



Media Environment

Anti-Corruption Council presents report on pressure and control over the media – Reactions to the Council's report – Interview with the president of Anti-Corruption Council Verica Barac – Viewers want more educational and documentary programme – Government prepares amendments to the Law on Commissioner for Information and Ombudsman – Strong connections between the state and PR agencies, says Council's report – RTS sues 140,000 citizens for unpaid TV fee – Widespread series of attacks, pressure and threats against journalists: Tutin, Sabac, Beograd, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Vranje, Kragujevac, Nis – Democratic Party apologizes to *Juzne Vesti* – Printing company *Dnevnik* strikes again – Government adopts the Media Strategy – EU comments on the Media Strategy – After New Year the government will be allowed to fund projects but not the media – Most disputed segment of the Strategy: six proposed public service broadcasters – Numerous reactions to media policy of national minorities' councils – President of the MB of RTV resigns in protest against institutionalization of control of minorities' councils over the media – The resignation is scandalous, says the Hungarian National Council – UNS requests judgment on constitutionality of the Law on National Minorities and a delayed decision by RRA

Professionalism in the Media

NUNS and NDNV: More professional reporting on interethnic conflicts is required – False news about Nobel Prize spreads in the media – Press Council holds its first session – Awards, contests and training courses for journalists – EBART documentation offered by the world's largest library – Media consulting with Slovaks – Russian state TV attacks *Danas* over articles on Russian influence in Serbia – Number of cable TV users grows – Circulation of all newspapers in Serbia drops – Several Serbian regions suffer from weak TV signal – TV Ultra is the best-rated children's TV station – Anniversaries of *Pobeda*, *Utisak Nedelje*, *Enterijer* magazine – Jurij Gustincic's anniversary

Media Economy

Serbian state institutions allocate money for advertising in the media – Problems with media financing from local sources – Owner of TV Piroć transfers the ownership over the station back to Privatization Agency – Radio Sombor is in trouble – Does Springer jeopardize the competition in the Serbian media market?

Media Institutions & Activities

NUNS demands more professional reporting – UNS requests explanation from the Ministry of Defense – RRA issues first 12 licenses to cable broadcasters – SEEMO protests against the Tutin case and the escalation of control over Hungarian minority media – NDNV and the President of Assembly of Vojvodina want less sensationalism in reporting about interethnic incidents

Media Innovations

Radio Belgrade has a new programme schedule – Mobile devices require specialized news – *Pescanik* is on the air again – Serbian Post Office announces contest for strategic partner for digital TV – Digitalization is delayed because of numerous unsolved problems

The media situation in Serbia

The Anti-Corruption Council has presented its Report on Pressure and Control over the Media in Serbia which states that the media is fully controlled. "While this situation lasts it is impossible to fight against corruption or to accomplish any democratic procedure" – says the president of the Council, Verica Barac. The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia, Vukasin Obradovic, points out that "it will be interesting to see how the media will report on this event".

(Kurir, 30.09.2011)

Current estimates of the media situation in Serbia

In his article published by the MC Newsletter, Zlatoje Martinov writes: "The Report on Pressure and Control over the Media in Serbia by the Anti-Corruption Council claims that the media has ceased to be independent long time ago, that it is being pressured by various centers of political power, and that citizens do not have access to complete and unbiased information. Insufficient transparency of ownership and strong connections between the political elite and tycoons' speculative capital are the main reasons behind the existing control over the media and the lack of journalistic freedom. The political elite in Serbia has been successful in using money from the state budget to win over certain media outlets, while media editors have often been made aware that that they could expect to be later appointed as ambassadors in exchange for their obedience, or punished by being taken off the list of recipients of state budget money if they did not bow to demands. At the same time, marketing agencies (often owned by politicians!) that control the advertising market keep buying the advertising space in the media as long as their reporting is in line with certain policy (at the local or national level). The public service broadcaster (RTS) has practically become the mouthpiece of the ruling coalition. During the presentation of the report, the conference hall in the Media Center was full of journalists, including TV crews from various TV stations. However, after the presentation of the report, its media coverage was minimal. Many of the media outlets did not even register it. This fact was the best – although discouragingly sad – proof that the Anti-Corruption Council's report had accurately described our media scene.

(MC Newsletter, 07.10.2011)

Interview with Verica Barac, published last week by daily newspaper *Danas*, is one of the rare attempts to break the media silence about the situation in the Serbian media and Serbia journalism, writes Slobodan Jerkovic. The issue is still a taboo in the political circles, in the public and in the media. Why is the issue of the media strategy strongly related to professional dignity and the survival of the media? Because all of the previous media strategies have been only attempts to achieve control over the media scene instead of promoting democracy.

(Danas, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

TV news in Serbia should focus less on the activities of politicians – this is the opinion of more than 61% of citizens, while 63% of them considers that news programmes should contain more positive examples from the society. More than three quarters of interviewees believe that the domestic media is manipulative and removed from reality – these are the conclusions of the research entitled "The Old and New Media and Media Dependence of the Audience". The research was conducted by the Center for the Digital Media "Pozitiv" using a sample of 2,208 interviewees. Around 64 percent of the interviewees claimed that they use the media more often than 10 years ago. At the same time, 65.9% of them wanted more educational programmes; 34.3% expressed desire for more documentary programmes; 25.4% of the interviewees wanted more news; and 6.5% wished to see more entertainment.

