



MEDIA NEWS BULLETIN

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Issue No. 8

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Another letter to President Tadic

Political influence on the media is still present in Serbia, warned the President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Arne König, in a letter to President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadic, thanking him for his address to the annual EFJ Assembly that was held in Belgrade last month. The European Federation of Journalists is the largest European journalistic organization that brings together around 260.000 journalists from more than 30 countries. The content of the letter is available at the web sites of two associations, the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS).

(UNS, NUNS, 17.07.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) and the Journalists' Union of Serbia (SNS) have voiced their support to the opinion of the President of the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Arne König, expressed in his open letter to the President of Serbia.

(Beta, Danas, Dnevnik, Pravda, Politika, Kurir, 18.07.2011)

Attacks, threats and court proceedings

The former editor-in-chief of the TV Avala, Robert Nemecek, filed a lawsuit before the First Primary Court in Belgrade against his former company because of "damage to reputation, honor and individual rights" caused by his "removal from position without due notice for alleged unsatisfactory business performance", said Nemecek's legal representative.

(Danas, 07.07.2011)

An announcement, issued by the legal office representing Robert Nemecek in court proceedings related to his lawsuit against TV Avala, says that the TV company "has not presented a single parameter that would justify the allegation of bad business results, regardless of the fact that in the course of six months when Nemecek was the editor the ratings of TV Avala doubled, while its revenue increased fourfold". Bojana Lekic has been appointed as the editor-in-chief of TV Avala. Before her appointment, she had served as the director of the media company.

(Kurir, Politika, Press, Blic, 07.07.2011)

Journalistic team of the Kurir daily newspaper has announced that pressure on the media company is still continuing. Their statement says that "the unfair competition has an issue with our circulation and our success that we have achieved by our new, redesigned format. They have an issue with Kurir, the only Serbian newspaper whose owner is publicly known and who is not a disguised tycoon or a foreign fund".

(Kurir, 08.07.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) protested against the verdict of the Court of Appeals in Belgrade according to which journalist Milenko Vasovic was sentenced for an article published in the Dnevni Telegraph magazine 14 years ago. NUNS hopes that the Constitutional Court will annul the verdict after a constitutional appeal and prevent another embarrassment of the Serbian judiciary before the International Court of Justice in Strasburg.

(Beta, Danas, Blic, 24 sata, Pravda, 08.07.2011, Kurir, 11.07.2011, NUNS Newsletter, No. 0016)

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Ivica Dacic, said that the OSCE Chairman praised the Ministry's efforts to protect journalists.

(Beta, Danas, 08.07.2011, NUNS Newsletter, No. 0016)

The Court of Appeals in Belgrade upheld the verdict passed by the First Primary Court in Belgrade sentencing the leader of football fans of the Partizan football club, Milos Radisavljevic Kimi, to six months of imprisonment for violent behavior. However, the Court has annulled the part of the verdict related to the threat to safety of B92 journalist, Brankica Stankovic, and ordered a new trial over the threats to Ms. Stankovic.

(Politika, Press, Pravda, 12.07.2011, Politika, 13.07.2011)

The Commercial Court in Novi Sad has decided that rights to the logo of the Dnevnik newspaper belong to Dnevnik Holding and not to the Dnevnik Vojvodina Press company, which publishes the daily newspaper. The Court ordered the Dnevnik Vojvodina Press company to pay the costs of legal proceedings in the amount of around 700,000 dinars. *(Pregled, 12.07.2011)*

Appointment of the management of the Public Service Broadcaster

Yesterday, Sanda Savic officially became the new programme director of Radio-Television Vojvodina. Production will be managed by Vanja Kranjac. Both of them had been employed by TV B92 until recently. It is expected that Sanda Savic will soon appoint new editors of Radio and Television.

(Dnevnik, 12.07.2011)

The general director of Radio-Television Vojvodina (RTV), Sinisa Isakov, has confirmed to the Novosti newspaper that Sanda Savic, a former editor of TV B92, was appointed as the new programme director of TV Novi Sad, while her colleague from the same company was appointed as the director of production of TV Novi Sad. He has also announced that new and renowned individuals would be employed by the province's public service broadcaster in the future.

