisions related to the two most disputed issues covered by the future media strategy – state ownership in the media and establishment of regional public service broadcasters – have not remained unchanged as compared to the proposal made by the work group which had included representatives of the media, claims the source of *Novosti* daily

newspaper who had a chance to read the proposed Media Strategy which is still considered confidential. The finalized version, prepared by the Ministry of Culture, proposes that the *Tanjug* news agency be transformed into a form of public company instead of being privatized. The previously rejected idea about formation of local public service broadcasters was reintroduced into the document, says the unnamed source of *Novosti*.

(Vecernje Novosti, ANEM, 25.08.2011)

The Minister of Culture, Predrag Markovic, says that the Media Strategy was prepared in three steps, as was previously announced. The first proposal was made by representatives of media and journalistic associations and it was followed by public discussion. None of the political parties have made any comments. Instead, proposals were offered by national councils, citizens, and the media who are members of the *Kragujevac Initiative*, said Markovic, and added that "some of the suggestions came from the European Union".

(Fonet, RTV Vojvodina, 31.08.2011)

Public service broadcasters

The editor of the film programme of the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS), Ivan Karl, pointed out that the RTS had refused to broadcast the film "Haircut" ("*Sisanje*"), authored by Stevan Filipovic, because films depicting brutal violence and explicit sex are not appropriate for airing in time slots for domestic films.

(TANJUG, Blic, NUNS, 18.08.2011)

A co-scriptwriter of the film "Haircut" ("*Sisanje*"), Dimitrije Vojnov, said that the RTS officials, after they had read the scenario of the film, were of the opinion that the film was too pessimistic with regard to state institutions and therefore unsuitable for the public service broadcaster. Vojnov added that the film depicted a major social issue and that it had been the most viewed film in 2010 even without strong marketing campaigns.

(Pravda, 19.08.2011)

The film "Haircut" ("*Sisanje*") will be broadcast by TV Prva. Its producer, Mr. Jevic, expects that the film will also be broadcast by the RTS after its TV premiere.

(Dnevnik, 19.08.2011)

Attacks on the media and journalists

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) demands that Russian authorities immediately investigate the attack on the correspondent of the news agency Beta, her husband, journalist Genadiy Sosoev, and their friends, during their vacation in the village of Bogoyavlyenye near Moscow. The journalist of Beta was hospitalized today due to serious injuries. The police refused to begin investigation although the victims had reported the attack. The NUNS supports the demand made by the Beta news agency, delivered to the Ministry of External Affairs of Russia, that the case be immediately investigated and perpetrators punished. The Association will inform all international journalistic associations about the incident and ask them to react and protect their colleagues.

(BETA, NUNS, 26. 08. 2011, Danas, UNS, Tanjug, Dnevnik, Blic, Press, 27.08.2011)

The Embassy of Serbia asked the Ministry of External Affairs of Russia for information about the steps that had been taken in relation to the incident involving the attack on the correspondent of Beta news agency.

(B92, 30.08.2011)

Russian investigators have launched a criminal investigation against attackers on the Beta correspondent from Moscow, Zorana Bojic-Sisojeva, her husband and a group of their friends.

(Beta, NUNS, Radio Slobodna Evropa, 31.08.2011)

Anniversaries

The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the "Prozor" protest on September 2. The longest and largest protest against repression of the freedom of speech in the history of journalism in Serbia took place two decades ago in Novi Sad. The protest was a response of independent, pacifistic journalists to the warmongering propaganda of the state TV and other media controlled by the regime of Slobodan Milosevic. The protest lasted for a month and more than 100 of most prominent politicians, intellectuals, artists and journalists from all parts of the country took part in it. The protest took a form of an alternative to the TV news programme aired by the Channel 1 of Radio-Television Serbia (RTS).

(NDNV, 30.08.2011)

TV Pink versus Croatia

The previously announced session of the Managing Board of TV Pink yesterday was interrupted because the owner of the station, Zeljko Mitrovic, had to go on a trip.

(Danas, 19.08.2011)

TV Pink has postponed making a decision on the boycott of Croatia.

(NUNS, 19.08.2011)

Awards, promotions, courses and contests

A contest for free training for media trainers is open until September 5, 2011. Additional information is available from the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS).