(Danas, NUNS, UNS, 10.10.2011, Tanjug, RTV, NUNS, 11.10.2011)

The state and the media

The Minister of Human and Minority Rights, State Administration and Local Self-Government, Milan Markovic, said that he expected the amendments to the Law on the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and

Protection of Personal Data and the Protector of Citizens to be adopted by the end of the year. The amendments are intended to strengthen these institutions.
(Tanjug, Politika, 29.09.2011)

During the last three years, the state institutions have allocated at least 2.5 million euros for services of public relations agencies and private production companies, says the report issued by the Anti-Corruption Council. The report emphasized that agencies, which are often owned by senior officials from political parties or persons closely related to them, have been dominating the advertising market for years. The agencies purchase the advertising space from the media and sell it to their clients, i.e. individual buyers, at much higher prices.
(Danas, 01.10.2011)

"Reaction of the public after the presentation of the Report on Pressure and Control Over the Media in Serbia fully supports the claims contained in the Report. The media has reached a consensus not to comment on the Report at all. The Report has been delivered to the Government and the Ministry of Culture and we had invited representatives of the Parliamentary Committee for Information, the Minister of Culture and the State Secretary for the Media to attend the presentation of the Report, but no one has attended the event and there have been no media reports about it", says the President of the Anti-Corruption Council, Verica Barac.
(Danas, 06.10.2011)

Public service broadcasters

The government wields considerable influence via the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) which, instead of being a public service broadcaster serving the citizens, functions as a tool of political structures and production companies that are closely connected to ruling political parties and members of the Managing Board of the RTS. The public interest is not being realized in this way, since the public service broadcaster is not fulfilling its obligations and is in violation of the Law on Broadcasting, says the Report on Pressure and Control Over the Media in Serbia authored by the Anti-Corruption Council.
(Danas, 30.09.2011)

Since the beginning of the year, 140,000 citizens who have not paid their TV fees have been covered by measures aimed at collection of due payments. Most of them have been issued warnings or last warnings before initiation of legal proceedings.
(Danas, 08.10.2011)

Attacks, threats and legal proceedings against journalists; media-related trials

Marko Jakovljevic (25) was arrested in the city of Sabac after he had physically attacked journalist Hanibal Kovac in the premises of the Public Payments Administration. The suspected attacker assaulted the journalist verbally and threatened to kill him. The attacker works as a personal body guard of the person that had been mentioned several times in Kovac's reports.
(Beta, Blic, Alo!, Press, Politika, Kurir, Večernje Novosti, Pravda, Dnevnik, 06.10.2011)

Legal representatives of Luka Bojovic, who has been charged with organization of the unsuccessful assassination of Andrija Draskovic, said to journalists that "lawsuits have been filed against several media outlets". The lawyers criticized the media "who have violated the assumption of innocence of Luka Bojovic using unnamed police sources".
(Press, 06.10.2011)

The court session in the Primary Court in Novi Sad related to the lawsuit filed in 2003 by journalist Vladimir Jesic against the president of the political party New Serbia, Velimir Ilic, was rescheduled again. Similarly to all previous court sessions, Velimir Ilic did not appear in court yesterday. Vladimir Jesic sued Ilic because he kicked him and tried to physically attack him during an interview made for TV Apolo from Novi Sad in 2003.
(Dnevnik, 06.10.2011)

Journalists and correspondents from Belgrade and Novi Sad media outlets have announced their intention to protest to the Ministry of Justice and the Republic Public Prosecutor against the unsatisfactory attitude of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Zrenjanin toward the media during the last several months.

(Večernje Novosti, Dnevnik, 05.10.2011)

SBB informed TV Kanal 9 from Novi Sad that it had complied with the temporary order of the Commercial Court in Novi Sad dated 26 September to continue broadcasting the TV station's programme. The cable operator SBB previously removed TV Kanal 9 from their packages on 5 July 2011.

(UNS, 30.09.2011)

On Thursday afternoon, one of the officials from the City Branch of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) from Vranje called a journalist from the same city, Vojkan Ristic, and told him that he was "not competent to report on the 'Kolubara case'", says the Vranje Press agency. The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) have issued their own statements about the case.

(Juzne vesti, Vranje press, 07.10.2011, Pravda, 08.10.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) strongly condemns the threats by a member of the City Branch of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) in Vranje against journalist Vojkan Ristic. The member of the City Branch of DSS, who is well known to Ristic, called the journalist over the phone and threatened him because of the article about arrests in *RK Kolubara* published by the *Vranje Press* portal. UNS demands that the authorities ensure adequate working conditions for journalists and to punish those who threaten them.

(UNS, 07.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) expects that the police from Vranje will take legal measures against the member of the Democratic Party of Serbia from Vranje who threatened the editor of the web portal www.vranjepres.info because of the articles about the "Kolubara affair".

(Kurir, 08.10.2011, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

Former director of JIP TV Valjevo, Zivorad Jankovic, has been sentenced by the Primary Court in Valjevo for libel in a process initiated by a former journalist from the same media company. The first-degree verdict obliges Jankovic to pay a fine in the amount of 20.000 dinars, as well as court expenses, because of his claims that Predrag Lucic had misallocated money from the budget.

Employees of the weekly magazine from Kragujevac, *Svetlost*, have received court warnings. If they fail to pay high court fees related to their lawsuit against the media owner – who has not paid them their salaries for more than a year – their personal property will be confiscated. The employees have been trying – unsuccessfully – to realize their right to receive salary for performed work for more than seven months. They have stopped going to work, but the magazine still features their names.