Radio Novi Sad, which is a part of the RTV together with TV Novi Sad, is already preparing for the arrival of B92 journalist, Danica Vucinic, the author and host of the radio show "Kaziprst".

(Vecernje Novosti - Vojvodina, 14.07.2011)

The Anti-Corruption Agency has recommended the Managing Board of Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) to remove from position the director, Aleksandar Tijanac, because he failed to submit a report on his personal property. The complaint filed by the director of the public service broadcaster was rejected at the session of the Board of the Agency held on July 12.

(Pregled, Politika, Press, Danas, Vecernje Novosti, Kurir, 14.07.2011)

The Media Strategy

The state will have to sell its ownership share in the media, except in certain public service broadcasters, if the Government adopts the proposed new media strategy that is being prepared by representatives of journalistic associations and the media industry, said the Minister of Culture and Informing, Predrag Markovic. In Serbia, the state fully or partially owns no less than 70 media outlets.

(Politika, 08.07.2011)

The Head of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, Dimitrios Kypreos, says that he expects that the final version of the Media Strategy will be available to the Government of Serbia in the beginning of September, as was previously announced.

(Danas, 08.07.2011, NUNS Newsletter, No. 0016)

A member of the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency, Goran Karadzic, points out the fact that local broadcasters in Europe are mostly privately-owned, and that they are rarely owned by the state. "Serbia can have public service broadcasters at lower levels than the national level, but there is the problem of financing", says Karadzic.

(Politika, 12.07.2011)

The debate on the Media Strategy has been completed.

(ABC Srbija, Newsletter, no 62)

The Ministry of Culture and Informing has received 27 comments and suggestions related to the Draft Media Strategy. They mostly concern the basic concept of the Draft Strategy which envisions privatization of all media outlets except public service broadcasters of Serbia and Vojvodina. The deadline for submission of proposals related to the Draft Strategy of Development of the Media in Serbia has expired on July 15. All remarks will be reviewed by the relevant Ministry, after which the final version of the Media Strategy will be prepared.

(Beta, Danas, 16.07.2011)

Minority media outlets

A parliamentary group consisting of minorities' representatives has estimated that the basic concept of the Draft Media Strategy is unacceptable since it envisions that all media outlets should be privatized except public service broadcasters of Serbia and Vojvodina. The president of the parliamentary club, Balint Pastor (The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians – SVM), said that the Media Strategy has to offer the possibility that local self-governments and national council of minorities can found media outlets. "There are not any European regulations or standards that oblige the states to withdraw from media ownership", claims Pastor. A member of parliament from the Bosniak Democratic Party of Sandzak, Esad Dzudzevic, has demanded that the Media Strategy include the possibility of forming regional public service broadcasters, while the leader of the Party of Democratic Action (PDD), Riza Halimi, has warned that the Radio-Television Serbia does not broadcast any programmes in Albanian language.

(Tanjug, Politika, Dnevnik, Danas, 14.07.2011)

The editor-in-chief of Radio Srbobran, Ivica Smit, says in an open letter that the claim, made by certain national minority politicians, that there have been no successful media privatizations broadcasting programme in minority languages is not true, and that Radio Srbobran has expanded its programme in Hungarian language by 50 percent. He claims that the National Council of Hungarians does not assist Radio Srbobran in any way, although it is a successful media outlet, and that the Council allocates all funds to RTV Panon from Subotica despite its dismal ratings. In his words, the founders of RTV Panon are high-ranking officials from the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, whose member is the MP Balint Pastor.

