



# MEDIA NEWS BULLETIN

biweekly

Issue No. 12

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## Media Institutions & Activities

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## Media Innovations

New Media Summit to be held at the end of September in Belgrade – Power of social networks is growing – Special edition of *Kurir* in English language – TV Zona introduces 20 new author shows in its programme – Ten advices to editors for successful integration of social and traditional media

### The media situation in Serbia

The Protector of Citizens, Sasa Jankovic, expressed his concern over the pressure that was being exerted on representatives of certain civil society organizations in Novi Pazar via local media outlets that are considered to be under the influence of a religious community and its leader. Tanjug reports that the ombudsman also pointed out the unacceptability of media reporting that is based on national and religious exclusion, citing the recent example of an article published by the *Sandzak* magazine which described inter-ethnic marriages as "mistakes".

(Politika, NUNS, UNS, 14.09.2011)

### The state and the media

During the last year, state assistance to the media sector in Serbia amounted to around 21 million euros, while this year the sum of around 25 million euros has been allocated for the same purpose, says the analysis of the media situation which is a part of the Draft Media Strategy, according to *Danas*. In 2011, the sums of 5 and 3.5 million euros were allocated at the national level and at the level of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, respectively. At the level of local self-governments, approximately 16.5 million euros was allocated for the purpose.

(Danas, NUNS, UNS, 12.09.2011)

In his interview to the *Monitor* newspaper, professor Rade Veljanovski says: "The idea about the preparation of the media strategy in Serbia was used as a smokescreen two years ago, when the government caused the fiasco with the Law on Amendments to the Law on Public Informing. The document, which had contained several provisions that violated the standards and practice of the democratic world, as well as the Constitution of Serbia, was judged unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court a year later. Since this attempt to modify legislation showed the government in a very bad light, the effort was launched to adopt the strategy, proving once again that the government in Serbia does not have a correct relationship towards the development of the media system. The steps taken by the government prove the lack of the desire to change the *status quo*."

(NUNS 06.09.2011)

Representatives of the ruling majority in the Assembly of the Municipality of Ljig decided at the last session of the Assembly to cancel live TV airing of its sessions. The president of the Assembly, Miodrag Starcevic Mikela, explained the move by pointing out that local elections were approaching and that the broadcasts could have been used for political campaigning.

(Pravda, UNS, NUNS, ANEM 08.09.2011)

### Public service broadcasters

Around 8,000 candidates applied for jobs after the announcement of a public contest for employment of around 100 young experts by Radio-Television Serbia, which amounts to around 80 candidates per work position. The contest ends in two weeks.

(Danas, 01.09.2011)

The Administrative Court has adopted the complaint filed by the director of Radio-Television of Serbia. He complained against the warning issued to him by the Anti-Corruption Agency because of his failure to submit a report on personal property.

(Beta, NUNS, 07.09.2011, Politika, UNS, 08.09.2011)

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

"It is not true that I was scared and went to the police – I have not visited the police at all! I was not concerned about my safety and I was not afraid that the women who was sending me messages might hurt me!" - writes Tatjana

Vojtehovski, a renowned TV host and the PR manager of the Pink Media Group, in her letter sent to the *Kurir* newspaper after it had published an article entitled "A Lesbian Stalks Tanja".  
(Kurir, 03.09.2011)

Journalists from local media outlets in Leskovac left the press conference – held in the premises of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) in the local assembly – protesting the criticism of the editorial policy of *JP Radio Leskovac* expressed by the representative Miodrag Jovanovic. The journalists from Leskovac told the *Blic* newspaper that they had been targeted by unsubstantiated criticism of almost all of the political parties in Leskovac, which threatened professionalism of the media and objectivity of reporting and advertising.  
(Blic, NUNS, 02.09.2011)

Criminal charges were filed against Maja Uzelac, the author of the popular show "Cultural Knockout" aired by TV B92, because she incited violence on the social network *Twitter*. She posted the following sentence: "The people who run *Apartman* (a club in Belgrade) should be beat hard and long". She is charged with threat to security. An expert for web-based business, Dragan Varagic, says that the Internet is a public place where everything is easily visible and verifiable, and that people are unaware of the fact that everything that is posted on social networks like Facebook or Tweeter is available to everyone.  
(Press Online, Press, NUNS, 09.09.2011)

A statement issued by the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) says that the police overreacted and acted imprudently and wrongly. The statement says that the police had "incorrectly interpreted a lucid comment", and adds: "On the other side, it remains unknown whether the police has reacted to direct and unambiguous threats posted on various blogs and social networks against the gay community, the Roma and other minorities".  
(Beta, Politika, NUNS, Pravda, 09.09.2011)