(Danas, UNS, NUNS, 12.10.2011)

The Court of Appeal in Belgrade passed a verdict in favor of the newspaper "*Pirotske Novine*" which had sued the Municipality of Pirot for failure to honor contractual obligations. The municipality is obliged to pay the sum of 500,000 dinars, which includes debt and interest. The dispute arised in 2009, when the municipality stopped paying its obligations in accordance with the previously concluded contract, justifying its move by the fact that the newspaper "published critical reports about the activities of the local government". "*Pirotske Novine*" is the only newspaper in the Pirotski District that has been privately-owned since its inception and which has refused to serve the local government", say the newspaper's employees.

(Juzne vesti 12.10.2011)

The web portal *Juzne Vesti*, located in Nis, informed the Anti-Corruption Agency and professional journalistic associations about the insults delivered against them by Milan Ogrizovic, a deputy director of the city heating plant in Nis and a high-ranking official in the Democratic Party, because of their question about the beginning of the heating

season in Nis.

(Danas, UNS, Juzne vesti, 11.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) has publicly criticized the Utilities Administration and the management of the Public Company Heating Plant Nis, which have been ignoring for several days journalists' questions about the beginning of the heating season.

(Fonet, Juzne vesti, NUNS, 11.10.2011)

The central office of the Democratic Party from Belgrade apologized for "impermissible" behavior of their official, who is the director of the heating plant in Nis.

(Juzne vesti 12.10.2011)

The case of *Dnevnik*

Due to failure to honor the agreement reached during the meeting between representatives of striking workers from the Printing Company *Dnevnik Holding* and provincial secretaries for labor, culture and informing, the strikers have decided to again organize protest walks in front of the building of the Government of Vojvodina. The strike began in mid-summer and since its beginning the newspaper *Dnevnik* has been printed by *Forum* instead of *Holding*.

(Dnevnik, Danas, UNS, NUNS, 12.10.2011)

The Media Strategy

The Government of Serbia held a conference-call session and adopted the Media Strategy Strategy until 2016.

(Tanjug, Danas, Politika, Blic, Press, Vecernje Novosti, 29.09.2011, Pravda, 30.09.2011, ASMEDI Newsletter October 2011)

"The next step is to adopt several laws during a very short period of time – the laws on public information, broadcasting, news agency *Tanjug*, public service broadcasters... The deadline for adoption of the laws is two years from now, and the same deadline applies to the withdrawal of the state from media ownership", says the State Secretary for the Media, Dragana Milicevic Milutinovic.

(Dnevnik, 30.09.2011)

The European Commission announced via the Office of the European Commissioner for EU Engagement, Stefan Fule, that "the Strategy constituted a good foundation for elimination of numerous shortcomings in the media sector".

"We will closely monitor its implementation and the legal framework, which have to be harmonized with EU standards", says the announcement issued by the European Commission.

(Tanjug, Pravda, 30.09.2011, Beta Press, 02.10.2011)

The Media Strategy still contains the provision about formation of six regional public service outlets, but the names of the cities where they should be established were removed from before its adoption. Formation of regional public service outlets was accepted despite protests from media associations and objections made by the European Commission. The Commission considers that "creation of six new regional public service outlets in an already overcrowded market is a reason for serious concern".

(Danas, 30.09.2011)

Judging by the new Media Strategy, the state has decide to help the media, especially the print media. "We will consider the possibility to reduce customs duties for importation of goods necessary for newspaper operations, as well as to significantly reduce the VAT on sale of print publications and news agency services, including the possibility to introduce positive discrimination in favor of the print media", says the Strategy. In the future, state bodies will be obliged to buy the advertising space directly from media outlets, without any mediators. The Law will forbid simultaneous ownership over print media outlets and the distribution and sales networks.

(Večernje Novosti, 30.09.2011)

The president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), Vukasin Obradovic, said that the Media Strategy was important, but that it was necessary to adopt laws which would establish equal conditions and independence of the media. He expects strong resistance during the process of adoption of media laws because of the involvement and influence of politics over the media.

(Blic, 30.09.2011)

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) organized a press conference in the Media Center Belgrade entitled "The Media Strategy – What Is the Next Step?". Representatives of journalistic associations and the Media Association warned that the state had to stop financing the media as of 1 January 2012 in accordance with the signed Association and Stabilization Agreement. The implementation of the Law on the Control of State Assistance begins on that day and in accordance with the Law the state will not be allowed to finance media outlets but only media content. According to interpretation offered by the president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), this means that the next year's budget must not include financing of the Tanjug news agency. Representatives of media associations also question the financing of future regional public service broadcasters, as well as their number.

(Medija centar, 06.10.2011, Vecernje Novosti, 07.10.2011)

"The Strategy offers only declarative announcements that something will be done. We have a habit of adopting strategies in cases when we do not want to offer real solutions. What is necessary is to adopt new laws and improve the existing ones, but also to ensure their immediate implementation by institutions, which is impossible without an analysis of the current situation. Strategies usually do not oblige anyone to do anything", says the President of the Anti-Corruption Council, Verica Barac.

(Danas, 06.10.2011)

The minority media

At the press conference entitled "The Media Strategy – What Is the Next Step?" the representatives of journalistic associations and the Media Association warned that the most questionable aspect of the recently adopted Media Strategy, aside from the proposed six public service broadcasters, was the provision that stipulated that the media in languages of national minorities would be "managed" by national minority councils.