Ivica Smit has accused the National Council of Hungarians and the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM) of performing a "political guillotine" on the editor-in-chief of the Magyar Szo newspaper, Caba Presburger. "Should I remind you that you have received this newspaper as a gift and that in your capacity as founders you are under no obligation to take care of the financial needs of the company. The state takes care of that. You are only paying attention to its reporting and are exclusively committed to your permanent struggle against publication of intellectually valuable thoughts or opinions of those who are not members of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM). Is this your vision of the strategy and the future of the media in minority languages?", asked Smit. His message to Pastor was that it would be better for the SVM and the National Council of Hungarians to be media partners instead of media owners. Since 1968, Radio Srbobran has been broadcasting its programme in Serbian and Hungarian languages, and it has continued the practice after privatization.

(Beta, Danas, 16.07.2011)

In the *Dialogues* section of the *Danas* daily newspaper, Dr. Zorica Mrscevic says that the Women's World Cup 2011 will be held in Germany between June 26 and July 17. However, the media in Serbia has ignored this globally significant event. Who made such a decision? Who decided that women's football is not interesting to the Serbian public, asks Dr. Mrscevic.

(*Danas*, 10.07.2011)

Journalist and writer, Bosko Lomovic, in his commentary published in the *Politika* daily newspaper, says: "It is a rhetorical question whether television distorts and corrupts the language; the question, obviously, already contains the answer – and it is YES. Do linguists warn the viewers about the mistakes, allowing them to be corrected? It seems that this question is also rhetoric and that the answer is – NO."

(*Politika*, 08.07.2011)

The news about the alleged arrest of the last of the accused by the Hague Tribunal, Goran Hadzic, has spread in the Belgrade media. The Minister of the Internal Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, said that the "unverified" information on the arrest of Goran Hadzic are "detrimental" to his actual arrest.

(*Pregled, Blic*, 19.07.2011)

Awards and contests

The delegation of the European Commission in Serbia, the Office for European Integration of the Government of Serbia, and the Erste Bank have announced a public contest for the best media report on the process of European integrations in Serbia published between January 1 and December 1, 2011. The award is a work/study visit to Brussels, where the winning journalists will have a chance to meet the officials from the European Commission and the European Parliament.

(*Beta, Danas*, 13.07.2011, *NUNS Newsletter*, No. 0016)

Media transfers

A popular programme from *Emotion's* production, "48 Sati Svadba" ("*48 Hours Wedding*") will be aired on TV Pink after its seven seasons on the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS), reports *Kurir* daily newspaper. According to the newspaper's report, weddings in front of cameras will be broadcast every Wednesday and Thursday at 20.00.

(*Kurir*, 12.07.2011)

Anniversaries

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) has invited everyone who wants to assist in construction of a memorial house dedicated to a journalist, publicist and politician, Pera Todorovic, to offer their donations in a financial form or in a form of construction material.

(*Politika, Vecernje Novosti* 07.07.2011)

The editorial office of the regional news agency *Vranje Press* celebrated its ninth year of existence and operations, stating that it was continuing its mission to improve the content offered by web journalism as one of new journalistic forms.

(*Vranje Pres, NUNS*, 19.07.2011)

In Memoriam

A correspondent of the *Vecernje Novosti* daily newspaper from Vranje, Sladjana Veljkovic, died at the age of 41 after a short and serious illness. Sladjana Veljkovic was born in 1970 in Leskovac and graduated from the Faculty of

Philology. She began her journalistic career in the *Vranjske Novine* newspaper, while during the last three years she had worked as a correspondent for *Vecernje Novosti*.

(FoNet, Kurir, Vecernje novosti, Juzne vesti, NUNS, 08. 07. 2011)

Media business operations

A professor from the Faculty of Political Science, Rade Veljanovski, says that the system of collection of the TV fee is not present in all European countries, but that it constitutes a dominant form of financing in 90 percent of cases. "There is a certain number of countries that have retained the budget-based form of financing, among them Bulgaria, Spain, Greece... In countries where the TV fee is a primary form of financing it is a legal obligation, but its collection is easier in countries with better living standards. For example, the percentage of successful collection of TV fee is huge. The BBC, which is a public service broadcaster, receives around four billion pounds a year in this way, but they have no right to receive any revenue from commercial advertising nor to broadcast advertisements", says Veljanovski. The president of the Managing Board of ANEM, Sasa Mirkovic, also points out the problem of collection of the TV fee: "For example, while the percentage of successful collection of the TV fee is extremely high in Croatia, Serbia has never truly accepted the practice. If I am not mistaken, the collection percentage in Serbia is around 40 percent".