Seven journalists, editors and media employees, against whom legal proceedings had been initiated, have received free legal assistance within the project launched by the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS).  
(NUNS, Politika, UNS, 07.09. 2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) strongly condemns the threats made by the president of the Football Club Vojvodina, Ratko Butorovic, against the editor-in-chief of the web site *Napred Vosa*, Miroslav Gajinov.  
(Politika, UNS, 10.09.2011)

Six years have passed since the brutal beating of the correspondent of *Novosti* newspaper from Loznica, Vladimir Mitric, while the legal process against L. T., a former police officer from Belgrade, has not been completed yet. In the meantime, the journalist has been living and working under permanent police protection. Organizers of the brutal attack have not been identified. According to medical experts, the attack on Mitric was a murder attempt, although it was legally characterized as infliction of serious physical injuries.  
(Tanjug, Politika, Večernje Novosti, NUNS, 13.09.2011)

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

General Ratko Mladic, who is held in prison in Scheveningen, might be of great assistance in the investigation of the murder of journalist Dada Vujasinovic, committed in 1994, and identification of the murderers and organizers who were behind the crime, former members of intelligence from the Republic of Srpska claimed to the *Novosti* newspaper. At the time, general Mladic gave Dada Vujasinovic documents about the criminal activities of some of the highest-ranking members of the government of the Republic of Srpska.  
(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 13.09.2011)

### **The Media Strategy**

The Minister of Culture, Informing and Information Society of Serbia, Predrag Markovic, announced that in a week a modified version of the Media Strategy would be presented, and that it would contain all the desired and requested changes. He pointed out that not a single political party was involved in its preparation.

(Dnevnik, NUNS, 02.09.2011)

A journalist for the *Republika* newspaper, Olivija Rusovac, writes: "The government in Serbia does not perceive the media as a public good, and instead considers it a private and party property, viewing the political and financial pressure at the media as a logical consequence of being in power. A single phone call from a politician's cabinet is sufficient for a journalist to lose his/her job. If a media outlet is considered to have acted 'traitorously', its survival in the market and access to advertisers become impossible. Disastrous position of the media and journalists should be improved by the announced media strategy. However, the initial optimism has dwindled. One of the crucial demands was the withdrawal of the state from media ownership. The government is not willing to do that. Domestic tycoons and businessmen rule the media scene, while their political and financial interests have become the most important criteria in journalism. The announced media strategy and change in legislation will prove whether the laws apply to everyone or whether the present situation would continue under a different name."

(Republika, NUNS 06.09.2011)

The Media Strategy envisions formation of six public service broadcasters in Serbia. The document says that the obligations and functions of the public service broadcaster are realized by "public service broadcasters at the republic, provincial and regional levels", and that "necessary working conditions and stable sources of financing of public service broadcasters will be provided in the Republic of Serbia", reports *Danas*. The Strategy also envisions that the state cannot own media outlets. The Action Plan specifies that the state must withdraw from media ownership "not later than 24 months after the establishment of the legal basis".

(Danas, NUNS, 10.09.2011)

Serbia will gain six regional public service broadcasters until 2013: in Belgrade, Kragujevac, Nis, Novi Pazar, Zajecar and Uzice, *Novosti* reports. Solution to the status of the news agency *Tanjug* was one of the most disputed issues. The first version of the document says: "The public company *Tanjug* must be privatized". According to the new version of the Strategy as well, the ownership structure of *Tanjug* is to be transformed, but privatization is not mentioned anywhere, which means that the agency might remain a public company. Formation of local public service broadcasters puts into disadvantage all local media outlets that have been privatized.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 13.09.2011)

The Minister of Culture, Informing and Information Society, Predrag Markovic, announced that the Draft Media Strategy would be presented to members of the National Parliament of Serbia on Tuesday, September 13.

(Press, 11.09.2011)

Journalistic organizations – the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV), and media associations – the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM), Local Press and the Media Association, consider the section of the Draft Media Strategy that is related to regional public service broadcasters completely unacceptable and practically unsustainable. The media sector demands that this section of the Draft Media Strategy be completely revoked and that the legal regulations related to public service broadcasters be thoroughly redefined. The media sector demands that all imprecise definitions be removed from the final version of the Media Strategy, since they would allow subsequent ambiguous interpretations by the government and differing legal procedures, mostly with regard to media ownership and withdrawal of the state from media ownership. Journalistic organizations and media associations are also dissatisfied with the fact that, according to the proposed Strategy, National Councils of National Minorities will be allowed to establish media outlets – and not only print media outlets.