(Vecernje Novosti, 07.10.2011)

Two weeks ago, the Panon Foundation dismissed Rudolf Mihok from the position of the director of the radio-television company. The dismissal was achieved using the "golden vote" of the member of the Managing Board of the Foundation who belonged to the Hungarian National Council. The president of the Association of Hungarian Journalists of Vojvodina, Livija Tot, was of the opinion that the media strategy of the Hungarian National Council, which stipulates the manner of media reporting in certain situations, demonstrated their desire to interfere with the editorial policy and independence of media outlets. At the same time, the Council of Europe discussed the Media Strategy of Serbia and estimated, among other things, that the model of financing the minorities' media via national councils was inadequate because of the dominant influence of political parties in such councils.

(Politika, 30.09.2011)

Media outlets of national minorities can work as commercial media, civil society media, and the media of National Councils of National Minorities, stipulates the Strategy. State representatives have not accepted the appeal of individual media associations and intellectuals belonging to national minorities not to entrust the National Councils with management of the media.

(Dnevnik, 30.09.2011)

Daily newspaper *Magyar Szo* criticized the Hungarian National Councils and individual politicians, stating that the paper's editors had often been targeted by their pressure. With regard to the recent dismissal of the director of RTV Panon, Rudolf Mihok, the newspaper said that it was "strongly pressured" to refrain from publishing the letter written by the dismissed editor, that it was threatened with lawsuits, and that its editor received phone calls from the Hungarian National Council. The turmoil in the newspaper *Magyar Szo* has not subsided since the decision of the

Hungarian National Council to dismiss the editor, Caba Presburger.

(Dnevnik, 30.09.2011)

The president of the Managing Board of the RTV, Boris Labudovic, resigned from his position. The Board appointed, Vanja Barisic-Jokovic, employed as a head of PR in the company *Vode Vojvodine*, as a new president. In the explanation of the decision, Labudovic said that the forthcoming changes in the Statute of the RTV aimed at harmonizing the Statute with the Law on National Councils of National Minorities were unacceptable to him. "The same legislators are behind the Law on Broadcasting, which stipulates that the RTV is independent, and the Law on National Councils of National Minorities, which practically denies that. According to the authorities' interpretation, the Managing Board and the management of RUV would not be allowed to appoint 16 out of 21 editors. How can the general director and the editor-in-chief of Radio-Television Vojvodina be in charge of the editorial policy if three quarters of their editors are appointed by national councils?", asks Labudovic.

(Dnevnik, Pravda, 06.10.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) considers that the resignation of the president of the Managing Board of RTV, Boris Labudovic, was a professional and responsible act caused by his unwillingness to accept the jeopardizing of independence and autonomy of RUV as a result of the announced changes in the RTV Statute. In practice, national councils are becoming bodies governed by political parties of national minorities, which has resulted in unacceptable political influence on the media that violates the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the media. For this reason, the UNS has filed a request for judgment on constitutionality of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. UNS calls on the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) not to approve the harmonization of the Statute of Radio-Television Vojvodina with the Law on National Councils of National Minorities before the Constitutional Court passes a verdict on the constitutionality of the Law.

(UNS, 06.10.2011)

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(Dnevnik, 08.10.2011)

The Hungarian National Council accused the former president of the Managing Board of Radio-Television Vojvodina (RTV), Boris Labudovic, that he had offered an "outrageous" explanation for his resignation. "This whole charade is a part of the well-know Serbian theatre in which rights of minorities are accepted until we want to actually exercise them, and then the things change", says the statement issued by the Hungarian National Council.

(Beta, NDNV, 09.10.2011, Dnevnik, 08.10.2011)

Professional standards

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) appeals to journalists and editors to strictly adhere to professional journalistic standards while reporting on events in Kosovo. Headlines like "Serb shot in Djakovica" or "Albanians shoot Serbs in the back", as well as articles beginning with the sentence "Albanians in Kosmet shot Serbs again", which were published recently in some of the Serbian media outlets, evoke memories of the period of warmongering journalism from the beginning of the nineties.

(NUNS, 04.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV) condemns the reports of most of Serbian media outlets about events in Kosovo and characterizes them as "unprofessional and malicious approach to very sensitive issues". The president of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), Ljiljana Smajlovic, says that the opinion of the NDNV is not aimed to defend journalistic standards but their own political beliefs. "They see something wrong with the political opinion that is implied by the expression 'defenseless people'", adds Smajlovic.

(Pravda, 05.10.2011)

In most of the 1,586 articles and 400 TV reports about the Law on Confiscation of Property, published between 1 March 2009 and 31 March 2011, journalists were well-informed about the subject and used the terminology that was understandable to average readers, says the analysis of media reports about the Law on Confiscation of Property Acquired by Criminal Acts. In this year, interest of the media in this subject has fallen off noticeably and few articles and items have been published about the issue.

(Beta, Danas, 29.09.2011)

A fake page of the Nobel Foundation featured a news which said that Dobrica Cosic had won the Nobel Prize in Literature. The "news" caused numerous reactions on the internet and in the media and fooled numerous media outlets, among them The Guardian, RTV Slovenia, Index.hr from Zagreb, Radio Sarajevo, RTS, B92, Studio B... Five minutes before the official announcement, RTS reported that Cosic had won the Nobel Prize. Ten minutes later, the station apologized to its viewers and the writer.

(Danas, 07.10.2011)

At the web site used to disseminate the false information about Dobrica Cosic, unnamed hackers explained that they had acted in this way with the aim to "draw attention of the Serbian public" to the "dangerous influence (of this) politician and writer who had been active for decades and always stayed near the center of political power". "We registered the domain of the obviously false web site on 5 October 2011 as a symbolical reminder of the day when our country missed a historical opportunity to create a different and better world".