(Politika, 12.7.2011)

Privatization and the state-owned media

The Central Register of Securities registered yesterday a change in the managing structure of the *Novosti* company, after the right of the majority owner, Milan Beko, to 2,356 votes had been revoked and his managing rights limited to 25 percent of shares.

(Beta, Danas, Kurir, Politika, 07.07.2011)

A businessman from Belgrade, Milan Beko, cannot sell his shares of the Belgrade media company, *Novosti*, without an agreement with German company VAC, reports the Beta news agency, because VAC has collateral on the shares of *Novosti* that have been purchased by three Beko's companies: *Ardos*, *Trimaks* and *Karamat*.

(Politika, Pravda, Dnevnik, 07.07.2011)

The *Novosti* company may have a new management, Managing Board and editors by the next week, says a well-informed source to the *Kurir* daily newspaper. The Securities Committee has limited the right to usage of shares owned by Milan Beko and instead of 63 percent, he can now use only 24.99 percent of shares. The state of Serbia, with its 29 percent of shares, has now become the largest shareholder and practically takes over the *Novosti* company.

(Kurir, 09.07.2011)

The daughter company of VAC, *Ost Holding* from Vienna, has filed a lawsuit before the Administrative Court of Serbia against the Commission for Protection of Competition. For this reason, the Commission decided to abort the procedure related to their request for approval of acquisition of 62.39 percent of ownership over the *Novosti* company.

(Pravda, Vecernje Novosti, 15.07.2011)

The Commercial Court in Novi Sad has accepted the appeal filed by *Dnevnik Holding* and decided to give the company back the founding rights over the *Dnevnik* newspaper. In accordance with the contract concluded in 2004, *Dnevnik Holding* – together with the German corporation VAC (the ratio is a 45%:55%) – is a co-owner of the company *Dnevnik Vojvodina Press (DVP)*, which has been publishing *Dnevnik*, the only daily newspaper in Serbian language in Vojvodina, since then.

(Vecernje Novosti, 15.07.2011)

The Anti-Corruption Council of the Government of Serbia has submitted criminal charges against seven persons involved with privatization of the newspaper *Vecernje Novosti*. In the words of the President of the Council, Verica Barac, there is a possibility that the number of accused individual will be increased. The criminal charges have been

filed before the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade against the former Minister of Economy and Privatization, Predrag Bubalo, a businessman and majority owner of Vecernje Novosti, Milan Beko, the President of the Securities Committee, Milko Stimac, a member of the Committee, Dejan Malinic, Djordje Jovanovic and Dusan Bajec, and the Director of the company *NIP Novosti*, Manojlo Vukotic.

(Pregled, Kurir, Dnevnik, 13.07.2011, Beta, Danas, Dnevnik, Pregled, Politika, Blic, 15.07.2011)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS)

The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS), with support from the Civil Rights Defenders and the Media Legal Defence Initiative (MLDI), has begun cooperation with the legal office Zivkovic & Samardzic which will offer NUNS members legal advice related to violation of professional right of journalists and which will represent the association's member before courts.

(NUNS Newsletter, No. 0016)

Journalistic trade unions

The President of the Journalists' Union of Serbia, Dragana Cabarkapa, says: "The media employees do not need a media strategy, but laws and collective contracts. Collective contracts are the best way to protect labor and professional rights. In Serbia, there are no industry-wide collective contracts. At the same time, there is no dialog between employers' associations and trade unions because it is being obstructed by renowned journalists from six "relevant" organizations and associations. EU member countries do not adopt media strategies, but media laws. Two crucial laws, about the transparency of ownership in the media and media concentration, have not been mentioned in any of the 18 sections of the Action Plan for implementation of the strategy. The last year's discussion about the Media Study insisted on adoption of these two laws; the Study was prepared by European experts, but was not adopted due to the boycott by the Media Association. The representatives of this association – who are at the same time members of other 'relevant associations' – participated in the preparation of the draft media strategy. However, the strategy does not even mention labor-related issues."