(Fonet, NUNS, 14.09.2011)

## Minority media

National councils of national minorities should remain founders of print media outlets in minority languages, but their influence on the editorial policy should be reduced as much as possible, says the open letter to the Minister, Predrag Markovic, signed by nine Hungarian intellectuals. As it stands, the national councils make decisions regarding editorial policy, they appoint editors-in-chief, and at the same time disregard their obligation in accordance with the Law on Information: to maintain a free and independent editorial policy – says media expert, Zuzana Serences. "This is the taxpayers' money at work. All the citizens are paying for the operating expenses of media outlets in minority languages, but the political elites in national councils treat this media as their own property", writes Serences. The letter was signed by Laslo Vogel, Zuzana Serences, Alpar Losonc, Antal Bozoki, Laslo Gerold, Eva Karkai-Vas, Bela Garai, Deze Ereg and Caba Presburger.

(Beta, NDNV, 07.09. 2011, Dnevnik, NUNS, 08.09.2011, Politika, NUNS, 09.09.2011)

### Appraisals, awards, training courses and contests

The role of the media as the most significant channel of political communication is crucial in forming of the image of political candidates and political parties, writes Sinisa Atlagic in an opinion piece published by *Politika* daily newspaper. Researchers of electoral behavior have found out that an increased role of the media in creation of the image of candidates or parties results in greater influence of this factor in voters' decisions. Those who have access to scenarios of spin-doctors in the domestic political scene are of the opinion that the current president, Boris Tadic, has been most successful. His marketing team has succeeded in creating and "selling" in the political market a celebrity politician with an excellent TV appearance.

(Politika, NUNS, 14.09.2011)

A film produced by Radio-Television Vojvodina has been selected for the Kitovras Film Festival.

(NUNS 07.09.2011)

The deadline for submission of journalistic articles for the contest for the best media piece on local self-government expires on Thursday, September 15, 2011. The contest is organized by the Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities within the project "Strengthening Local Self-Government in Serbia, Phase 2".

(NDNV, 02.09.2011)

The UNICEF Office in Serbia has announced a contest for annual award for media reporting on children and children's rights, with a focus on promotion of social inclusion of deprived children in Serbia. The awards are given for the best report on television, radio and the print media in the territory of the Republic of Serbia between January 1 and November 1, 2011. The deadline for submission of works is November 5, 2011.

(MC, 12.09.2011)

The management of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) has decided to name the newly established award for humane journalism after journalist and humanitarian, Djoko Vjestica – announced the UNS. The award will be presented each year on October 26 to colleagues whose articles and reports encourage individuals and the public to act humanely, who criticize socially irresponsible behaviour in the society, and promote solidarity.

(Tanjug, Blic, Politika, Alo!, Press, UNS, 14.09.2011)

### Media transfers

The transfer of Slavko Beleslin from TV Pink to B92 is the last in the series of transfers that have made waves in the Serbian media scene. However, the winner in the "war" for TV hosts before the beginning of the autumn programme schedule is TV Prva – the station has attracted the largest number of other stations' personnel, while managing to retain all its staff.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, 13.09.2011)

### Anniversaries

*Prozor* ("The Window"), an alternative to TV news of the Channel 1 of Radio-Television Serbia (RTS), whose anniversary was marked on September 2, is still remembered by many citizens of Novi Sad as the first step in the fight against oppression of the freedom of expression – says the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV). Almost all of the original participants have remained independent intellectuals or university professors, or took part in creation of the democratic society. Almost all of the political parties and non-governmental organizations in Novi Sad have evolved from *Prozor*.

(Danas, ANEM, 01.09.2011)

The twentieth anniversary of *Prozor* was celebrated at the balcony of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) at 19.30. The longest and largest protest in the history of Serbian journalism against the oppression of the freedom of expression began exactly two decades ago.

(Dnevnik, 03.09.2011, NDNV, 05.09.2011)

On the occasion of its twentieth birthday, Radio Kikinda organizes a free concert for all citizens at the main city square. Radio Kikinda began broadcasting its programme on September 12, 1991 at 14.00. (Dnevnik, NUNS, ANEM, 10.09.2011)

Radio Boom 93 has been broadcasting its programme since September 6, 1992. Since its inception, the station has been opposed to warmongering politics, disregard for and violation of human rights, theft and criminalization of Serbia, earning it several closures during the Milosevic's regime.