(NUNS, MC, 25.08.2011)

26 years ago, journalists participated in the launch of the "Beer Days". Similarly, this year's event in Zrenjanin began with a cocktail party for journalists organized by the mayor of the city, Mileta Mihajlov, in the city garden. Journalists from the city and the capital of the country were informed about the history of the event, the manufacture of beer in the city, the industry's tradition and cultural heritage.

(Danas, UNS, 26.08.2011)

National Endowment for Democracy announced yesterday that applications for 2012-2013 Reagan Fascell Fellowships are being accepted now until November 1, 2011. "The program enables democracy activists, practitioners, scholars, and journalists from around the world to deepen their understanding of democracy and enhance their ability to promote democratic change." Visit NED's website www.ned.org/fellowships/reagan-fascell-democracy-fellows-program for details.

(IREX, 25.08.2011)

The media audience

During the first six months of the year, the circulation of daily newspapers in Serbia fell by 3.32 percent compared to the same period last year, says ABC Serbia. Out of 141.5 million printed daily newspapers in the first half of 2010, 101.5 million copies were sold, while in this year 137 million copies were printed until June, out of which 98 million were sold. In the first half of this year, an average of 530,000-588,000 copies of daily newspapers are sold every day, while around 28 percent of all printed copies remain unsold. The average number of sold copies of weekly magazines amounts to 430,000-490,000 copies every week, while a third of the total circulation remains unsold. Monthly magazines have the largest number of sold copies which amounts to 700,000-766,000 copies a month, while around

22 percent of total circulation remains unsold.

(Danas, NUNS, UNS, 19.08.2011)

Media transfers

The sexiest Croatian TV host, Nikolina Pisek, will be the main autumn addition to the team of TV Pink, reports *Kurir* daily newspaper. A source close to Nikolina Pisek claims that she will probably have her own entertainment show on TV Pink.

(Kurir, 25.08.2011)

Media transfers have been numerous during the summer. New positions have been offered to many prominent journalists and TV hosts.

(Blic, 28.08.2011)

Nemecek has not (yet) decided to join TV Vojvodina.

(NUNS 25.08.2011)

Media business operations

After the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) began submitting charges against national broadcasters because of violations of the Law on Advertising, only three verdicts have been passed. TV Pink was sentenced to pay two million dinars, while its owner was fined 140,000 dinars. The station made 36 violations during the period related to the verdict. The other two verdicts have been passed against Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) and amounted to 300,000 and 400,000 dinars.

(Danas, ANEM, 24.08.2011, NUNS, 24.08.2011, NUNS, 25.08.2011, Danas, 26.08.2011)

Privatization and state-owned media

"I am afraid that privatization would inevitably result in closure of minority media outlets, having in mind the difficulties these media are facing while trying to survive in the market", says Aniko Muskinja-Hajnrih, the Ombudsman of Vojvodina.

(Dnevnik, 28.08.2011)

Telecom Serbia has become an owner of 51 percent of the company HD WIN and all four Arena Sport channels after a capital increase worth 7.7 million euros. On September 1, the company will offer its users the possibility of watching TV programmes on the internet and mobile phones. The investment constitutes the most significant investment of Telecom Serbia after the purchase of the majority ownership share in Telecom Srpska and founding of the m:tel operator in Montenegro. After this investment, Telecom Serbia has become the first telecommunication provider in Serbia who will have a significant role in production of multimedia content, apart from its role in of such content's distribution.

(Fonet, Beta, Tanjug, Blic, Danas, ANEM, Politika, 27.08.2011, Pregled, UNS, 29.08.2011)

A part of TV Pink might soon become a property of one of the owners of SBB, the investment fund "Mid Europa Partners". The station says that negotiations on the sale amounting to 150 million euros have already begun. "Mid Europa Partners" is an independent private company that invests in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and which is worth around 2.2 billion euros.

(UNS, 31 August 2011)

Aiming to bring urgently needed stability to his "pink empire", to advance its business operations and gain a strong strategic partner, Zeljko Mitrovic has decided to sell a part of TV Pink to the cable provider SBB, owned by George Soros, reports *Alo!* magazine citing unofficial but well-informed sources. Pink Media Group has issued a statement confirming our reports.

(Alo!, 30.08.2011 i 31.08.2011.)