(Danas, 13.07.2011)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA)

The Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) was founded on 9 July 2003. The Council of the RRA has decided to celebrate the day as the Day of the Agency.

(RRA, 09.07.2011)

Ivan Ivanovic's inappropriate jokes about Croatia will not result in court proceedings because the Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has decided that the TV host's words did not contain hate speech and that he did not violate the Broadcasting Law. Still, on the basis of a complaint filed by the RRA, the court has for the first time sentenced a TV station – TV Pink – to pay a fine in the amount of 750,000 dinars for the programme "Trenutak Istine" ("*The Moment of Truth*").

(RRA, 13.07.2011, Tanjug, Pravda Blic, Politika, Danas, Kurir, Vecernje Novosti, 24 sata, Dnevnik, 14.07.2011, Blic, Dnevnik, 15.07.2011)

The Council of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has issued a statement and called on all cable operators to offer regional and local broadcasters' programme to their customers in licensed territories of those broadcasters. Considering the lack of legal authority to regulate this area by mandatory regulations, the Council will contact the Ministry of Culture with the aim to establish an appropriate model before the adoption of new media laws, in accordance with European best practice.

(RRA, 13.07. 2011)

Telecommunications company *Digi Sat d.o.o Belgrade* has joined the initiative launched by Channel 9 from Novi Sad and supported by the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS), according to which distributors of media content would be obliged to transmit programmes of TV stations that possess a terrestrial broadcasting license in the territories where such licenses are valid. They point out that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) has a legal possibility of making this obligation mandatory on the basis of the Article 101 of the Law on Telecommunications which is entitled

'The Obligation to Transmit'.
(UNS, 18.07.2011)

The ownership structure of all national broadcasters will be shortly published on the web site of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) in accordance with the decision adopted by the Council of the RRA.
(RRA, 13.07.2011)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS)

The Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS) gave its support to the proposal put forward by the TV station Channel 9 from Novi Sad, that the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA) and the Republic Agency for Electronic Communications (RATEL) should oblige cable operators to transmit via their systems the programmes of TV stations which have valid broadcasting licenses, in territories covered by those licenses. The Association reminded that on July 5, cable operator SBB stopped transmitting the programme of the TV station Channel 9. Regardless of the fact that Channel 9 has a broadcasting license and that it pays its obligations to the government, the station cannot access its viewers in Novi Sad any more because more than 50 percent of the households use the SBB cable network.

(Politika, Dnevnik, 13.07.2011, Pravda, Politika, 15.07.2011)

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM)

The Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM) is of the opinion that it is unacceptable for local cable operators to stop transmitting the programme of TV VK from Kikinda and Channel 9 from Novi Sad, justifying this move by economic or technical reasons. In this way, cable operators have become a bottleneck and a limiting factor in relation to the citizens' right to have access to a wide and varied selection of media content.

(Pravda, 16.07.2011)

The Republic Agency for Electronic Communications (RATEL)

The Republic Agency for Electronic Communications (RATEL) has continued to develop and advance its cooperation with regulatory bodies in neighboring countries. Cooperation, as defined by signed memorandums on understanding, includes regular exchange of information related to development of policy and strategies in the field of electronic communications, as well as meetings of experts aimed at analyzing and comparing technical, legal and other aspects of national regulatory activities.

(RATEL, 13.07.2011)

The Ministry of Culture, Informing and Information Society has delivered the Republic Agency for Electronic Communications (RATEL) its opinion on the implementation of the Instruction with Elements of Technical Solutions for Radio Communication Services which is a part of the *Rulebook on Forms for Requests for Issuance of Individual Licenses for Radio Frequencies*. In the process of issuing individual licenses for usage of radio frequencies, RATEL will act in accordance with the opinion of the relevant Ministry.