(Radio Boom 93, ANEM, 06.09.2011)

### Media business operations

The national code of advertising is expected to be adopted in Serbia in the first half of the next year, after which a self-regulatory body will be formed to monitor advertising and the implementation of the code – says the executive director of the Serbian branch of the International Advertising Association (IAA), Jelena Ivanovic.

(Danas, NUNS, 03.09.2011)

TV B92 has informed the cable operators in Montenegro that they will not be allowed to broadcast its programme in the future because of issues with violation of paid royalties. In this way, after the withdrawal of Croatian TV stations RTL and Nova, as well as Serbian TV stations Prva and B92, the attractiveness of cable programmes in Montenegro will be significantly reduced.

(www.bizlife, NUNS, 01.09.2011)

Pirated programme is aired by 56 radio and TV stations in Serbia. Their closure falls under the competence of the inspection department of the Ministry of Culture, Informing and Information Society, which is planned to begin operations on September 19, after numerous announcements. The director of the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL), Milan Jankovic, said that the number of unlicensed radio stations had increased during the recent months.

(Tanjug, Pravda, Blic, NUNS, 13.09.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) has already informed the local public several times about the illegal broadcasters who are seriously jeopardizing the position of the media and the media market. The last specific protest was broadcast by TV SANTOS from Zrenjanjin against a long-time pirate station, KTV television. The company DOO "SANTOS-COMMERCE" has paid more than 18,700,00.00 dinars to the state and local budgets between 2008 and 2011; on the other hand, the pirate station, KTV, has not paid any of these obligations and constitutes unfair competition.

(NDNV, 13.09. 2011)

### Privatization and the state media

The owner of TV Pink, Zeljko Mitrovic, has agreed to sell a minority share in his media company to the largest European investment fund, Mid Europa Partners, controlled by the billionaire George Soros, reports *Kurir* daily newspaper. "Not true", said Mitrovic in a short message to *Kurir*.

(Kurir, 03.09.2011)

Zeljko Mitrovic said that there were many parties interested in increasing the capital of his company, after which its stocks would be sold in the London stock market. At the moment, negotiations are ongoing with the fund "Mid Europa Partners" which owns a share in the cable provider SBB. The price of the fund's entry in TV Pink would be 150 million euros.

(Politika, NUNS, 10.09.2011, Kurir, Politika, 11.09.2011, UNS, 12.09.2011)

Pink International Company owns 14 companies, out of which 10 are in Serbia and 4 in other countries of the region (Podgorica, Sarajevo, Ljubljana and Skoplje). The total debt of all companies amounts to 14.9 billion dinars as of the last year, i.e. slightly less than 150 million euros. All of the real estate is under mortgage, claims economist Miodrag K. Skulic, who is preparing a book about the financial position of the media. The debt in the amount of nearly 150 million euros is 2.2 times larger than the total annual revenue of Pink.

(Politika, NUNS, 10.09.2011)



Radio-Television Vranje will be removed from the city budget on January 1 next year at the latest, and will have to be privatized in the period of two years, writes *Pravda* daily newspaper.  
(UNS, ANEM, 12.09.2011)

TV Plana began broadcasting on the channel 34 in the KDS network. The station operates within the privatized Radio-Television Plana and airs experimental music programme with numerous news covering the activities of the local self-government, culture and sports. The director, Dragana Radosavljevic, expects the programme to be expanded after the introduction of the youth editorial office and greater availability to viewers through cable networks and on the internet.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 14.09.11)

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

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) has joined the campaign "*Bitka za bebe*" ("The Battle for Babies") and invites all its members and all media outlets to assist in realization of the campaign. "The Battle for Babies" aims to solve the problems of technologically obsolete incubators in maternity hospitals or the lack of incubators in health care institutions.

(Beta, NUNS, Danas, 05.09.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) has provided free legal assistance to seven journalists, editors and media employees within the Free Legal Assistance project. At the moment, NUNS is representing the daily newspaper *Danas* in several legal cases. More information about the Free Legal Assistance is available at the NUNS web site [www.nuns.rs/pravni\\_saveti](http://www.nuns.rs/pravni_saveti).

(NUNS, 06.09.2011, Politika 07.09.2011)

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

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) has begun a reconstruction of the sixth floor of the Journalists' Building of Serbia. The works include replacement of the worn-out wooden windows with aluminium, replacement of floor tiles, ceilings and electrical wiring, as well as reconstruction of the central heating system.