(Beta, Politika, 07.10.2011)

Members of the Complaints Committee of the Press Council held their first meeting on 29 September. The Committee will hold regular meetings every last Thursday in a month or more frequently as appropriate. All decisions are available to public and are posted here: www.savetzastampu.rs.

(ASMEDI Newsletter October 2011 No.161)

Appraisals, awards, training courses and competitions

A training course for Serbian journalists reporting on domestic violence was held in Nis under the auspices of the Government of Norway and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

(Pravda, 30.09.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (DNV), which is a regional branch of the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), is enrolling a new generation of students who will attend a free computer literacy training.
(UNS, 07.10.2011)

The Protector of Citizens, Sasa Jankovic, won an award for his special contribution to promotion of the right to access information and transparency in the category of public authorities, while Ministry of Defence received the award for the best *Information Booklet* about activities of government bodies. The awards were presented yesterday by the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance on the occasion of the International Right to Know Day.
(Danas, 29.09.2011)

The jury of the public competition "The Best Media Report on Local Self-Government", organized by the Council of Europe and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, will offer the winning authors the chance to visit Strasbourg and Paris between November 14 and November 18, 2011. The winners will visit 5 renowned media companies and EU institutions located in Strasbourg.
(MC, 12.10.2011)

Winners of the contest for journalistic report and photograph "Because I Love Danube" have received their awards: Radio Belgrade crew won a three-day visit to Vienna for the best journalistic report, while the first award at the photographic contest was won by Andrej Filipovic. In total, 168 articles, radio reports, TV reports and web news participated in the contest.
(UNS, 05.10.2011)

The Library of Congress from Washington has included the Ebart media archive in its regular offer. Ebart Media Archive is the first organized and all-encompassing online archive in the region. It covers the period since 2003 and contains almost three million newspaper articles. In Serbia, the Archive is available in one hundred libraries and educational institutions. Ebart management expects the archive to be used in the future by numerous foreign libraries, universities and archives, as well as to be offered by 500 libraries in Serbia.
(B92, Danas, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

On October 10 in the Country Club in Babe, USAID and IREX will organize consultations for the media industry within the Media Assistance Program. Experts from Slovakia, who are highly experienced in the media industry, will participate in the consultations. The meeting will be attended by media representatives from Serbia, among others: the editor-in-chief of *Blic*, Veselin Simonovic, the president of the Media Association, Sasa Mirkovic, the president of the Managing Board of the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM), Jelena Jelincic, the executive director of the Fund for an Open Society, Dragana Solomon, the head of the media department of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, and others.
(ABC Srbija Newsletter, 10.10.2011)

Before the end of the month, the Society of Journalists of Nis intends to organize a three-day seminar on reporting methods. The following topics will be covered: economy, green technologies, energy efficiency and criminal procedure. The seminar is supported by the Local Economic Development in the Balkans with a donation in the amount of 300,000 dinars. Details about the schedule of the seminar and its location will be announced later.
(Vecernje novosti, NUNS, 12.10.2011)

Media visits

A crew from Russian TV station *Kanal 1* (in the majority ownership of the government) visited the editorial office of the newspaper *Danas* to interview its editors and journalists on the subject of the series of articles entitled "Serbia is full of Western spies, they say – so who's working for Russians?" The colleagues from *Kanal 1* (www.1tv.ru) – the "successor" to the Channel 1 of TV SSSR – wanted to know what motivated *Danas* to investigate the subject of "pro-Russian" political, economical and intelligence factors in Serbia. Journalists Snezana Congradin and Jelena Dikovic explained them that the immediate motive were the recent diplomatic incident by the Ambassador Aleksandar Konuzin and the statements made by the leaders of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Democratic Party

of Serbia (DSS) on the eve of the United Russia congress.

(Danas, 06.10.2011)

A report about the *Danas'* series of articles – which was published under the title "Who's working for Russians?" – was aired in the prime time slot of the Russian government-owned TV channel. The report said that the newspaper *Danas* was used by Brussels as a tool in its continued attack on Russian company Gasprom and the countries that buy natural gas from Russia. The report was aired by pro-government *Kanal 1* on Sunday, 9 October in the evening and was available to its 190 million viewers. The report described the series published by *Danas* as "scandalous".

(Danas, NUNS, 11.10.2011)

The media audience

According to information offered by AGB Nielsen, all cable channels in Serbia have the audience share in the range of 8-9 percent. During the last eight years in Serbia, the number of cable TV users has increased from 17% in 2003 to 42% in 2011. More than one million households has access to cable TV. At the same time, the number of users of digital services has been on the increase: IPTV, Digital Cable, DTH and DTT have a user base of around ten percent, says the executive director of the ratings agency AGB Nielsen, Darko Brocic. Best-rated TV channels are RTS, Pink and Prva. Apart from national broadcasters, the list of best-rated channels includes RTV Studio B, Channel 1 of Radio-Television Vojvodina and TV Ultra.

(Danas, Blic, 06.10.2011, Danas - Biznis, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

Regardless of the fact that 1.3 million households in Serbia has access to a large number of channels, the stations with national frequencies still occupy 75% of viewers' time. At the level of the city of Belgrade, cable TV has the largest percentage. IPTV by Telecom Serbia has 110,000 users who can choose among 152 channels in total, out of which 46 channels are domestic.