Responding to inaccurate information reported in the media about alleged negotiations between SBB and Zeljko Mitrovic on the purchase of an ownership share in RTV Pink, Tanja Tatomirovic from SBB denied such information.

(Politika, 31.08.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

One of the most renowned contemporary Serbian writers, Dragan Velikic, became an honorary member of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS). During the ceremony of presentation of the honorary membership card, the president of NUNS, Vukasin Obradovic, said that Dragan Velikic had made a significant literary, intellectual and human contribution to democratization of the society and freedom of speech. During the nineties, he was the editor of the publishing section of B92 and his columns were published by *NIN*, *Vreme* and *Danas*.

(NUNS, NDNV, 30. 08. 2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)

Clio publishing company has made a special offer to members of the Journalists' Association of Serbia. Apart from the 20% discount on all publications, members of UNS will have a chance to buy the publications from the Multimedia edition with a 50% discount.

(UNS, 25.08. 2011)

Five students from the Journalistic School of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) will report on the "Olympics for the Elderly" in Sokobanja which will be held at the end of September. They will comprise the Press Center of the Olympics and engage in multimedia reporting.

(UNS, 26.08. 2011)

The Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL)

The Protocol on Implementation of the Rulebook on the Transfer of Phone Numbers in Public Telecommunication Networks was signed in the premises of the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL). Users can find information on possible transfer of certain numbers in other mobile networks at the internet address www.prenesibroj.rs using application developed by RATEL.

(Ratel 30.08.2011)

The Nes Communications company announced today that it has been issued a license by the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) to offer telephone services via the internet after full liberalization of the market and introduction of the possibility of issuing phone numbers after January 1, 2012. According to information available on the web site of RATEL www.ratel.rs, 48 companies in Serbia have been licensed to offer voice services via the internet, including Nes Communications.

(Beta, NDNV, 19. 08.2011)

The South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO)

SEEMO Supports Democratic and Transparent Debate on New Media Strategy in Serbia.

(SEEMO, 21.08.2011)

What's new in the media

In cooperation with the project *Naslovi internet kliping (Headlines Internet Clippings)* www.naslovi.net/kliping, Media Center now offers a new service that includes internet monitoring on more than 90 of the most visited domestic web sites www.naslovi.net/izvor. Public presence necessarily includes presence on the internet. Internet clipping offers a possibility to monitor changes in the real time and perceive the picture formed by the public. Regardless of whether the user is an organization, company, individual or a PR agency, internet clipping allows the client to receive the full text of the posting and a link to the article not later than 15 minutes after its publication. This service is a powerful tool for PR agencies and individuals in companies or organizations which can ensure that they are timely informed about important postings on the internet and that they can properly respond to them. Additional information, consultations, presentation of the service or activation of the trial period: Vesna Opavsky, webmaster@mc.rs, 063 408 094
(MC, 25.08.2011)

Web Fest .ME 2011 is a festival dedicated to promotion of web content and high-quality activities on the global digital network originating from the region. The festival is comprised of two main parts – the competition for the best web site/web project and the conference. Organizers of the festival are: DoMEn, registrar for the .ME domain; HUGE Media, a digital marketing agency; ICON Creative, a creative studio; and AGENA, an IT company. Additional information about the festival is available at the address: www.webfest.me.
(MC, 30.08.2011)

A series of lectures and musical programs "*Mediokratija*" will be held between September 3 and October 15, 2011 in the Youth Center in Kragujevac and the *Soda* club with two weeks of pause between each event. The project aims to raise awareness of the continuity of development of media forms during the nineties and later. It was realized with assistance from the *Centrifuga* program and Erste Bank, media support from Radio-Television Kragujevac, the association of citizens *Vido*, the Youth Center from Kragujevac and the *Sodaclub*, and the Media Archeology Team from Belgrade which has donated its archive.
(Lokal press, 30.08.2011)

Google TV, a service offering television programme via the internet, could be available in Europe at the beginning of the next year.
(Danas, UNS, 30.08.2011)

New programme schedule of B92

The rating of TV B92 has been doubled since April, when the new programme schedule was launched, said to *Blic* daily the director of the station's news programme, Jelena Kosanic Podunavac. She has also announced a new approach to political programmes.
(Blic, 31.08.2011)

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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

The Media News Bulletin is edited by Marin and Goran Cetinic who can be contacted at goran.cetinic@gmail.com

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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