(UNS, 09.09.2011)

Two days ago, the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) created a Facebook page. The Association will also inform the public about its activities via the Twitter network. The UNS will regularly update these pages, answer to questions and accept proposals sent by its Facebook friends and Twitter followers.

(UNS, 14.09.2011)

### Trade unions

Journalists from the weekly magazine *Svetlost* from Kragujevac have been striking for a year. Recently, they sued their company because of unpaid salaries and contributions, but instead of receiving their money they are now struggling to pay court expenses. The president of the Journalists' Union of Serbia, Dragana Cabarkapa, says that *Svetlost* is one of the most dramatic examples of difficult position of journalists which proves that there can be no freedom of journalists in Serbia if they cannot receive their salaries for months. "We demand that systemic laws be changed so that owners must guarantee payment of salaries with their property", says Cabarkapa. The Journalists' Union will pay the court expenses in order to prevent confiscation of property of the journalists.

(Blic, Pravda, NUNS, 10.09.2011)

### The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)

Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) expects a reaction and suspension of a member of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Gordana Susa, because of, in his words, inadequate comments about the party. "Her appearance on TV, during which she spoke about the SNS with contempt and disdain, has compromised her position in the body that regulates broadcasters", says a statement issued by the SNS. The party points out that the credibility of all members of the Council should be reconsidered and that SNS is prepared to initiate the procedure for removal of all members from their positions.

(Kurir, UNS, 13.09.2011)

### The Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL)

The Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) and three mobile operators have signed the Protocol on Transferability of Numbers in Public Mobile Telecommunication Networks. Users can verify whether a number has been transferred to another mobile network by visiting the web address [www.prenesibroj.rs](http://www.prenesibroj.rs) using an application developed by RATEL.

(RATEL, 30.08.2011)

Unauthorized usage of radio frequencies causes economic inequality in the market of broadcasting services, hinders the activities of legal users of the radio spectrum and jeopardizes the security of air traffic, as well as the activities of other crucial services that use this channel of communication. In accordance with its legal authority, the Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) has taken, and will continue to take, appropriate measures to prevent the operations of such FM and TV stations. The Agency has initiated appropriate procedures to punish the owners of these stations. The list of 56 FM and TV stations which are using radio frequencies without authorization is posted on the web page of RATEL.

(RATEL, 09.09.2011)

The first regional summit dedicated to the new media, "New Media Summit", will be held in Belgrade on September 28 with participation of experts in digital media and representatives of state institutions of Serbia, countries of the region and the European Union.

(NDNV, 02.09.2011, Blic, Pravda, 03.09.2011, Press, NUNS, 05.09.2011)

The fourth Serbian MobileMonday will take place on September 12 at 18.00 in the Cultural Center *Gradin* Belgrade (4 Brace Krsmanovica Street). The event will be dedicated to tablets that are available from domestic providers and the development of applications for them.

(UNS, 09.09.2011)

Dr Oliver Subotic emphasized the significance of social networks at the event entitled "The Rising Power of Social Networks" that was recently organized in the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia. "Until now, the political, military and economic power have been dominant in the society. Social networks are now becoming the fourth pillar of power that brings citizens together and offers a chance to achieve a certain balance of power", believes Subotic.

(Press, NUNS, 09.09.2011)

A special issue of *Kurir* daily newspaper in English language was distributed to participants of the Serbia-EU Forum.

(Kurir, 10.09.2011)

The regional TV Zona introduces a new programme schedule on September 15 with no less than 20 author shows. "The programme content will cover all segments of life in the city of Nis and its surroundings. We will emphasize the news programme, which we have been very proud of, since we are one of the best-rated TV stations in the region. We will also include contact programmes, which have also achieved excellent ratings" – says Gordana Bjeletic, the editor-in-chief.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 14.09.11)

Taking into account the fact that many traditional media outlets do not use the possibilities offered by social media, and that often treat them with disregard, journalist and expert for new media strategies, *David Brewer*, offers ten advices for integration of social and traditional media at his web site [www.mediahelpingmedia.org](http://www.mediahelpingmedia.org). *Brewer* points out five mistakes of the traditional media which should be avoided during integration of social media, as well as five things that should be done. "Have a look at how the leading media outlets have implemented their presence on Facebook and other social networks and web sites (CNN, BBC News, Wall Street Journal)...", advices *Brewer*.

(Media Center Sarajevo, MediaHelpingMedia.org, NUNS, 08.09.2011)

### Issue No. 12

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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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