(Danas - Biznis, 10.10.2011)

Among the eight daily newspapers whose distribution is monitored by the auditing agency ABC Serbia, *Vecernje Novosti*, *Blic* and *Press* suffered a drop in distribution amounting to around 4, 9 and 5 percent, respectively. Newspaper *Pravda* has lost the largest number of readers and its circulation is now reduced by 30 percent. The circulation of *Politika* has dropped by 5 percent. The economic crisis, which has reduced the standard of living, has undoubtedly affected the sales of newspapers despite the fact that their price is by far the lowest in the region.

(Vecernje Novosti, 07.10.2011)

Many citizens of Serbia suffer bad reception of national TV channels. In Pirot, TV Happy is completely unavailable. Inhabitants of Babusnica, Dimitrovgrad and Bela Palanka have access to only three out of six national TV channels: RTS, Pink and B92. In Subotica, all channels are available but their quality is completely unacceptable. Aside from TV Happy, the worst signal in the territory of Serbia belongs to TV Avala. The Republic Agency for Electronic Communication (RATEL) says that it can take measures only if someone files a complaint.

(Blic, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

Children's cable TV channel – TV Ultra – is the best-rated among all cable channels: it has 270,000 viewers at the monthly level, which proves that children's programme aired by national TV stations is very poor.

(Danas - Biznis, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

Media transfers

Tanja Vojtehovski has decided to resign from TV Pink and launch her own agency, "Vojtehovski Communications". The agency will offer high-level PR services to clients in the region – from Slovenia to Croatia to Serbia.

(Blic, 29.09.2011)

Anniversaries

Weekly magazine *Pobeda* has published its 3000th issue. The first issue of the magazine appeared on newsstands on 16 November 1944.

(Pravda, 30.09.2011, Politika, 03.10.2011, Vecernje Novosti, 05.10.2011)

On the occasion of 20th anniversary of the launch of the programme *Utisak Nedelje*, its author, Olja Beckovic, offered an overview of the subjects of her programme and resignedly concluded that all the pressing issues in our society had remained unsolved – writes Branislava Dzunov.

(Blic, 02.10.2011)

The magazine *Enterijer (Interior)*, one of the most reputable domestic magazines in the field of architecture and culture of living, has celebrated 10 years of existence. At the same time, a new magazine – *ECOlife* – was presented to the public. *ECOlife* is the first Serbian magazine dedicated to green lifestyle and will be available on newsstands after 7 October 2011.

(MC, 05.10.2011)

Born in Italy, raised in Slovenian-speaking environment, schooled in Russian and German languages, Jurij Gustincic achieved his fame by describing the most influential English-speaking individuals – in Serbian language. Jurij Gustincic is one of the rare journalistic legends from former Yugoslavia who is still active. He is remembered as one of *Politika's* best correspondents from New York and London. Today he works as a commentator for *Mladina* from Slovenia and its TV. Honouring his 90th birthday and his 70 years in journalism, RTV Slovenia has recently produced and broadcast a documentary film entitled "The Century of Jurij Gustincic".

(Politika, 05.10.2011, Politika, 06.10.2011, Danas, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

In Memoriam

Stevan Sevic, a longtime journalist and editor in *Politika* company, died in Belgrade after a long and serious illness.

(Politika, NUNS, UNS, 11.10.2011)

Media business operations

State institutions in Serbia allocate around 15 million euros annually for advertising in the media. If we take into account the money that is officially allocated to media operations, the total sum that the media receive from the state amounts to no less than 40 million euros, which means that a quarter of the total advertising revenue of the media comes from state institutions – says the Report on Pressure and Control over the Media in Serbia issued by the Anti-Corruption Council. The Council says: "In this way, the government has a significant leverage to achieve financial influence over the media and therefore their editorial policy". "Apart from the basic form of advertising defined by the Law on Advertising, the media receive money from state bodies on the basis of specialized information services, contracted information services, fees for services, cultural subsidies, as well as project-based financing intended for the civil sector, including even research services", says the report.

(Danas, 03.10.2011)

Radio 033 announced that it had reduced the number of reports about the activities of the local self-government. The station was forced to take this step after the local self-government had refused to allocate 2.4 million dinars to media outlets in the city on the river Lim. Unofficial sources say that a half of the sum had been spent on advertisements and notifications.

(Večernje Novosti, 03.10.2011)

Privatization and state-owned media outlets

Four years after the purchase of the regional TV Pirot, its majority owner, Milorad Pejic, asked the Privatization Agency for a mutually-agreed termination of the contract due to the difficult financial position of the TV station which may lead to dismissal of employees. The station's bank account has been blocked and it owes money for electrical power and other obligations, while its employees have not received 2-3 salaries.

(Vecernje Novosti, Pravda, Pregled, Blic, Press, 03.10.2011)

The Assembly of Shareholders of the regional station Radio Sombor appointed a new Managing Board, while journalist Stipan Benic was appointed as a new acting director. The station was sold at an auction sale held on 2 November 2007, but the sales contract has been terminated because of the failure to fulfill obligations. Nine employees are producing a part of the news programme, although they have received only around 5,000 dinars for each month of the nine-month period of the last year. They have not received any salaries in this year. Employees in Radio Sombor expect the status of the station to be decided upon in the following period. It is uncertain whether the station would serve as a public service broadcaster of the citizens of Sombor or if it could be sold.