(RATEL, 13.07.2011)

Most of the television stations with national broadcasting licenses broadcast advertisements with sound that is louder than their other programmes, shows the research conducted by the Control Service of the Republic Agency for Electronic Communications (RATEL) at the request of the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA). RATEL has informed these stations about the results of the report and asked them to rectify the irregularities or be penalized.

(Danas, 16.07.2011, TANJUG, Politika, 16.07.2011, Politika, 18.07.2011)

Since Tuesday, two additional film channels are available in the market: CineStar TV and CineStar Action & Thriller. CineStar channels broadcast more than 20 hours of film programme every day, the films are aired without commercial breaks and are fully subtitled. The channels are available to all users of the regional Total TV platform from Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Macedonia.

(Politika, 07.07.2011)

A correspondent office of the Radio-Television Serbia (RTS) has been reestablished in Bor after 11 years. The local self-government and the Mining and Smelting Complex Bor have enabled the business and technical cooperation, while the public company Stampa, Radio i Film has donated its business premises to the RTS correspondent office. "By opening an office in Bor, Radio-Television Serbia is gradually completing its system of correspondents and now has 23 correspondent offices, including the one in Bor", said the editor-in-chief of RTS correspondent offices, Nenad J. Ristic. The official opening of the RTS office in Bor in the premises of the public company SRIF will be held on August 6, the Miners' Day.

(RTV Bor onlajn, NUNS, 18. 07. 2011)

Digitalization

The *Digital Impact* conference, held in Belgrade on July 1, was organized by ABC Serbia and Busines Dialogue with support from the USAID and IREX. The event, dedicated to digital media business, brought together more than 250 participants. The complete report from the first *Digital Impact* conference is available here:

abcsrbija.com/dogadjaji/odrzani-dogadjaji.html.

(ABC Srbija, Newsletter, no 62)

ABC Serbia and Gemius signed on July 1 a long-term contract on cooperation related to introduction of the *ABC gemiusAudiences* system in Serbia, which would for the first time consolidate the measurement of advertising potential of the online and print media, including the demographic research of the internet. The contract will result in availability of a unique product in the Serbian media scene that would greatly benefit media owners, agencies, advertisers and other participants in the Serbian marketing industry. More information about the new system is available from email address office@abcsrbija.com or telephone 011/24 50 508.

(ABC Srbija, Newsletter, no 62)

The regional *New Media Summit – Digital Impact*, organized by ABC Serbia and Business Dialogue, will be held on 28 September in the Belgrade Hotel Continental. After a big success of the last year's summit dedicated to print media, the second *Media Summit* will be focused on the new media and their effect on change and development of the media scene in the region.

(ABC Srbija, Newsletter, no 62)

After the completion of the digitalization process, almost 1.5 million households in Serbia that receive TV programme via aerial antennas will be forced to acquire a Set-Top Box (STB) device that currently costs 20-40 euros. Otherwise, they would not be able to receive the TV signal. Digital terrestrial television brings clearer and sharper picture, higher-quality sound thanks to multiple sound channels, the possibility of airing high-definition television channels, increased number of channels, as well as introduction of additional services like subtitles, delayed watching of programmes and e-shopping. In the beginning, these will be standard-definition channels, while high-resolution channels will be introduced later together with the possibility of recording programmes, video-on-demand and delayed watching.

(Danas, 19.07.2011)

Today, the media do not rely only on traditional print editions, but are increasingly focused on online editions, said the director of the Ringier Axel Springer company web sites, Jovan Protic. "Taking into account the new trend, we have integrated our editorial office, and the same journalists now write for the print and online editions", added Protic. He emphasized that social networks have an increasing influence on the media. In his words, Facebook discussions can

serve to initiate a media report that can end up on front pages. "In the digital age, you do not negotiate with the Government anymore, but with Google and Facebook", said the editor of the NTV Serbia web site, Vladimir Jeric. (Blic, 16.07.2011)

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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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