(Vecernje Novosti - Vojvodina, 03.10.11, Dnevnik, 04.10.2011)

The announced change in the ownership structure of the German media group VAC was of interest to Serbia even before the Axel Springer media group made its takeover offer and became involved in negotiations between the current owners. Both publishing companies already have a share of ownership in Serbian media, reports *Danas*. Springer has founded a joint company with Swiss corporation Ringier. Belgrade newspapers *Blic*, *Alo*, and *NIN* are owned by Ringier. VAC – which owns a part of daily newspapers *Politika* from Belgrade and *Dnevnik* from Novi Sad – has not officially given up on its intention to buy *Vecernje Novosti* from Belgrade. If its intention was realized and Springer became the owner of VAC, Springer would almost totally dominate Serbian media market and the Committee for Protection of Competition in Serbia would have a lot of work on its hands. In Germany, too.

(Danas, 04.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) warns that the Serbian media has begun again publishing articles which emphasize the nationality of participants in the reported events. The latest such example are the journalistic reports about the achievement of the team of surgeons in Nis, who have succeeded in reattaching the severed hand of Esref Demiri from Presevo. Some of the daily newspapers' headlines emphasized that the patient was an Albanian from Presevo, although his nationality was completely irrelevant to the subject of the news. Emphasis on the nationality of the patient gives a completely unnecessary political dimension to events, and at the same time separates and publicly marks members of a national minority.

(NUNS, 07.10.2011, Blic, 08.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) strongly condemns the physical assault on Hanibal Kovac, journalist of the weekly magazine *Podrinjske* and contributor to *Slobodna Evropa*. Yesterday morning in the center of Sabac, Kovac was kicked in the back by an unidentified man and warned that he would end up "beaten or dead". It is encouraging that only several hours later the police arrested the attacker, who is now in 48-hour custody. NUNS expects that investigating bodies will identify those who had organized the attack on the journalist and punish both them and the attacker in accordance with law.

(NUNS, 06.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) expects that the police will take legally stipulated measures against the member of the City Branch of the Democratic Party of Serbia who threatened the editor of the web portal www.vranjepres.info, Vojkan Ristic, because of his article about the "Kolubara affair". NUNS expects that the police – which was informed by the journalist about the identify of the person who had threatened him – will file appropriate criminal charges.

(NUNS, 06.10.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia will receive from the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) a request for judgment on constitutionality of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities. You can read the [UNS' request for judgment on constitutionality of the Law on National Councils of National Minorities](#).

(UNS, 06.10.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) demands that the Minister of Defense reveal all the facts about the armed incidents in Jarinje which are available to his Ministry. In response to his statement that the media reports on Jarinje "were not completely accurate" and that they were published under strong emotions", the UNS reminds the Minister that the Serbian public does not expect a media analysis from his Ministry, but a comprehensive and timely information about the attack on Serbs at Jarinje. The secretary-general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said that NATO "had delivered all information to the Serbian side via military channels". It is known that KFOR troops record everything that happens at the crossings.

(UNS, 06.10.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) that the Minister of Defence publicly present all facts on the basis of which he claimed that he knew "the truth" about the wounding of Serbs in Jarinje and that the "truth was somewhere in-between". The UNS emphasizes that the secretary-general of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, said that NATO "had delivered all information to the Serbian side via military channels" with regard to the recent conflict between Serbs and KFOR troops in the northern part of Kosovo. When asked about the recording from Jarinje that had allegedly been delivered to the Ministry of Defence, the Minister, Dragan Sutanovac, said that "the story about the recording originated from certain media outlets and the president of the UNS, Ljiljana Smajlovic".

(UNS, 11. oktobar 2011, Blic, 12.10.2011)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)

The Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has decided to issue the first 12 broadcasting licenses to cable broadcasters, in accordance with the Law on Broadcasting, thereby commencing the final phase of the regulation of broadcasting in the field of satellite and cable distribution of programme in Serbia. At the invitation of the RRA, 151 broadcasters have submitted requests for programme broadcasting via cable or satellite. Within this number, 86 broadcasters already possess the Agency's licenses for terrestrial broadcasting of programme. (Vecernje Novosti, 30.09.2011)

The most frequent violation made by broadcasters in Serbia is the incorrect designation of the appropriate age of viewers of certain programmes, said a member of the council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), Goran Pekovic, at the conference entitled "Media Laws and Protection of Children and Minors". The deputy president of the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), Dragan Janjic, said that the situation regarding the protection of children within media content had significantly improved and that the identity of children was increasingly often hidden via facial blurring and use of initials instead of full names. (Tanjug, Politika, Danas, 06.10.2011)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency submits around 3,000 violation reports against various radio and TV stations. The fines for these violations range from 100,000 dinars to 1,000,000 dinars. (Danas - Biznis, NUNS, 10.10.2011)

The South East Europe Media Organization (SEEMO)

SEEMO condemns an attack on a local public service TV Tutin crew and urges Serbia's authorities to protect journalists, especially in local communities. (SEEMO, 30.09.2011)

SEEMO condemns continued political pressure on Hungarian minority media in Vojvodina, Serbia. The National Council of the Hungarian Ethnic Minority, an umbrella organisation of ethnic Hungarians in Serbia, fired two media executives. This Council is supposed to represent the interests of the national minority. However, its members were elected as party representatives and they appear to represent the interests of their political parties rather than those of the Hungarian minority. (SEEMO, 04.10.2011)

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM)

In its 25th Monitoring Report for August 2011, the Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) says that pressure, attacks and threats against the media have continued, including the judicial practice to pass controversial verdicts in media-related cases, and that none of the competent bodies have made any contribution to the improvement of the position of the media etc. [The Monitoring Report is available at the web site of ANEM.](#) (ANEM Monitoring Novosti 25, 30.09.2011)

The Media Association

The Media Association will continue to monitor the implementation of the Media Strategy and demands that the legal reform envisioned by the Strategy commence as soon as possible – said the representatives of the coalition's associations. The president of the Media Association, Zoran Sekulic, said that the parliamentary and local elections cannot serve as an excuse for any delays. (Beta, Danas, Politika, 07.10.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV)

At the initiative of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina (NDNV), the president of the Assembly of Vojvodina, Sandor Egeresi, and the president of NDNV, Dinko Gruhonjic, called on the media not to report on inter-ethnic incidents in a "sensationalist" manner and warned that such an approach can lead to very serious consequences. "I appeal to the media to carefully and cautiously report on incidents in Temerin. It is highly necessary to report on these incidents, but at the same time it is of crucial importance not to report arbitrary and unverified indications and interpretations", said Egeresi. Gruhonjic added that he was "irritated" by the fact that certain politicians and some segments of the public view the media as the main culprits for the incidents in Temerin. He said that some of the media in Serbia reported professionally on the subject.

(Beta, NDNV, 09.10.2011)

New in the media

The editor-in-chief of Radio Belgrade 1, Djordje Vlajic, has announced changes in the programme schedule as of 3 October 2011. They are aimed to combine interesting news content and a dynamic programme design in the tradition of today's international electronic media, especially the public service broadcasters in European countries, says Vlajic.

(Politika, 30.09.2011)

The fact that an increasing number of people access the internet from their mobile phones has forced the traditional media to pay more attention to mobile apps and to adapt their content to smartphone users – this is one of the conclusions reached by the participants of the Belgrade New Media Summit. "People want to read headlines and find out what is new in the shortest amount of time. News adapted to mobile phones are more similar to information from Twitter than traditional newspaper articles", said Steve Herrmann, the editor-in-chief of BBC online news.

(Politika, 30.09.2011)

Everyone who has ever wished to publish their information in the press or on TV now has a chance to become a "journalist" with the first Serbian citizen journalism agency "*Moja Vest*". On the web site www.mojavest.com, every computer-literate citizen can share news with the rest of the world and offer their own point of view. The first Serbian agency for citizen journalism is a project of the organization *Integracija SADA* and is supported by the news agency FoNet and the Embassy of the USA in Belgrade.

(Politika, 30.09.2011, ASMEDI Newsletter October 2011)

The 12th season of the cult radio show *Pescanik* begins on Sunday, 2 October 2011. In the new season, *Pescanik* will be aired each Sunday on Radio Boom 93, while the audio recording of the show will be available on its [homepage](#). [The programme will be aired on Sunday at 9.00](#) in Pozarevac as well as on radio stations in Novi Sad, Vranje, Cacak, Novi Pazar, Kotor and Podgorica. The authors of *Pescanik* left the Radio B92 after the radio station refused to apologize to Srebrenica victims because of the participation of Ljiljana Bulatovic and Kosta Cavoski in the programme *Debata*. *Pescanik* had been broadcast on B92 for 11 years.

(Boom 93, 30.09.2011)

Digitalization

The Serbian media must be prepared to rapid development of global communication and should use the new forms of communication more actively, said the State Secretary for the Digital Agenda, Jasna Matic, at the opening of the New Media Summit.

(Beta Pravda, 29.09.2011)

We will have to adapt to fast-developing changes, like for example the 140-character limit in Twitter, believes the editor-in-chief of the online edition of BBC news, Steve Herrmann. Thanks to the internet and the digital media, journalists have a chance to find out what their audience thinks and to learn news directly from the audience, because there is always someone among the viewers or readers who knows more than the journalists, says Herrmann. He gave a lecture at the New Media Summit in Belgrade (organized by ABC Serbia) about the distribution of news on mobile devices. "In the case of the digital media, the content must be presented in such a way that people can easily find what they want to find. We are talking about partnership between content and technology. The online team of the BBC numbers 100-150 people, mostly in their late twenties or thirties."

(Politika, 29.09.2011)

Both the digital TV and the test digital signal will not arrive in time, reports *Vecernje Novosti*. The original deadline for digitalization of television in Serbia was 4 April 2012. After a while, it became doubtful that the deadline could be achieved, and therefore it was extended to the beginning of 2013. Today, the State Secretary for the Digital Agenda ,

Jasna Matic, and the director of the Public Company "Emisiona Tehnika i Veze", Vladimir Homan, cite the forthcoming elections as a reason for delays. Experimental broadcasting of digital programme is also late. Equipment for transmitters that is necessary for the launch of the digital TV and repair of 12 transmitters that were damaged in NATO bombing of 1999 has not arrived. The sum of around 70 million euros that is necessary for completion of the process of digitalization is still lacking.

(Vecernje Novosti, NUNS, UNS, 10.10.2011)

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- Sections - www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-abbreviations-and-sections.2317.html
- Archive - www.mc.rs/media-news-bulletin-archive.2381.html
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Media News Bulletin is a short account of media reports on the situation in the media. It has been created with the aim to register the information about the media published in the previous 14 days in Serbia, shortened to reflect the basic message of media reports and grouped in thematic subsections. The editors convey the news without changing the essential meaning of media reports on the media. For the readers interested in the complete published article, its source and date of publishing are given.

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